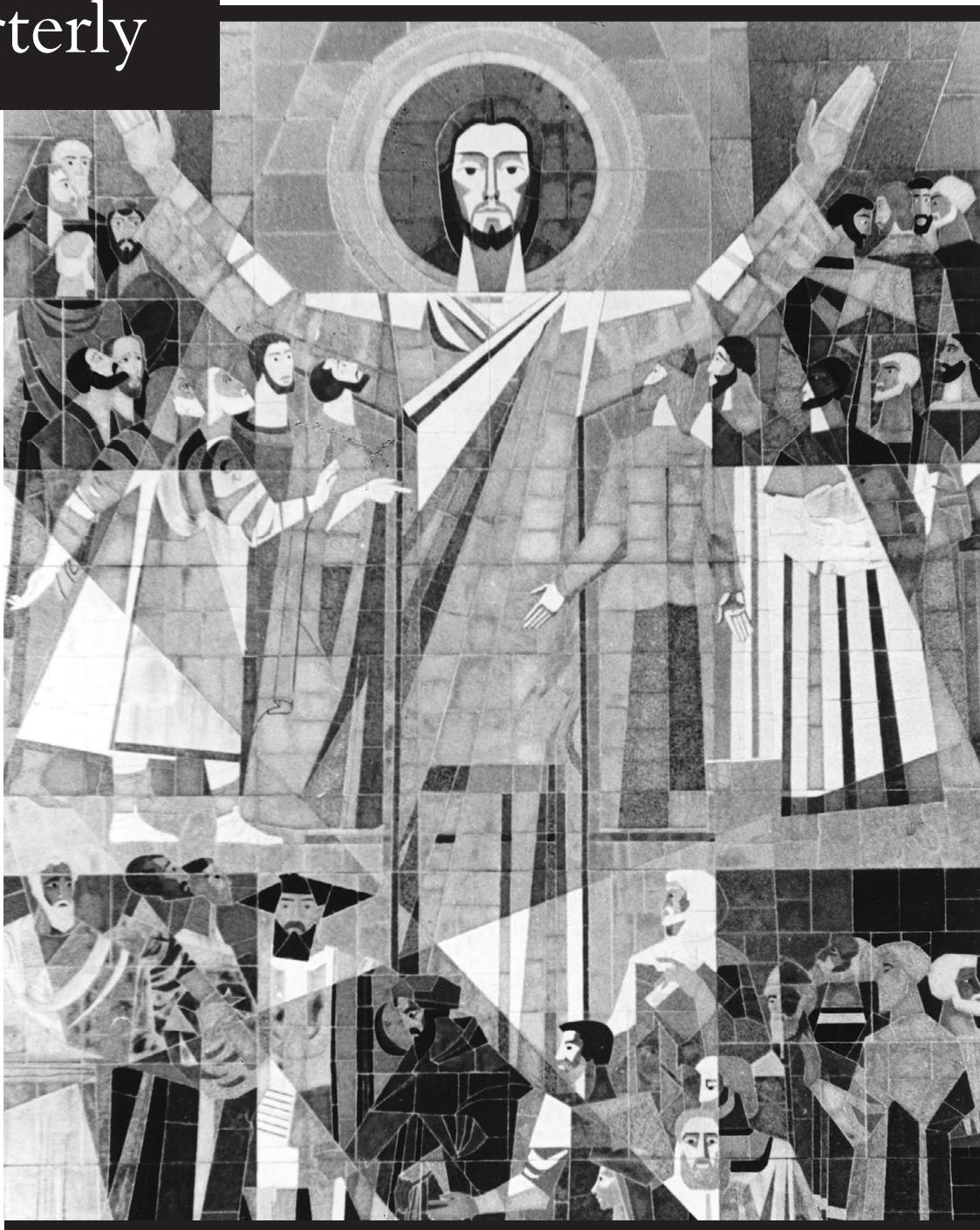


Fellowship  
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Scholars  
Quarterly

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## Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

Scholarship Inspired by the Holy Spirit,  
in Service to the Church

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**Reminder:** Membership dues will be mailed out the first of the year and are based on a calendar (not academic) year.

### PRESIDENT'S PAGE

**I**t is with pleasure and delight that I write to you as the new President of the Fellowship. I write also with a deep humility, a humility derived from the formidable legacy left by my most distinguished predecessors. Not just the great legacy left by Gerry Bradley, my immediate predecessor. We are all aware of his great accomplishments and the great leadership he exhibited during his nine years as president. (I always assumed he was president of the Fellowship for life). But it also includes the legacy left by his predecessors, the great men who created and led the Fellowship through those years. It is a legacy of great vision, inspirational leadership, unblinking courage, and an uncompromising commitment to the Church and its eternal truths.

As I see it, my task in the next few years is to continue this great work and to build upon the solid foundation by continuing to provide a powerful and persuasive voice in support of the Church's magisterium and, in the words of Msgr. George Kelly, to maintain our commitment "to the integrity of the Catholic Faith and obedience to Church Law."

The Fellowship will continue, for example, to be a forceful voice for full implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and the reform of Catholic higher education and for the articulation of the responsibilities Catholic politicians have to adhere to the Church's teachings on the fundamental issues of innocent life. It will also continue to draw upon the wisdom and experience of its membership for the newly emerging issues now confronting the Church.

To assist in this mission, we will aggressively seek to expand our membership from the ranks of those who share our vision, eagerly reach out to our brother and sister scholars in other countries to join us in our collective efforts, and vigorously pursue joint efforts with other Catholic organizations which share our commitment to the Church's teachings and whose work complements ours.

The need for a strong and forceful Fellowship is as great today as it was at its founding. We have accomplished much in the last 25 plus years, but we need to do more by continuing to fight those battles not yet won and to confront the new challenges now emerging. I ask all of you for not only your prayers as I assume the office of President, but also for your ideas, comments, and suggestions on how to build an even stronger and more vibrant Fellowship.

I look forward to seeing you next September at our annual meeting, which will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina. A Blessed Christmas and a Holy and Prosperous New Year to all. ♣

# Msgr. George A. Kelly

## *In Memoriam*

by Patrick G.D. Riley,

**F**or members of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, the death of Msgr. George A. Kelly restores meaning to the term *end of an era*. Many of us must wonder who else could have midwifed our organization and imparted the impetus to give it impact, even survival. But beyond that, and beyond question, he was a national figure, a foremost leader of resistance to the decades-long retreat of Catholics from the obedience of faith.

During the quarter-century and more since he founded the Fellowship, his word could be decisive for us. That was due in part to natural pietas toward the founder, of course, but at least equally due to respect for his almost preternatural good sense and his unerring grasp of situations. He epitomized that rare charism known as leadership in years when religious superiors and others responsible for the Church's well-being were invoking it as a substitute for authority.

His breakthrough book *The Battle for the American Church*, published in 1979 a year after our foundation, cemented his unique prestige within the Fellowship, and established him throughout the country and abroad as a chronicler and interpreter of the Church's turbulent times.

He loved to quote Emerson's adage that an institution is the lengthened shadow of one man. Anyone writing a memorial of him could scarcely avoid mentioning it, or its obvious relevance to the Fellowship and himself. If the Fellowship is feisty, intransigent, and fired with love of the Church, we can credit George Anthony Kelly.

All of us who knew him, whether up close or from a distance, have savored the flavor of the man, and understand its uniqueness. Hard as it is to conjure up anyone for those who do not know him, I think it less difficult in the case of George Kelly. His conversation was always provocative and at times

"outrageous—but he gets away with it," as another New York priest remarked in astonishment. Its piquancy was "like mustard in the mouth of a young child," as was said of the great Dr. Sam Johnson.

An admirer of his in the bureaucracy of the old National Conference of Catholic Bishops—there were some there, if they kept quiet about it—reported that when the name of George Kelly arose at high-echelon meetings "everybody starts foaming at the mouth." Unconscious praise indeed, and unwilling, but all the more sincere for that.

Before reminiscing more about Msgr. Kelly, I should offer some particulars of his life. For that purpose I'll reproduce an obituary I wrote when he died, and will give it entire for the especial reason that the New York Times and other media did not publish it, although it was submitted through proper channels.

Perhaps the Times was embarrassed by Kelly's unique success in marshaling outstanding scholars to oppose the kind of dissenting Catholic academics considered at once progressive and mainstream by major media. I hardly need mention that the New York Times, whose obituary page often has a plebeian flavor, had published lengthy obituaries of priests of far lesser achievement, if any. One of them, prominent in the Midwest, Kelly thought doctrinally ambiguous and even a dissenter. Another, who had once employed the wife of a Times religion reporter as a secretary, received an extensive obituary complete with photo although he was practically unknown outside clerical circles. Be all that as it may, here is the rejected obituary.

### MSGR. GEORGE A. KELLY

Msgr. George A. Kelly, who rose to leadership of traditional Catholics a quarter-century ago by founding the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars and then publishing *The Battle for the American Church*, a documented account of dissent from Roman Catholic doctrine and discipline, died August 12. He was eighty-seven years of age, and had been ill with cancer for about a year.

Msgr. Kelly was a priest of the Archdiocese of New York. He had been a pastor, diocesan administrator, and university professor, as well as the author or editor of some three dozen published books.

Edward Cardinal Egan, a longtime friend of Msgr. Kelly's, celebrated the funeral mass in Msgr. Kelly's old parish church of St. John the Evangelist, in the building of archdiocesan headquarters at 1011 First Avenue, Manhattan.

In 1978, while Flynn Professor in Contemporary Catholic Problems at St. John's University, Jamaica, N.Y., he founded the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, whose more than 800 members in the United States and abroad include professors and writers in theology, philosophy, law, history, and science. The Fellowship is strongly traditionalist in orientation, and was founded to break what Msgr. Kelly considered the stranglehold of dissenters over associations of Catholic theologians, scripturists, and canonists.

Msgr. Kelly often recalled how he came to found the Fellowship. Cardinal Gabriel Garrone, prefect of the Vatican's department for higher education, complained to him about the strongly dissenting character of Catholic scholarly associations in America, and asked anguish: "Does nobody speak for Catholic Scholars in America except the Catholic Theological Society of America?"

Msgr. Kelly's *The Battle for the American Church* (Doubleday), which appeared in 1979, is an account of rebellion against the authority of Rome and the bishops. Because of its detailed documentation it remains a work of reference, and made him a national figure among Catholics of religiously conservative bent. The more progressive Catholics saw him as an adversary of mettle.

Another of his three dozen published books, *The Catholic Marriage Manual*, earned him almost a quarter-million dollars in royalties, a princely sum in 1958 when the book was published. He donated the entire proceeds to the New York Foundling Hospital, a Catholic foundation.

Msgr. Kelly's published works on family life, and his decade as director of the archdiocesan Family Life Bureau (1955-65), brought him to Rome as a member of the papal birth commission. He was one of the very few members who held to the traditional condemnation of contraception, which was reaffirmed in 1968 by Pope Paul VI in the hotly-contested encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. In 1984 he was made a consultor of the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy, which is responsible for

the welfare of Catholic priests and for the soundness of religious instruction throughout the world.

Although not a specialist in scripture studies, he took on the foremost American Catholic biblical scholar, Father Raymond Brown, in a highly critical book: *The New Biblical Theorists: Raymond E. Brown and Beyond* (Servant: 1983). International theologians such as Hans Urs von Balthasar and Rene Laurentin praised the book, but it was not well received by most American biblicists. "They don't like it, but they haven't read it," observed a former president of the Catholic Biblical Association, Rev. Neil McEleney, CSP.

Msgr. Kelly's readiness to take on all comers was appreciated by the late John Cardinal O'Connor of New York, who called him "that clerical Jimmy Cagney." Cardinal O'Connor's aides and predecessors also knew him as a man to be reckoned with.

During the late '60s, Coadjutor Archbishop John Maguire deputized him to visit U.S. Senator Robert Kennedy, who had asked to meet with a representative of the archdiocese. Senator Kennedy opposed legislation that would partially reimburse low-income parents for tuition at nonpublic elementary and secondary schools. He did not look up from his desk when Msgr. Kelly entered, but continued writing until he abruptly challenged his visitor: "What has the Catholic Church done for the blacks of this country?" Msgr. Kelly shot back: "A hell of a lot more than you have, or your father." Then he listed the work of the Archdiocese of New York for blacks, dating to early in the nineteenth century, and pointed out that *Ebony* magazine, three years running, had listed Catholic priests as the whites whom Blacks trusted most.

Msgr. Kelly liked to point out that when he was director for education in the Archdiocese of New York, from 1966 to 1970, the Catholic school complex in the New York metropolitan area, comprising the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn, was the third-largest education system in the United States, behind the public school systems of New York and Chicago.

In 1999 a colloquy in his honor was given in the auditorium of the archdiocesan center. It brought visitors from around the world, including Archbishop George Pell, now a Cardinal and Archbishop of Sydney. A festschrift of the colloquy was published as *Keeping Faith: Msgr. George A. Kelly's Battle for the Church* (Christendom Press), with contributions by Joseph Varacalli, J. Brian Benestad, William E. May, James Hitchcock, Ralph McInerny, Kenneth D. Whitehead, Scott Hahn, Dr. Pell, Gerard Bradley, Father Anthony

Mastroeni, and Robert P. George.

George Anthony Kelly was born 17 September 1916 at his parents' apartment in Good Counsel Parish, part of the strongly Catholic Yorkville section of upper East Side Manhattan. He was the eldest of six children of Charles Kelly from Athlone, Ireland, an employee of the New York subway system, and Bridget Fitzgerald Kelly from Offaly, Ireland. On leaving Catholic grammar school he entered Stuyvesant High School but switched to the archdiocesan minor seminary at Cathedral College. In 1942, on completing his philosophical and theological studies at St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, he was ordained by Archbishop Francis Spellman of New York.

He wrote in his autobiography, *Inside My Father's House* (Doubleday, 1989): "What in hindsight is remarkable about the parish is that from 1918 to 1945 one, two, or three priests celebrated their first mass there every year." He recalled that that was not too rare in the New York of those years.

The new priest was sent to the Catholic University of America, where he obtained a Ph.D. in sociology in 1946. But he was not deeply impressed by the sociologists of his day. He wrote:

It is fashionable nowadays to pay attention to sociologists and psychologists when they dissect the psyches of priests from a purely unbelieving point of view. Priests were firstborn, they say, or the only child, or dogmatic characters, or mother pets, or conformist types, or members of large families and so forth, hardly suggesting a relationship of vocation to faith. Fortunately, none of us at the start knew we were any of those things.

Despite his doctorate he was first assigned to pastoral work. Until 1956 he was an assistant at St. Monica's parish in the Upper East Side. Former parishioners hold that even as an assistant, he was the man to see. His last pastoral assignment was to St. John the Evangelist Church on East 55<sup>th</sup> Street. He oversaw its move into the ground floor of the archdiocesan headquarters, directing its internal design, and traveling abroad to find the most sumptuous furnishings. He directed that he be buried from it. He was buried in Calvary Cemetery in the borough of Queens, in a plot he had prepared to be near his parents.

He is survived by his sisters Beatrice Long of Whiting, New Jersey, and Delray Beach, Florida; Isabel Hoff of Valley Cottage, New York; and Margaret Bergin of Lynbrook, New York. He was predeceased by his sister Mae Comiskey and his brother Daniel.

**E**veryone who knew Msgr. George A. Kelly will agree that he was exceptionally single-minded. He would not be distracted. That may have been his salient characteristic, and what made him and his career so exceptional. He was fiercely focussed on the Catholic Church, on what the Church means to the world, and above all on defending her. His enemies *par excellence* were her false friends, Catholics of every status who attacked her from within. If he detested them, they returned the compliment.

"Culture" in the narrow sense seemed to interest him little, although he had enjoyed the excellent classical education provided to most New York priests of his generation. If he wanted to make an vaguely remembered allusion from literature, classical or modern, he called upon one of the experts who had flocked to his Fellowship of Catholic Scholars.

In middle life, his method of writing and editing was unusual if not bizarre. He would get fired up by an idea, and compulsively dash off page after page in his strong clear hand. Dr. William Kimmig, his first altar boy who referred to himself as Kelly's "anonymous amanuensis," would type up his manuscript and mail it to various friends for editing. Kelly's compulsiveness was such that he would phone a friend to say an article or a new chapter was on its way, and advise what to look for in the manuscript. A day or two later he might call the friend again to ask if it had arrived.

He once complained to me that one such victim was in the habit of rewriting rather than simply editing; that was too much for Kelly, who told me he had stopped sending him material. In editing his manuscripts I rarely questioned his ideas, but touched up the style for clarity, though only rarely for elegance, which he appreciated but did not strive for. He usually let the changes stand, and thanked me for them, but if he stuck by his original he would carefully explain why.

His talent for judging and improving the writing of others can be called prodigious. Though I had worked under some storied veterans at United Press International and elsewhere, I think he was the most perspicacious editor in my experience. He knew what had to be emphasized or expanded, and he cut ruthlessly. The result was not only more concise but also more forceful and more readable.

"Make damn sure it comes out clear as a bell," he barked when he had persuaded me to tackle a book

on contraception. “The average college person must understand every sentence.” Even on this metaphysics-saturated question he seemed averse to mere theory, but I was to emphasize the factual and the human. “Talk about the father,” he kept saying, and made it clear he was talking also our heavenly Father.

He often spoke of his own father. I saw him weep only once, when he told me of what he called “a high point in my life.” As a young priest he was speaking at a Communion breakfast of the New York transportation workers’ union when, at the end of his talk, he pointed to his father, a union official, saying how much he owed him. When father and son embraced in front of hundreds of other men, there was a standing ovation. At the memory, Msgr. Kelly broke down.

In the last years of his life he recalled his sense of awe as he had walked from his parents’ flat to his parish church for his first Mass. He repeated for me—and here he spoke very slowly—the words he spoke over the host: *Hoc est enim corpus meum.*

He confessed that as a seminarian he was dismayed not to find himself among those chosen to go to Rome for theological study. He then applied himself strenuously, and upon ordination was sent to Catholic University for a doctorate.

When he returned to New York for his first pastoral assignment, he declined a proffered posting to his home parish on grounds that his father would be too strong an influence. The chancery sent him to an adjoining parish.

His recollections of years as a curate and then as a pastor were warm, entertaining, and somehow managed to be edifying even when the incidents he was recalling might not be. His autobiography, *Inside My Father’s House*, contains some luminous pages on the priesthood. They also glow with appreciation for his fellow priests; that was far from a pose, as anyone privileged to converse with him regularly will know.

His autobiography got a warm review from Gerald M. Costello, editor of the archdiocesan weekly *Catholic New York*. Mr. Costello was not in full accord with Msgr. Kelly on every issue, to underestimate the case, but he appreciated him as “an Irish storyteller with a some good stories to tell.” Gerry’s summary: “The scrappy Msgr. Kelly hasn’t mellowed out, not by a long shot. But he packs enough smiles in this book to last a long time.”

Early in 2003 a precipitous decline in Msgr. Kelly’s health became apparent. His voice, always vigorous, was suddenly weak and at times indistinct. He began to complain, “I’m so tired.” In June his leg buckled beneath him on the way to a midnight visit to the bathroom, and he fell hard on his face. “There was blood all over the place,” he reported.

He had been living alone in an apartment house in Rockaway Beach built over the cluster of summer cottages where his father and mother had brought the family every year until the Depression. Sobered (he said) by a reminder of mine that he was approaching ninety, he entered the Mary Manning Walsh Home in Manhattan on 5 August, but in such poor condition that he was taken immediately to a hospital, and then to Our Lady of Consolation Residence for Clergy, a nursing home in Riverdale, a leafy section of the Bronx.

He had lost 50 pounds. Curled up in his bed in a quasi-fetal position, he looked shrunken. But he crowed that his blood tests showed that his cancer was losing ground. “What more do you want?” he asked with his customary defiance of the odds. He asked me to send him my notes for the book on contraception that he kept speaking about almost compulsively, as if it were his own.

Among his visitors were Edward Cardinal Egan of New York and Archbishop Pell, not yet Ordinary of Sydney and a Cardinal. However I was shocked when Msgr. Kelly said he didn’t want to receive an associate who had withdrawn from a projected newspaper ad marking the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Humanae vitae*. I practically pleaded with him to relent, but he was adamant, saying in some agitation of this friend and another who had abandoned the project with him, effectively sinking it: “Don’t they realize that contraception is at the root of the West’s travail?”

(I was reminded of an evening two decades earlier when we were sitting in a car at Catholic University and he pulled his hatbrim over his eyes to avoid meeting his old friend and mentor John Tracy Ellis, who he thought was giving aid and comfort to dissent.)

Hardly had he entered the nursing home than its director advised me to visit him at once. “He’s in hospice care,” she said, and would say no more to someone not of the family. Despite her guarded language it was clear she thought he would soon die.

Also in guarded language she made it known she

would not change her way of running the institution at his behest, so I realized he was not planning to die anytime soon. And when he answered my knock at his door with “Come in—if you’re good-looking,” I was sure he had plenty of life in him. In the dining room, where he was brought in a wheelchair, he might pay little attention to the table conversation, and once blurted out, “The question is: When do I get out of here?”

He told me he had decided against asking for assignment as a curate because that “wouldn’t be fair to the pastor,” explaining: “I would soon be in charge.” I suppose that anyone who knew him well would agree with that.

Still, after a while he suggested to Cardinal Egan that he be posted to some parish as “senior priest”—a title, I believe, of his own invention. He said the Cardinal was “working on it.” During his homily at Msgr. Kelly’s funeral Mass, Cardinal Egan actually used those same words. In response to Kelly’s request for such an assignment, he told him he was “working on it.” He added that he expected to be forgiven for stretching the truth in such a worthy cause.

When Msgr. Kelly arrived at Our Lady of Consolation, a physician wanted to speak to his sisters about moving him to a hospital for the dying. That didn’t happen. By October he had moved to the home of his sister Margaret Bergin in Lynbrook, Long Island. He told me he found the distress of his sisters at his condition a burden.

A month later, on 6 November 2003, his friend and collaborator Father Ronald Lawler OFMCap died. Mrs. Bergin thought he was too weak to get that news, but she later realized a friend had told him. When he and I finally discussed Father Lawler’s death two months later, he spoke in anguish.

He was still restless and eager to move, although his only excursions were around the block by wheelchair. By April 2004 he was back in Manhattan at the Mary Manning Walsh Home. In June, when I wanted

to arrange a motorized, self-righting scooter to make him mobile, he said, “I have a feeling I’ll get out of this. Let’s hold off for a few months.”

I happened to phone him on Independence Day. Again urging me to get busy with the book on contraception, he returned to a favorite topic, the fatherhood of God—to which all men owe fealty,” he said. A book on contraception, he said, “could be the most important book of our time.” Again: “Make a lot of fatherhood.”

The week before he died, incapacitated by a stroke, his sister Peg Bergin said: “He can’t speak, but he can still say *bullsh\_t*.” The old Kelly was still alive, even with death days away.

Death came shortly after Mrs. Bergin found him gasping for breath, with two aides lifting him rhythmically to help him pull air into his lungs. She couldn’t bear the sight of him struggling so, and ordered that he be allowed to die peacefully.

She told me she and her sisters had had no idea of their brother’s importance to the Church until they heard Cardinal Egan’s homily at the funeral. “He would just say he was going on a trip.” This was the last thing I learned about him, and I confess it came as a surprise. He was modest.

When the funeral cortege got to the cemetery, the coffin was set down by the new-dug grave, and the prayers of the Church recited. The mourners—old-fashioned word, *mourners*, but how timelessly apt!—the mourners lingered to speak with one another, then slowly dispersed. The solemnity had vanished. Some drifted to the nearby grave where Msgr. Kelly had moved his father and mother, to be near them until the resurrection. The coffin, draped in baize, seemed forlorn, the body abandoned. We did not witness the burial. We could not watch the remains returning to that earth from which this great man had come. We could not sprinkle dirt on them. For a moment the figure of Antigone rose before me, and only with difficulty did I banish her. ♫

# Paul Michael Quay, S.J.: A Founding Father of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars (1924–1994)

by Reverend Brian Van Hove, S.J.

Paul Michael Quay was born in Arkansas on August 24, 1924. After military service he entered the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus on September 1, 1946, and was ordained to the priesthood on June 11, 1961. He died in Chicago at Loyola University on October 10, 1994, at the age of 70. His doctorate in theoretical physics was from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he studied under Professor Alfred Shatkin—a convinced atheist who forced Quay to answer hard questions about why Catholics are no better and often worse than atheists. Quay did a year of postdoctoral research in physics at the Case Institute of Technology and then taught physics and theology at St. Louis University for fourteen years, returning to Chicago in 1981. He wrote over seventy-five scholarly articles and one book, *The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality*, which has been translated into several languages. At the time of his death he held the position of Research Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University in Chicago.

Quay's outstanding contribution to Roman Catholic studies in the United States is his posthumous

book, edited by Joseph Koterski, S.J., in 438 pages: *The Mystery Hidden for Ages in God*. After the initial input from Shatkin during the years of Quay's doctoral studies, the book was first conceived as a project in 1964 through conversation in France with Winoc De Broucker, S.J., and then again gained momentum in 1969 as a result of further investigation at Fourvière, the Jesuit theologate in Lyon, with Henri de Lubac, S.J. It explores the thought of de Lubac on the patristic theme of *recapitulation*, and was distilled into its present form after being presented first as a university course, then as symposium lectures, then as essays. *The Mystery Hidden for Ages in God* is thus the result of thirty years of meditation upon *recapitulation*, that is, how the individual Christian goes through “biblical stages” of gradual transformation into the likeness of Christ.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

I want to comment on your editorial entitled “A Flock of Shepherds.”

I assume you are referring to Mr. Kerry when you stated [he] “champions abortion.” The man has said he is personally against abortion and has never encouraged it, etc. I think he deserves to be applauded for going out on a political limb, as it were, by saying he’s personally against it.

Finally, if you think that Bush is pro-life just look at the number of people he had put to death when he was

governor of Texas (more than any other governor in the history of the U.S.!) and now as the so-called President, causing innumerable deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan, civilian and military. And Reagan was pro-abortion while governor of California and against it when the GOP decided to choose him as their presidential candidate. Talk about hypocrisy!

Professionally,

Sister Geraldine M. Wagner, O.P., R.N.  
*Lompoc, CA*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Professor McInerny:

Donald Prudlo's article ("The Authority of the 'Old' Pontifical Biblical Commission", Vol 27, No. 3, Fall 2004, pp. 12-16) defending the total binding force of the early Biblical Commission decrees must be answered by qualified Catholic biblical scholars and perhaps canonists, historians, or ecclesiologists. His position requiring formal revocation of decrees seems completely erroneous. Among several important documents issued by the Pontifical Biblical Commission in recent years is "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church", published in 1993 with a laudatory introduction by Cardinal Ratzinger, who is also prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Cardinal Ratzinger in 2003 published an article in *Communio*, summarized in *Theology Digest* last spring, which surveys the relationship between the magisterium and exegesis for the past 100 years. It offers no support for Prudlo's contention. I hope responsible scholarly criticism of Prudlo's article will be published in the FCS Quarterly in the very near future.

Jerome F.Treacy, S.J., Colombiere Center, Clarkston, MI

P.S. Prudlo does not mention the criticism of his position in the more recent *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* of 1990 on p. 1171.

### *Response from Donald Prudlo:*

I thank Fr. Treacy for his comments on my article, indeed if his impressions are correct, then I have been indeed lax in my presentation. However I think that some of his assertions go beyond my intentions. My central point was to state that no magisterial document has formally revoked these decrees, and therefore they can still provide a useful guide for biblical study, especially study under the guidance of the magisterium. I am also quite aware that modern biblical scholarship proceeds without reference to these documents. They are free to do so but I should like them to answer the core of my argument: where is the formal revocation of the decrees (which I freely admit are neither infallible nor irreformable)? Merely ignoring or wishing away magisterial statements of the past that we are uncomfortable with is not a responsible way for Catholic scholars to proceed. They must be engaged with critically, not polemically.

I do agree with Fr. Treacy that the PBC has in recent years issued important documents. If I underemphasized that I am sorry, but my main point was that the decrees issued by the old PBC had magisterial force when issued, binding authority which the new PBC does not possess.

## Request for Funds

Dear Sir

I am a priest from the Diocese of Thiruvalla, Kerala, India and presently a doctoral student doing a research in Pastoral Theology at the Theology Faculty, Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium. My Research Topic is: "A Theological Re-interpretation of Deification of the Human Person in Eastern Sacramentology," directed by Prof. Dr. Lambert Lijssen.

During my Masters in Religious Studies program at KULeuven in 2002-2003, I did not have any scholarship in spite of all the efforts of my then Bishop (now Emeritus) Rt. Rev Dr. Geevarghese Mar Thimotheos, Bishop of Thiruvalla, Kerala, India to secure one. Finally, he funded me with some of the scanty resources from my diocese itself, a venture he could not continue for my Licentiate in Theology program at KULeuven in 2003-2004. I am sure you will understand that for a priest from a developing country like ours, it is not possible to study in a western country without a scholarship from some donor. So, during my Licentiate program, I had to depend solely on my summer ministry earnings for survival. Accordingly, I have been going through enormous financial difficulties during the past academic year. My new Bishop Rt Rev Dr. Issac Mar Clemis tried other alternatives to obtain a scholarship for my doctoral program but unfortunately with no success. So, my struggle will continue not only during this academic year but also throughout the coming four years until I complete my doctorate.

Given this situation of dire need, I turn to the generosity of your esteemed organization to ask for a scholarship. The annual expenses involved for a foreign student in Belgium is Euro 6500/=. Since, I am in the first year of the doctoral program, I would require four academic years to complete. The actual time period will be from the academic year 2004-2005 up to that of 2007-2008. Accordingly, I would require Euro 26,000/=(6500x4) to complete the doctoral program in four years. In case, you are unable to furnish the full amount, we shall be grateful if you could give at least a partial grant.

I am making this query with the approval of my Bishop. In the event you wish to consider my request, he is ready to recommend this project. Please find enclosed copies of my CV and of the doctoral project. I am ready to furnish also any other documents needed for this purpose.

Please note that this a SOS plea. I humbly and earnestly request you to give it a sympathetic hearing and eventually a favorable response.

Fr. John Cherian, Holy Spirit College, Naamsestraat 40, B 3000 Leuven, Belgium E-mail ckottayil@hotmail.com  
Tel 0032-16-324519      Fax 0032-16-324528

# The Scandal of Philosophy

October 2004 lecture delivered at Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, Budapest, y

by Ralph McInerny  
University of Notre Dame

1. “Philosophy” has become an almost equivocal term as we embark on the third millennium. It almost seems that one has to become a nominalist in order to think of the history of philosophy as the narrative of a common effort—what more than the name is common to all these thinkers?

This is not a lamentation, at least not terminally. These times are our own, and nostalgia for some past Golden Age, like the demand for an ideal impossible of realization, amounts to self-indulgence.

But what are we to make of the undeniable fact that ever since the sixth century BC those called philosophers have succeeded one another, generation after generation, and seem to have left us little more than a report from the Tower of Babel?

—one might regard the past as merely prologue, a lisping effort to achieve truths only later clarified, but nonetheless necessary if that clarification is to be made.

—one might regard the past as simply a record of error and confusion and see one’s own task to begin anew, and to get it right. On this view, the past has nothing to teach us, at least in a positive way, and we must sweep it aside and begin *ab ovo*.

—or one might simply notice the plurality of conflicting philosophical systems, select one, and proceed within its assumptions, effectively ignoring its many putative rivals. This may seem to be the actual situation of most men and women, even though the selection was not consciously made. We are introduced to philosophy in a certain way and it is only later, perhaps, that we become aware of the alternatives. By the time we do, our intellectual virginity has been lost, and we cannot return to our pristine state. It can all seem merely the result of chance.

2. There is of course the specifically Catholic variant of this. For centuries, the Church has presented

as our mentor in philosophy as well as theology St. Thomas Aquinas. He is taken as the paladin of sound philosophy, which is why his philosophy is compatible with the faith: natural truth cannot conflict with supernatural truth. Indeed, philosophy plays an important and indispensable role in our reflection on the faith, that is, on theology.

One need only recall this fact in order to realize that it has become an embarrassment to many. Indeed, some have thought that the role of Thomas Aquinas, admittedly central prior to 1962, has radically changed since Vatican II. We are told that the hegemony of Thomism was ended by the Council, and that now we are free to philosophize in any of the many wonderful ways made available to us today. Well, that Thomas has been abandoned by the teaching Church is a difficult position, even an impossible one, to defend. Since the Council, again and again, and notably in *Fides et Ratio*, we find the magisterium still pointing us to Thomas. (And of course he figures significantly in the documents of the Council that is supposed to have set him aside.)

3. Some Reflections on the Thomistic Revival. When Leo XIII issued *Aeterni Patris* in 1879, calling for a restoration of Christian Philosophy in the schools, he did so against the background of a stern judgment on the times. Faulty, even lethal, social and moral and political trends were seen to be the result of defective philosophies. The remedy must be sought in a sound philosophy.

Now it should be noted that the name of Thomas Aquinas does not occur until halfway through Leo’s encyclical. When it does occur, Thomas is seen as the preeminent representative of a tradition that stretches back to the Fathers. I will return to the significance of this.

—what are we to make of Leo’s negative estimate of the times? When *Aeterni Patris* appeared, many thought, and seemingly with reason, that mankind had at last embarked on the path of progress. In the absence of prince and priest, men could finally realize their full potential untrammeled by the suppressive power of the old regimes or the superstition of the clerical class.

And surely there were many things to support this sunny estimate. Of course, there were a few things one had to overlook. The excesses of the French Revolution, the subsequent Terror, the incredible power of a Napoleon, and of course the war of 1870. But these could be regarded as simply the purging of the old order. Ignore all the broken eggs, and look for the promised omelet. We might wince as we remember, but for all that the expected result was the important thing, and the horrors were said to pave the path of progress. Napoleon's cavalier treatment of two popes and the then current *Kulturkampf* in Germany, however they annoyed the pious bourgeoisie, were from an Enlightenment perspective, necessary and positive steps.

Now all of these political moves were underwritten by philosophy. The blandishments of the *philosophes*, of course, but as well the more sober "What is Enlightenment?" of Immanuel Kant. To be a free man is to be autonomous, to reject all authority, and this despite Kant's winsome way of invoking Horace as authority for what he said. The seemingly stratospheric speculations of Hegel played their role, particularly when the dialectic was turned on its head, Idealism rejected, and dialectical materialism proposed. The grim results of this were still in the future in 1879. Only a few had heard of Karl Marx and his choosing of Prometheus as the very type of the philosopher. Rejection of all the gods was to be the defining note of philosophy. Militant atheism, far more rigorous than its timid precedents, would now define modern man. Adapting Feuerbach, Marx would argue that the divine attributes were simply alienations of the properties of man and the location of them in a mythical transcendent being. Now these properties were to be reclaimed, and the means of doing so would be revolutionary and bloody.

Even so cursory a glance of what had led up to the situation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century makes it clear that Leo XIII was not imagining that the philosophy that lay behind the currents he deplored was inimical to both natural truth and to the faith; that he had accurately assessed.

4. It is one of the ironies of the past quarter of a century and more that the estimate of Leo has become fairly generally accepted. We have read much

of the failure of the Enlightenment Project. All those dreams of progress have been judged to be chimerical. Of course this did not lead to anything like Leo's notion of what the remedy might be. Not long after World War II, George Steiner delivered the T. S. Eliot lectures at Cambridge; they were later published as *In Bluebeard's Castle*. Like everything of Steiner, these lectures are an intellectual treat, they carry us along with their intellectual excitement. It would be difficult to find a more eloquent statement of the disillusion that had set in. Who could ignore the massive disconnection between cultural pursuits and the terrible tale of bloodshed that crested in the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Having put this bloody story before us, Steiner remarks that one begins to think of Original Sin. The reader's hopes rise, but then are quickly dashed. Incredibly, after his perceptive analysis, Steiner prescribes more of the same as the possible remedy. He seems to think the computer will rescue us. I will take Steiner as representative of the many who had lost their illusions with respect to the promises of the Enlightenment, and then danced away from a radical critique. One would have thought that promises that had so thoroughly failed of fulfilment would be analyzed in terms of their basic assumptions. Alas, this was not to be.

More recently, when the failure of the Enlightenment Project has become received opinion, Richard Rorty and his like can be seen as again exacerbating the problem rather than addressing it. And what is the heart of the matter, what is the fundamental problem?

**The Subjective Turn.** When René Descartes, product of a Jesuit education at La Flèche, now a soldier who sat in a warm room in winter quarters, asked himself what he really knew, he experienced a kind of vertigo. As the result of his education, his mind was filled with notions and arguments and supposed truths, but were any of them really defensible, was any of them so clear and distinct that he could not reasonably doubt it? And then Descartes had a dream. Belated attention has been paid to the almost mystical inspiration of the Father of Modern Philosophy. Perhaps the best analysis of it can be found in Jacques Maritain's *The Dream of Descartes*. Descartes awoke from his dream suffused with gratitude. He resolved

to make a pilgrimage to the House of Loreto in thanksgiving. Now, as you know, in Loreto was the house of the Holy Family, believed to have been miraculously transported there by angels. When he died in Stockholm, Descartes' account and interpretation of his dream was found, reminding us of the Memorial that Pascal always wore sewn into his coat. Descartes' dream suggested the method that was to make him famous, the figure on which history pivots, turning away from the past to a new beginning, to modernity.

There is no need to review for this audience the great intellectual drama of *The Discourse on Method* and of the *Meditations*. Descartes subjects the furniture of his mind to an austere and simple test. Can such and such a claim – let us symbolize any claim as  $p$ , that which can be true or false – be absolutely removed from doubt? Any claim that can reasonably be doubted must be set aside. Only a claim that is utterly and complete indubitable can be accepted, and with it we can safely begin. Of course Descartes cannot review each and every item in his intellectual memory one by one, so he classifies them. First, there are all the judgments dependent on sense experience. But his senses sometimes deceive him. And that sometimes could be any time. Accordingly, in one fell swoop, all such judgments are swept away. What is left? Mathematical judgments. Surely here there is certainty. Not for Descartes, he dismisses the whole of mathematics on the basis of two arguments which you will remember. Who can forget that based on the Malevolent Demon who prompts us to think that  $2 + 2 + 4$  when he knows that truly  $2 + 2 = 5$ ? This thought experiment is meant to introduce a basis for doubt that cannot be removed. So what is left? Here is the great dramatic moment of the account. Total skepticism seems to threaten, there seems to be no value of  $p$  that is immune to doubt. And then the peripety, the epiphany. Even if everything he thinks is dubitable, Descartes cannot possibly think that he who thinks does not exist. *Cogito ergo sum*. And so the thinking subject emerges as the keystone of modern philosophy.

The task of philosophy has now become: How do I get out of my mind? As Cornelio Fabro has put it: *Hic incipit tragedia moderna*. The thinking subject is first confronted by his own thinking and the ques-

tion becomes, has my thinking any counterpart, any object, outside thinking? The objective is now to be derived, deduced, from the subjective. This effort has taken many forms, one of the most influential that given it by Immanuel Kant. Phenomena, our mental constructs out of the a priori forms of sensibility and understanding and the mysterious other, the noumenal, renders radically problematic any talk of knowing the real as it is. We can only know it as we know it. Among our a priori contributions is causality, which we cannot ascribe to things as they are. Farewell, metaphysics. Dismissed as fundamentally mistaken is any effort to move from the things that are made to the invisible things of God. Things are indeed made, but by us as knowers, not by God. How logical it was of Hegel to take the next step and dismiss any wonder about the relation of Thought to Being. They are one. Thought is being.

**Homo Faber.** Maritain, in his reflections on Descartes, noted the uncanny resemblance between the Cartesian account of human knowing and the account of angelic knowing that we find in Thomas Aquinas. For Thomas, human knowing is based on experience of things and comes, as it were, after them, dependent upon their givenness. The angel, by contrast, has concepts which are before things, his knowledge is a participation in the creative knowledge of God. What the angel knows of things is not derivative from any experience of things. Maritain suggests that Descartes has similarly described our knowing as thus angelic. But there is a darker side to this, one stressed by my mentor Charles DeKoninck. When Marx adopts Prometheus as the very type of the philosopher, one who defiantly rejects the divine, DeKoninck too is reminded of angels, the fallen angels, and it is their *Non serviam* that he sees as definitive of modernity.

The aim of philosophy is no longer to think reality, it is to change it. Practical knowledge, the knowledge of the artisan, becomes primary. Man will fashion any world there is. His alienated properties now rescued from an imagined transcendent being, man becomes God and thus the divine artisan of reality.

Half a century ago, in *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Jean-Paul Sartre provided a crisp statement of the difference between theism and the atheism he him-

self professed. The theist thinks of God as an artisan who fashions things, man among them, giving them a nature which is the measure of what they ought to be, of their flourishing. The criteria of the good are antecedent to our actions. *Essentia* precedes *esse*. When God is removed from the picture, nature too goes, and with it any antecedent restrictions on what we might do. We are totally free, unrestrained by any nature. *Esse* precedes *essentia*. Man assumes the role the theist gave to God. That is what humanism means for Sartre.

I have mentioned Richard Rorty. In one of his essays, he advises philosophers to become Strong Poets. For him, this means that there is nothing outside thought that can verify, or falsify, what we think. Philosophical positions cannot meaningfully be advanced as true, since this would mean that they match the way things are, presumably outside thought. I can no longer say that what I say is true and your rejection of it false. Neither side of a contradiction is either true or false. This leaves mere assertion as the warrant for philosophical claims. If others agree with me, that is all they are doing, adopting *my* claims; I cannot persuade them by saying that what I claim is true. This is what is meant by being a strong poet.

**Emotivism.** In Anglo-American ethics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, moral philosophers assumed as given the claim of G. E. Moore, in his *Principia Ethics*, that there is a chasm between our evaluations, judgments as to what is good or bad, and the realm of facts. Theory after theory sought to account for an ethics which floated absolutely free of the things that simply are. Alasdair MacIntyre has shown that the victorious position was Emotivism. What do ‘good’ and ‘bad’ in our evaluations mean, or point to? Our feelings, our emotions. I cannot persuade you that what I say is good *is* good, as if it were grounded in the way things are. And since our feelings, emotions, differ, and you call things good that I call bad, there is no rational resolution of the conflict. Moral judgments are simply expressions of the speaker’s feelings, no more communicable than “I have a headache.”

Against this background, such a view as Rorty’s can be seen as the generalization to all thinking of this fact/value dichotomy. Or, better, as the dismissal

of facts so that all that remains are subjective evaluations. Physics and biology would seem to be equally emotive, subjective, about the speaker rather than the presumed objects spoken of.

5. Forgive this impressionistic trip through modernity to where we presumably now are. How must we proceed in a time when philosophers claim to be as immune as poets to refutation?

At the beginning of the Thomistic Revival, the epistemological problem was judged to be the neuralgic center of the philosophy that must be opposed, the philosophy which as Leo saw had spawned political and social movements antithetical to the truth. Flaws in Descartes’ procedure had been discovered by many philosophers who were not motivated as Leo XIII was. It would be wrong to think of the suite of modern philosophers as having uncritically accepted the critical or subjective turn. But when they saw flaws in their predecessors, when the logical jumps in Descartes were discerned, the critic then seemed to think that he must do in an unflawed way what Descartes had attempted. There was not a radical rejection of the subjective turn. What Leo called for was such a radical rejection, and that meant an acknowledgment of realism: the human mind is fashioned to know reality.

In our situation, Realism will seem to be a position no more true or false than its opposite. The upshot of modernity thus provides a tolerance for such a view, but tolerance on this basis is unacceptable. If realism is just an arbitrary stance, it cannot possibly bear the weight that it must. What is at issue here is not simply the realm of natural knowledge, of philosophy, but of the faith itself: grace builds on nature, the supernatural assumes and requires the natural for its intelligibility. From the point of view of the faith, the need is urgent to reestablish the very starting points of thought.

It can be said that we are faced with something that has recurred again and again in the history of philosophy, even if its modern manifestation is the most thoroughgoing instance of what might be called the dark side of philosophy. Recall that hardly had philosophy begun than it was confronted by its negative twin, sophistry. We must meditate anew on the way Plato dealt with the challenge of Protago-

ras who blithely suggested that what is true for me is true for me and what is true for you is true for you. Such arbitrariness strikes at the very root of the search for truth. As Plato and Aristotle did when they confronted the sophist, we must see our primary task as the defense of the obvious, of the self-evident. This defense is as well a rejection of that elitism that has characterized philosophical thought in the modern age. This defense is finally a vindication of common sense.

And so I come to John Paul II's wonderfully perceptive encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, often thought of as the *Aeterni Patris* of our time. The Holy Father is there embarked on a task that is as old as Christianity, what is the relation between what we know and what we believe? The ordinary reader may of course be put off by the realization that it is philosophy that is to be discussed, so the Pope allays this fear. The fundamental philosophical questions are ones that must eventually be asked by everyone – Why am I here? Where am I going? What is good and evil? Is death the end? What person can escape putting such questions? In that sense, to be human is to be a philosopher. But the Holy Father is not yet done with his threshold remarks. It is not simply that such questions are common to all, *there are answers to them which are also commonly known*. There is thus, he writes, an Implicit Philosophy of the race, a fund of commonly held truths, which are the starting points and assumptions of philosophy in the formal sense. We can therefore think of this as the realm of the pre-philosophical.

In proceeding as he does, John Paul II strikes at the basic presupposition of the subjective turn. To say that, prior to formal philosophizing, what we and everyone else thinks, must be accounted dubitable if not false, cannot meaningfully be sustained. Of course this is not a wholesale adoption of common sense, understood as the sum total of received opinion. So taken, common sense contains much manifest nonsense, not to say contradictory views. It would be silly to say that anything most men think is true and must be presupposed by formal philosophizing. But what is not silly is the claim that common sense contains the devices to distinguish between the really and only apparently true. It contains principles which are absolutely foundational because they are the prin-

ciples of reality itself, and thus of thinking. Common sense is correctable by common sense.

That is why I referred to Plato and Aristotle on the sophists. This disruptive position involves a rejection of the most basic principle of all, the principle of contradiction. Protagoras is in effect saying that a proposition and its contradictory opposite are simultaneously true. But, as Plato showed, in effect, if *this* statement is true, it is false. It will not do to see the Protagorean position as one of tolerance. It would be the destruction of all positions, including itself. It is not, accordingly, a position at all.

We too are confronted with the need to defend the self-evident, and that defense, as Aristotle said, and Plato showed, is indirect, finally a *reductio ad absurdum*. What is first, a principle, cannot be directly demonstrated: it stands in no need of demonstration. But it can be defended by showing that the proposed alternative is nonsense.

So it is that the urgent and primary task today is to argue for the obvious, and to prevent an initial move which can only lead on to disaster, both in the realm of thought, and in the political and social order. This is a task which requires the utmost tact and delicacy. It is not complimentary to say to another that what he holds is nonsense. Such a judgment is seldom received with equanimity. But the principal target of the effort is not the one who holds with sophistication and urbanity self-refuting views; rather the aim is to remove an obstacle from the path of those not yet in the grips of the subjective turn. That turn, as Fabro has insisted, whatever the intentions at the outset, leads on to atheism. And “leads on to” is the operative term. The Fathers of Vatican II, in *Gaudium et spes*, in the course of what can be seen as a little treatise on atheism, remark, *Nam atheismus, integre consideratus, non est quid originarium*. Atheism is not the default position of the human mind, to employ a bit of computerese. From the vantage point of the faith, we cannot permit philosophy to underwrite atheism.

When St. Paul said to the Colossians, *Videte ne quis vos decipiat per philosophiam*, he was not counseling the rejection of philosophy as such, but only of that which seeks to level all things to the measure of man. His remark can also be seen as the first of many by

which the custodians of the faith have given advice about philosophy, about good philosophy and bad, and the relation of the former to the faith. Almost since his death in 1274, that advice has stressed the role of Thomas Aquinas in the acquisition of a philosophy which, because it is true and a quest for truth, is compatible with the faith.

Responses to this advice can be varied, of course, and it would be wrong to think that what the Church requires is a kind of catechetical parroting of what someone else thought. However important, and inescapable, authority governs the way we begin philosophizing, authority plays no role within philosophy as such. And it is at the threshold of philosophizing that the recommendations of the Church are meant to play a role. We do not philosophically assess our first mentor in philosophy; we are guided by all kinds of things, usually unwittingly: the zeitgeist, the curriculum of the school we happen to attend, by uncountable contingencies that lead us to heed first this thinker rather than a host of others. And yet this starting point is crucial. A small mistake in the beginning gathers momentum and soon becomes a great one.

For all that, no one is without resources when he begins. That is the point of John Paul II's Implicit Philosophy. The pre-philosophical knowledge the phrase denotes provides a first test of the rival systems of philosophy. But that pre-philosophical knowledge is inchoate, it must be shored up, it is all too easily eclipsed and obscured. The Thomism that the Church commands is not one kind of philosophy among others. Its chief recommendation is that it is in continuity with Implicit Philosophy. Thomas is our chief mentor, but he is merely one of many thinkers over the course of history whose teaching, like his, is realist and thus in tune with Implicit Philosophy. Narrowness is antithetical to Thomism. Once we are well begun in philosophy, the horizon before us is vast. Let our attitude toward the advice of the magisterium in this matter not be one of embarrassment or shame. Our hearts and minds should be filled with gratitude that the Church has spoken to us on how philosophy should be entered into. Her advice is not to join a club, arbitrarily chosen, but to point us to a sure way to acquire philosophical truths, truths that for us are ultimately ordered to that higher truth that will set us free. ♫



# Aquinas and the Defense of Ordinary Things

## On “*What Common Men Call Common Sense*”

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“Not only the practical politics, but the abstract philosophies of the modern world have had this queer twist. Since the modern world began in the sixteenth century, nobody’s system of philosophy has really corresponded to everybody’s sense of reality; to what, if left to themselves, common men would call common sense.”

—G. K. Chesterton, *St Thomas Aquinas*.<sup>1</sup>

“*Omnis autem res humanae ordinantur in finem beatitudinis, quae est salus aeterna, ad quam homines admittuntur, vel etiam repeluntur, iudico Christi, ut patet, Matth. xxv: 21.*

—Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, 4.<sup>2</sup>

“I enjoyed the luxury of our approach to London, that metropolis which we both loved so much, for the high and varied intellectual pleasures which it furnishes. I experienced immediate happiness while whirled along with such a companion....”

—James Boswell, Thursday, March 28, 1776.<sup>3</sup>

### I.

**I**n 1964, Étienne Gilson, at that time residing at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto, gave the Fenwick Lectures on the occasion of the 175<sup>th</sup> year since the founding of Georgetown University. These lectures were subsequently published under the title of *The Spirit of Thomism*. In the first discourse, Gilson remarked, perhaps sadly, perhaps frankly, that “not all good Christians love philosophy.”<sup>4</sup> We think of Tertullian’s famous question “what has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” Gilson himself mentioned, in this same category, Arnobius, Peter Damian, as well as the Abbé Lucien Laberthonnière, who thought one had to choose “between being either a philosopher or a Christian.”<sup>5</sup> Actually, Leo Strauss seems to hold a

somewhat similar position, one must choose between the way of the philosopher and the way of the rabbi. Even St. Paul at times suspected not a little “foolishness” in philosophers.

One wing of Christianity, however, has devoted itself to saving philosophy, even from itself, while another has suspected that with Christianity, philosophy is in fact more itself, more philosophy, than it would be without it. This was surely the thesis of John Paul II’s *Fides et Ratio*. We might say of Thomas Aquinas that he was a theologian, and because he was a theologian, he was also a philosopher. Indeed, we might say that because he was a theologian, he was a better philosopher, and because he was a philosopher, he was a better theologian. Yea, more, we might even say that had he not been a theologian, he would not have found much interest in philosophy, and were he not a philosopher, he would not have seen much point to theology.

I trust that here in Fredericton, at a university named after St. Thomas, the good Christians do love philosophy and for its own sake, which is, as Aristotle implied, the only reason why we should love it. Or as Socrates put it in the seventh book of the *Republic*, “it is the nature of the real lover of learning to struggle toward what is, not to remain with any of the many things that are believed to be, that, as he moves on, he neither loses nor lessens his erotic love until he grasps the being of each nature itself...” (490b). Philosophy is indeed a thing to be loved, a thing about which to be excited.

In fact, I might be so brash as to hope that even the “bad” Christians, should there be such, which I must piously doubt in these noble halls, might also love philosophy. *Intellectus quaerens fidem* is, I suspect, as much a reality in “bad” philosophy as it is in “good” philosophy, perhaps more so. And when we know about revelation, I think, philosophy becomes something even more to be loved. Revelation is not the death-knell of philosophy but its re-awakening. It is philosophy that first properly poses the ques-

tions that it cannot satisfactorily answer for itself. It is also known that it is philosophy that knows when its own answers are not adequate. Much of modern philosophy, I suspect, is an often desperate effort to “prove,” on the basis of what is said to be philosophy alone, that revelation cannot happen, cannot be true. The more we see of these philosophic proofs of revelation’s presumed “untruths,” the more disturbingly accurate revelation seems to be in its understanding of the actual human condition and its perennial tendencies.

The great Augustine, moreover, remarks, in the first chapter of the Nineteenth Book of the *City of God*, that “*Nulla est homini causa philosophandi nisi ut beatus sit.*” “There is no reason to philosophize except that we might be happy.” I am ever indebted to E. F. Schumacher’s dedication to his *A Guide for the Perplexed*, a wonderful book, for causing me to notice a sentence that I had often overlooked in reading *De Civitate Dei*.<sup>6</sup> Few more profound words have ever been written.

Moreover, it is all right if a great man reminds us of another great man, if, say, Cicero reminds us of Plato, or Aquinas reminds us of Aristotle, or Boswell reminds us of Johnson, or Chesterton reminds us of Aquinas himself. We go to the trouble of thinking – it is in fact mostly a delight – because we want to know where we stand among existing things. We want to know that our personal destiny is not “in vain,” to use a famous phrase of Aristotle. We want to know that the *things that are* originate in gladness, not sadness. It is perhaps no accident that Scripture, in depicting the birth of children, speaks both of sadness and gladness, almost as if to say that our lot includes both, but in an order in which, in the end, the sadness is subsumed into gladness, if we choose to let it.

## II.

James Boswell told Samuel Johnson in a post-chaise on the way into London, in 1776, that “high and varied intellectual pleasures” are to be found in that glorious city. It is Aristotle who teaches us that all human activities have their proper pleasures, including those of the intellect, the neglect of which latter pleasures, the intellectual ones, usually turns us to disordered pleasures. Ironically,

there is a this-worldly penalty for not enjoying the delights of the mind. Pleasure, rightly considered, is always a consequence of, or better reality within, doing what we ought. As Aristotle said, there are some things we would choose, even if they did not give us pleasure, like seeing, an observation that makes the pleasure and power of seeing even more mysterious.

Thomas Aquinas even suggests that literally all human things are ordered to a final beatitude which directly concerns ourselves, challenging us to accept or reject it, almost as if it is exceedingly important what we think, what we choose. The activities of our minds are not supernaturally indifferent. It makes a difference, what we think about the *things that are*. In the end, Aquinas adds, we do not judge ourselves, which suggests that there is a reality we do not make, but only receive. Indeed, it suggests that what we do not make is, in the end, more what we want than that which we choose to give ourselves from the depths of only ourselves. Ultimately, we are receivers.

Charles Taylor made the same observation as Aquinas. “The point of things isn’t exhausted by life, the fullness of life, even the goodness of life...,” Taylor observed at a lecture given at the University of Dayton in 1996. “What matters beyond life doesn’t matter just because it sustains life.... For Christians, God wills human flourishing, but ‘thy will be done’ doesn’t reduce to ‘let human beings flourish.’”<sup>7</sup> The purpose of this life is not the eternal continuation of just this life. And Chesterton, that great admirer of Aquinas, was bold enough to speak of “everybody’s sense of reality,” as if it made obvious sense to say that we all live in the same world and know that we do.

Yet, intellectual things do not always allow us to be content with ordinary things. If we have but a breath of Plato in our souls, as we should, we know that no beautiful thing exhausts what it is to be beautiful in itself. Each beautiful thing, without denigrating its own being, its own *what it is*, is a reminder of what is luminously beautiful, even in what is ordinarily beautiful. Thus, it is precisely the ordinary that most often directs us to the extraordinary things and, paradoxically, it is the extraordinary things that are most needed to defend the ordinary, normal things. We underestimate God’s grandeur, I suspect, when we conceive it to be quite an easy thing to save us, knowing, if we be honest, what we are. Just why it

is all right to be an ordinary human being is, if anything, more puzzling than why it is all right to be a perfect one. Why, after all, should there be anything at all but God? We suspect that Aquinas little caveat, “*judicio Christi*,” has something to do with it.

### III.

**I**n a letter he wrote to a Thomistic congress in Rome in 2003, on Christian humanism, John Paul II, recalled, as did Chesterton back in 1933, how modern systems of philosophy do not allow us to see ordinary things. Between us and them there stands epistemological theories that obscure, if not totally darken, our vision of *what is*. And there are moral theories and practices that are perhaps even more blinding, more difficult barriers through which to see reality.

Modern man, the Pope said, seems to be “in search of his own fulfillment.” By this phrase, I take it, the pope means that modern man seeks to “define,” exclusively by himself, what it is to be human. He is subject to no “natural law,” even of himself. Then, recalling what he wrote in *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul II analyzed the factors that are obstacles in the process of humanism. Among the most common should be mentioned “the loss of faith in reason and its ability to arrive at the truth, the refusal of transcendence, nihilism, relativism, the forgetfulness of being, the denial of the soul, the prevalence of the irrational or feeling, the fear of the future and existential anxiety.... Christian humanism, as St. Thomas demonstrated, has an ability to preserve the meaning of man and his dignity.”<sup>8</sup>

We do not often enough, I think, consider the problem of precisely “intellectual obstacles,” of the notion that ideas themselves can and do prevent us from knowing the truth of things. In *Orthodoxy*, Chesterton remarks that “there is a thought that stops thought.”<sup>9</sup> We should have some sense that, often perhaps, we choose our ideas precisely so that we will not see a reality that would demand that we change our ways of living. How we think is not merely a frivolous exercise, like the four hundred and first crossword puzzle that we half-heartedly fill in because we have nothing else to do with our minds, or the television ads we watch because it is too much

trouble to shut the whole thing off.

The Holy Father’s short list of intellectual obstacles here is quite interesting. The first one he stresses is a “loss of faith in reason.” “What does it mean to have ‘faith’ in reason?” we might ask ourselves. We like to think that faith and reason are rather separate, either one or the other. But we have here a man of incisive intellect speaking of a lack of “faith” in reason as itself an obstacle that might prevent us from knowing what humanism might be. A point comes when we must discover a ground, a first principle, that itself is too obvious to “prove” by something more clear than itself. Strictly speaking, this is not “faith,” except in the sense that we must take as a given, that is, what invariably functions within us the way it does.

Chesterton, again, made much the same observation in almost the same words about the intellect’s power over itself:

The point is that the human intellect is free to destroy itself. ... One set of thinkers can prevent further thinking by teaching the next generation that there is no validity in any human thought. It is idle to talk always of the alternative of reason and faith. Reason is itself a matter of faith. It is an act of faith to assert that our thoughts have any relation to reality at all.<sup>10</sup>

In practice, few who theoretically doubt whether the mind can know reality fail to open the door before trying to enter a room. Unlike Descartes, we do not normally think we have to prove the existence of God in order to know that something besides ourselves is out there in the world.

The word “humanism” itself needs to be further considered. The pope speaks of “Christian humanism,” knowing that not all humanism is “Christian.” Humanism has been considered, not infrequently in the modern world, to be implicitly “atheist humanism.” That is, to be human, it is said, we have to be atheistic. We are said to be “alienated” from our own being if we do not give ourselves the total content of what we are, if we do not, simultaneously, destroy what outside of ourselves is said to cause us to be what we are. This sort of “humanism” does not want to be dependent on any “*theos*,” any god, for an explanation of what man is. But to have “faith” in reason means precisely to affirm that reason contacts

a world we did not create ourselves out of our own minds. The kind of being we are is already given to us. We are, in a sense, given to be what we already are. The drama of life is whether we accept or reject the kind of being we are given to be.

The pope also speaks of the “refusal of transcendence” and the “forgetfulness of being” as intellectual obstacles. Notice that he does not say the “intellectual rejection” of transcendence, but rather its “refusal,” even if, or especially if, there is intellectual proof for its existence. Charles Taylor, in the Dayton lecture, made the same point, “in Western modernity the obstacles to belief are primarily moral and spiritual, rather than epistemic.”<sup>11</sup> Our theoretic problems are designed often to cover our moral problems.

And the pope speaks of the “forgetfulness” of being. This is a curious word. How can we “forget” what is in front of us at all times? I think of the first response found in Aquinas’ *de Veritate*, in which he says, simply, “*illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum, et in quo omnes conceptiones resolvit, est ens....*” (*de Veritate*, I, 1).<sup>12</sup> Something other than ourselves exists; it is most known to us. In its light, we also exist as the kind of knowing beings we are. To “forget” being means that we are so busy examining and explaining everything else in our own terms that we neglect what is in front of us, what is the most curious thing about us, what is most known to us, namely, that we are, rather than are not, that there are things that are not ourselves..

#### IV.

I am fond of citing a lecture that Eric Voegelin gave in Montreal in 1980. One of Voegelin’s missions in life was to “recall being,” if I might put it that way, to insist that we do not “forget” it but rather find its “ground.” He spent his life urging us to get away from the constant going over ideas as if they were original sources and return to the experience of being on which they were founded. Those familiar with Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas already recognize this necessity as we saw in the brief citation from Aquinas about being. Voegelin remarked that there are “no new ideologies in the twentieth century,” only the working out of older ones. Ideologies – that is, expla-

nations of the world that originate not in being but in mind—can last rather a long time if there is a vested interested in keeping them.

Voegelin then added that “the college teaching level is usually thirty, forty, or more years back of what is going on.”<sup>13</sup> And is what is “going on,” even if we do not know it, that which decides our intellectual agenda? By no means. We need not be advocates of that vague “philosophy of the future” that Nietzsche spoke of in *Beyond Good and Evil*. Indeed, Voegelin himself admonished the students in Montreal in 1980, “Nobody is obliged to participate in the crisis of his time. He can do something else.”<sup>14</sup> And what is this “something else” in which he can participate? Socrates said in the sixth book of the *Republic*, “Let’s agree that philosophic natures always love the sort of learning that makes clear to them some feature of the being that always is and does not wander around between coming to be and decaying” (485b). It is absolutely vital that we realize that the philosophic life is open to us even in the most corrupt of societies or universities. This is the grounding of Voegelin’s admonition that we are not “obliged” to participate in the crisis of our time; we are not prisoners of our time because we have something else, a philosophy of being, of *what is*. But we must find it, choose it.

The final sentence in Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morality* is the following: “man would much rather will *nothingness* than *not will*.”<sup>15</sup> Just what to will “nothingness” might mean is problematic. We recall that, in Christian theology, God creates the world *ex nihilo*, from nothing. This “from nothing” has never been understood, of course, to mean that the world is made of something called precisely “nothing.” But it does mean that of itself, apart from God’s being and will, nothing is except God Himself. Nietzsche’s urging us “to will” is contingent on the existence of a will that did not will itself to be what it is. Behind the “will to power” is a will whose power is given to it.

#### V.

In the *Protagoras*, we find a passage of rare humor. It concerns the significance of our conversations about the *things that are*. Socrates has just given his analysis of the poems of Pittacus and Simonides on the difficulty of becoming

and being good. The young sophist Hippias offers to read his own analysis of these very poems, but Alcibiades, ever cutting, brushes him off deftly, “Yes, Hippias, some other time, though.” (347b). “Don’t bother us,” in other words. Alcibiades, that most attractive and dangerous of all the potential philosophers Socrates ever encounters, wants Socrates directly to answer the questions posed by Protagoras. He wants philosophy, not speeches about philosophy.

At this point, Socrates wants to stop talking about poetry and odes. “Discussing poetry strikes me as no different from the second-rate drinking parties of the agora crowd,” Socrates bluntly remarks. He continues with a damning description of local intellectual life, a description valid for most all times: “These people largely uneducated and unable to entertain themselves over their wine by using their own voices to generate conversation, pay premium prices for flute-girls and rely on the extraneous voice of the reed flute as background music for their parties.” (347c-d). Clearly, Socrates implies here that conversation should arise out of our own experience.—“philosophy exists in conversation,” as Frederick Wilhelmsen once made the same point. The artificial experience of the night-club with the latest music will not generate the deeper conversation to which we ought to turn our souls.

Then, in one of the finest descriptions of human conversation in all literature, Socrates continues:

But when well-educated gentlemen drink together, you will not see girls playing the flute or the lyre or dancing, but a group that knows how to get together without these childish frivolities, conversing civilly no matter how heavily they are drinking. Ours is such a group, if indeed it consists of men such as most of us claim to be, and it should require no extraneous voices, not even of poets, who cannot be questioned on what they say. When a poet is brought up in a discussion, almost everyone has a different opinion about what he means, and they wind up arguing about something they cannot finally decide. The best people avoid such discussions and rely on their own powers of speech to entertain themselves and test each other. These people should be our models. We should put the poets aside and converse directly with each other, testing the truth and our own ideas. (347d-e).

Socrates, be it noted, is not against drinking, nor is he opposed to singing or dancing, as we know

from both the *Laws* and the *Symposium*. Indeed, these activities are in many ways our highest human expression of joy and gratitude before the *things that are*. They are our response to *what is*, that it is.

The burden of this passage from the *Protagoras* is one that teaches us where philosophy really exists, in conversation, in conversation generated by a desire to know the truth of things. The conversation is civil. It is friendly. It does not disdain drinking but it requires sobriety. Things need to be decided. We do not rely ultimately on outside books, whose understanding Socrates often tells us, as in the case of the poets, if itself fleeting. We argue from a reality we know and confront.. We should converse, seek the truth, even of our own ideas.

## VI.

**C**hristof Cardinal von Schönbrun once remarked in a lecture in Austria that Thomas Aquinas was the first, and perhaps only, man ever canonized simply for thinking, as if it made a difference both whether we thought and what we thought about. We live in a culture whose basic proposition is that truth is dangerous, discriminatory. This context makes Aquinas doubly dangerous. He not only held that truth can be affirmed but that we can make the judgment in which it exists. Our grounds for living with others cannot be based on the proposition that there is no truth. They should be rather that we see and hold the same truths.

Josef Pieper, in his marvelous little book, *The Silence of Saint Thomas*, remarked that we often overlook the fact that Aquinas was first a teacher and devoted considerable effort to teaching others precisely the truth. Though I think that they are not in opposition, when sorted out, we often praise Socrates for the honesty of knowing what or that he did not know, whereas in Aquinas there are something like ten thousand “articles,” brief one to four page units of argument, each of which concludes to the affirmation of what is true and further states on what basis the conclusion is reached. “To lead a man from error to truth, this he (Aquinas) considered the greatest service which one man can render another,” Pieper wrote. For those of us who are admonished also to

give a cup of water or to clothe the naked, this passage deserves long meditation on the hierarchy of things to be done for our neighbor. It is not wrong to think that the men of our time need truth more than bread, to recall something in Dostoyevski.

Teaching, for Thomas, is something other and greater than to impart by one method or another the ‘findings of research’...,” Pieper continued. “Teaching is a process that goes on between living men. The teacher looks not only at the truth of things; at the same time he looks at the faces of living men who desire to know this truth.”<sup>16</sup> This careful observation is, in a way, the same point we saw in the *Protagoras*, in which we needed to be in direct conversation, face to face. Teaching is a spiritual endeavor, both on the part of the student and the professor. Truth, as such, is not something that can be owned. If Schall has a truth that is peculiarly “his” own and no one else’s, it is not worth having. The highest things are free in their very truth. It is possible that a teacher can take a student to something, to a text, to a reflection, whereby the eyes of the student are open. He begins to see, not only see but long. Every experience of truth takes us out of ourselves.

## VII.

If the human mind cannot reach reality, if there is no mind in things, if the only world *that is*, is the world that we project from within our wills, it follows, it would seem, that there is nothing we can receive. We are, in that case, the criterion and content of our own existence. Our modern “humanism” is not based on the gift of ourselves from whatever it is that causes *to be*, but it is the self-definition of our own world, in which what is not from our own wills simply is not allowed to exist or be considered as part of our humanity.

An old *Peanuts* cartoon shows Schroder, the Beethoven lover, excitedly telling Lucy, after she asks, “this is a new recording of Brahms Fourth Symphony.” With a disbelieving look, Lucy wants to know what he is going to “do” with it. Schroeder tells her that he is going to “take it home and listen to it.” She cannot comprehend this contemplative sort of answer. She wants to know if he is going to dance or march to it. “No, I’m just going to sit and listen to it.”

Lucy tries one more time, “you mean you’re going to whistle or sing while you listen to it?” For the fourth time, Schroeder tells her that he just going to “listen” to it. In the final scene, Lucy is standing alone gazing at the departed Schroeder. She concludes, “that’s the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever heard.”<sup>17</sup> Yet, Schroeder is right; we are essentially hearers and listeners before we are speakers and doers.

“There is no thinker who is so unmistakably thinking about things, and not being misled by the indirect influence of words, as St. Thomas Aquinas,” Chesterton wrote.

That strangeness of things, which is the light in all poetry, and indeed in all art, is really connected with their otherness; or what is called their objectivity. What is subjective must be stale; it is exactly what is objective that is in this imaginative manner strange.... All... the romance and glamor (of things), so to speak, lies in the fact that they are real things; things *not* to be found by staring inwards at the mind. The flower is a vision because it is not only a vision. Or, if you will, it is a vision because it is not a dream.<sup>18</sup>

The ordinariness and, at the same time the strangeness of the very same things, this is what Aquinas has to teach us about *what is*.

Yet, it is the lesson of the history of philosophy that once we exhaust what we can know about the cosmos, we eventually turn to the mystery that is ourselves. Socrates had it right: “It’s ridiculous, isn’t it, to strain every nerve to attain the utmost exactness and clarity about other things of little value and not to consider the most important things worthy of the greatest exactness?” (504d). In the older translations, Ignatius of Loyola used to provoke the precious, intelligent, and charming young Francis Xavier, at the University of Paris, with these plain words, unsettling to any college student, “what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose the life of his immortal soul?” Some modern translations have it, “what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his life?” If not losing our lives at any cost is our criterion, our principle, we are followers of Hobbes not of Christianity. There is something higher than the whole world. This is our tradition.

Let me conclude, in summary, with the following fifteen random propositions:

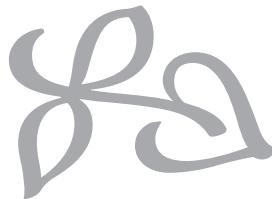
1) “Not all good Christians love philosophy” (Gilson). 2) ”The things of the greatest importance are worthy of the greatest exactitude” (Socrates). 3) “Since the beginning of the modern world, nobody’s system of philosophy has really corresponded with everyone’s sense of reality” (Chesterton). 4) “*Omnis autem res humanae ordinanter in finem beatitudinis, quae est salus aeterna*” (Aquinas). 5) “I enjoyed the luxury of our approach to London, that metropolis which we both loved so much, for the varied and high intellectual pleasures which it furnishes” (Boswell).

6) “It is the nature of the real lover of learning to struggle for *what is*” (Socrates). 7) “The flower is a vision because it is not only a vision” (Chesterton). 8) “*Nulla est homini causa philosophandi nisi ut beatus sit*” (Augustine). 9) “The point of life isn’t exhausted by things, the fullness of life, even the goodness of life” (Charles Taylor). 10) “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose the life of his immortal soul?” (Ignatius).

11) “Man would much rather will nothingness than not to will” (Nietzsche). 12) “The teacher not only looks at the truth of things, at the same time he looks at the faces of living men who desire to know this truth” (Pieper). 13) Schroeder tells a frustrated Lucy that he is “going to take the new recording of Brahms Fourth Symphony home and listen to it” (Schulz). 14) “We should put the poets aside and converse directly with each other, testing the truth and our own ideas” (Socrates). 15) “There is no thinker who is so unmistakably thinking about things, and not being misled by the indirect influence of words, as Thomas Aquinas” (Chesterton). ☩

## Footnotes

- 1 G. K. Chesterton, St. Thomas Aquinas (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Image, [1933], 1956), 146.
- 2 “All human things, therefore, are ordered to the end of happiness, which is eternal salvation, to which men are admitted or rejected, by the judgment of Christ, as is clear from Matthew 25: 21.”
- 3 Boswell’s Life of Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931), II, 3–4.
- 4 Étienne Gilson, The Spirit of Thomism (New York: P. J. Kennedy, 1964), 10.
- 5 Ibid., 11.
- 6 E. F. Schumacher, A Guide for the Perplexed (New York: Harper Colophon, 1977).
- 7 Charles Taylor, A Catholic Modernity, edited by James L. Heft (New York: Oxford, 1999), 20.
- 8 John Paul II, “Message to the International Thomistic Congress,” L’Osservatore Romano, English, October 15, 2003, 6.
- 9 G. K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Image, [1908] 1959), 33.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Taylor, ibid., 25.
- 12 “That which the intellect first conceives as that which is most known to it, and into which it resolves all conceptions, is being....”
- 13 Conversations with Eric Voegelin, edited by R. Eric O’Connor (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers, 1980), 16–17
- 14 Ibid., 33.
- 15 Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic, translated by M. Clark and A. J. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), 118.
- 16 Josef Pieper, The Silence of Saint Thomas (Chicago: Regnery, 1957), 23.
- 17 In Robert Short, The Gospel According to Peanuts (Richmond, VA.: John Knox Press, 1965), 26
- 18 Chesterton, ibid., 183–84.



# When You Teach in a Public School

by Cecilia Raine

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For the past few decades, cognitive psychology and its implications for education has been the theoretical paradigm dominating university Schools of Education across the nation. Under this paradigm fall scientific notions of how the brain works, and how it processes information which leads to knowledge, a separate warehouse, if you will, of the information the brain has processed. "Schemata" is the cognitive term. Throughout the ages, from ancient times in fact, the human brain, as a physical phenomenon, has been studied regarding its processes and representations; or the "how's", rather than the "why's" of human thought and behavior. The "why's" are taken up by larger concerns; those which posit reasons for existence itself; those which pursue entrance into worlds beyond matter and beyond the human brain-as-matter. Metaphysics, Ontology, and Theology are those fields. At one time, our nation's public schools addressed those philosophical and theological concerns. Not today however. Contemporary education has taken another theological position, which is that any mention, image or expression of God is best evicted from the increasingly diverse public school classroom, where the discard of personal religious backgrounds is assumed to be the rational prelude to an "unbiased" education. I say this is a theological position since it posits that God has no relevancy in the development of a student's mind. This theological position is called secularism.

The process concerning the "how's" however, deserves our attention as well. Cognitive psychology, with its exacting empirical findings, is worthy of close examination.

Early cognitive research stressed memory, thinking and problem-solving processes and their application to instruction. The emergence of the computer provided the credible metaphor for modeling and exploring human cognitive processes. More recently,

variables such as memory and thought have expanded to include the motivational and belief systems of learners. Questions concerning learners' self-efficacy and their own intelligence and abilities began to emerge, resulting in what today can be called cognitive motivational theory. Various cognitive motivational models have been developed, models that focus on human agency, emotions, goals and concepts of the autonomous self. And I think it is quite possible to conjecture that within these motivational components we can locate spiritual and religious origins, or at the very least, correspondences that may be useful in supplementing and supporting their activation in achievement contexts. I am going to try to illuminate two of the most important of these concepts, namely human agency and self-concept, which share an essential position in both motivational theory and spiritual belief systems which are representative in mainstream American public schools. By doing so, I hope to give some direction to teachers and motivational practitioners who wish to establish a cultural continuity in their classrooms, by nuancing or engaging the culturally potent contingent of religious belief, without violating erroneous notions concerning the "wall of separation" that so plagues our public schools. But first, a good working definition of religion and spirituality is called for.

Modern definitions of spirituality are increasingly co-mingled with traditional concepts of religion. This is influenced in part by societal trends for religious expression that are self-defined, and circumscribed by dogmatic norms, and also by avant garde developments in New Age sects, which differ from traditional conceptions of religion in so far as they are lacking an *a priori* reference point. These are often humanistic spiritualities, characterized by a diversity of numinous and phenomenological experiences. They are often dominated by magical thinking, aimed at personal protection and survival, or finding god-like presences within oneself. Historically however, the word *spirituality* is taken from the Latin root *spiritus*, which means breath or life, and the Latin word *spiritu-lis* designates a person who is "of the spirit." In the Hebraic Old Testament the word is *ruach* and in the

Greek New Testament it is *pneuma*. Across languages, these terms are typically referred to in the context of religion and they are still both experienced and expressed by many people through conventional religious understanding. The Latin root *religio*, from which the word *religion* derives, signifies a connection between humanity and a greater-than-human power and a method by which such a connection is established. In such a context religion and spirituality overlap and complement each other. This type of religious spirituality posits a transcendent, divine, sacred Being or ultimate Truth to whom devotion is rendered, a notion of the self as anchored in the sacred, and endowed thus with unique dignity, along with the necessary attributes of free will and volition, and a potential for numerous virtues which serve as vehicles for emotional control, righteous acts, and most of all, the attainment of divine benefits after earthly life. Using this definition, both religion and spirituality involve a personal search for the sacred, one that includes subjective feelings, thoughts, behaviors, as well as perhaps a prescription of rituals that facilitate the search, and finally, an interconnected faith community that supports it. This type of religion has often been referred to as "mature," in that it is rational, thoughtful and willing to debate issues such as truth, love, evil and goodness; values which are presupposed to have universal significance. These criteria also recognize those religious and spiritual expressions which have previously been outside the Eurocentric perspective, namely, Asian fabrics where although the activity of worship yields to notions of contemplation and insubstantiality, similar values may work in consort with affective and cognitive domains as well.

**Human Agency:** Motivation theorists often attribute divergent levels of achievement and successful learning to learners' efforts, rather than to external forces. They point to the assignment of attributions and the assumption of personal control over learning processes as fundamentals in motivation and learner expectancy for success. They have developed several models wherein human agency is the crucial component and wherein commitment and active choice to pursue a goal precedes an on-going, self-determining amount of effort to sustain the goal commitment. Self-determination theory is another model where human agency is highlighted. Here, the term

"autonomy" refers to the experience of initiative in one's own behavior, facilitated when learners are not coercively controlled and when choices are available when possible. All the cognitive motivational models assign strength of will as a situational variable, which can vary in quantity in the presence of other cognitive stressors. Research points to personal agency as a meta-assessment of one's self efficacy and control. In lay vernacular, it is called volition; in religious theoretical frameworks, it is often called free will.

In mainstream religious traditions, particularly those which fall into the Judeo-Christian category, free will is a concept which raises a human being to a dignity above the rest of creation and gives him his moral nature. Throughout the entire history of philosophy, thinkers of multifarious and divergent creeds such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant and Hegel, have upheld the notion that the human will is a central fact of existence. The will, rather than the intellect, is at the heart of a human being, whose core is *agency*, in the form of responsibility to do good as a response to the will of God. It is especially in regard to free will or a capacity for free choice that religion has in the past prescinded from psychology in which notions of free will were "controversial" and often given dubious and obscure expression. In conventional religious traditions, freedom of the will means that a human being can, and often does, make conscious, deliberate choices among several possible avenues of action that invite a choice. It means that the will has an element of choice; it can select or reject certain thoughts, words, actions or omissions. Often the choices are made at the point of sever self-sacrifice.

It can be said that the power and pervasiveness of this concept as a religious value, may cooperate harmoniously, if not strengthen and solidify the notion of human agency in motivational enterprises; that in initiations and efforts to change important aspects of one's academic life, a high exercise of human agency plays a significant role and may be buttressed by the spiritual and religious counter-supports of "will."

**Concepts of Self:** In research concerning achievement motivation, concepts of the self may be either negatively or positively connected with success in learning. The findings show that in students who are performance driven, there is a heavy if not excessive involvement of the ego, in which the concept of self is

largely internalized from the reactions and opinions of others. In these students, self-concepts are defined as, in part, appraisals and evaluations of one's being and attributes, and it is these evaluations that constitute self-esteem. The self is examined as an object. Such students regularly appraise themselves, compare themselves to others, and struggle to evade threats against a positive view of themselves. Contrarily, in self-determination theories, the self is viewed, not as a concept or object of evaluation, but as a process of assimilation and integration, a dynamic and inherent tendency, bringing meaning and coherence to life. In this perspective, when questions arise regarding self-worth or when self esteem is a manifest concern, it is psychologically problematic. Optimal health is more likely when self-esteem is not a concern because the worth of the self is not an issue. This definition of the self bears a clear correspondence to the self transformed by spiritual and religious goals. When students focus on mastering a subject rather than on comparing their performance to others or competing with them, they are said to have achieved an autonomy of self reflected in self-determination theories of motivation.

Mainstream religions foster and promote a teaching of the human self that is internalized by believers and shapes their lives and choices in substantive ways. The human person is seen as something far more than a mere mechanism which responds to stimuli; he is seen as being endowed by a Creator with a gift which makes him different in kind from, and greater in degree than, the lower forms of life. This gift or endowment is thought to be an immortal soul. In this way the self has been raised, by virtue of a Creator who is loving, to deem itself worthy, and so in spite of flaws, weaknesses and the darkness of ignorance, it can rise to a level of acceptance and peace. The "ego" in the genuinely religious student, is already healed. Influence, beauty, wealth, great intellectual ability, are not areas of psychological frustration, but those of security, because such students are reminded of their importance in the eyes of a greater Being; they know they are in possession of an immortal soul which shares that Being's life within them. While on a natural psychological level we can try to impart such confidence and self-valuing in order to motivate and encourage our students, students of a religious orientation already have this kind of confidence. It is hidden in the student as a matter of grace, or the operation of God within the soul.

Can teachers in public schools provide this sense of worth to students who do not come from some sort of faith system? To an extent it is possible. The maladjustment, fear, and insecurities oftentimes present in children who have no spiritual support from religious faith, can indeed be helped by cognitive motivational theories, in that educators are, or should be aware of their vocations as people who are called to draw forth the latent powers of their students; to help and facilitate them to advance in their goals of academic achievement and developmental steps towards maturity. However, the highly motivational nature of religion and spirituality render a greater credence for success.

**T**he criteria discussed above suggest that education is impoverished when it excludes such crucial aspects in human functioning as those derived from religious and spiritual belief systems. These inherent characteristics in mainstream religious beliefs, so common and of such importance to large numbers of families, should make their consideration of vital importance to teachers in public schools, especially those teachers who are religious themselves, since they are an enormously fertile source of insight favorable to cognitive models of motivation.

As the cultural fabric of American public school classrooms is changing, there is greater need to create culturally relevant pedagogies for specific population groups, particularly the Hispanic and Korean students for whom Christianity plays a vital role, in order to support school achievement. Religion is a crucial cultural component, and it is my hope that teachers will become motivational practitioners and explore ways to devise specifications concerning the relation of religious culture and achievement, which they can utilize for students who need help the most. They can encourage their students to forge those values nourished by spiritual and religious traditions into those which are motivational for achievement. Confidence in the self and rigorous exercise of the will or "human agency" are two such values. They are significant points of connection to tap into for motivational purposes; they are also positive concepts that provide a religious lens through which teachers may analyze their classroom populations, and thus create academic environments which further the opportunities to encourage and motivate their students. ☩

# The Grammar Wars... Which Side Should Catholic Schools Be On?

by Cecilia Raine

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**D**uring the past two decades, Catholic schools, as microcosms of the larger pedagogical universe, have seen a rise in their numbers of multicultural students, and there has been growing disagreement and controversy in the field of English and Composition regarding the nature and sometimes the very existence of grammatical “error.” This debate has become increasingly heated and oftentimes ideological over the role of explicit grammar instruction as a classroom intervention to aid in written accuracy. By “explicit” I mean the traditional classification scheme still found though often ignored, in most textbooks and anthologies for describing relationships and functions of words in sentences: parts of speech, subject and predicate phrases, and types of sentences. For the continuation of my discussion, I will use the term Standard Written English, or SWE to refer to this traditional, explicit type of grammar and its instruction.

Response to deviations from SWE has become an inescapably divisive issue for the teacher of English and Writing. Up until the 1970’s, Catholic pedagogy mirrored the dominant theories which were influenced by behavioral psychology and structural linguistics. A focus on accuracy, the correction of errors and the inculcation of grammatical rules were major components in writing instruction. However, in the 1970’s there occurred a major paradigm shift in which Composition practitioners and theorists began to focus on the *process* of writing, viewing language as an organic behavior where the *given-ness* of grammar, how it is actually used in written discourse should take precedence over its inner logic. The focus

also shifted to writers themselves, particularly those from immigrant families, and the importance of self-expression and building fluency as opposed to grammatical accuracy and competence in the function and relationship of words in sentences. Two opposing camps developed, and have evolved into a highly contentious conflict in pedagogical theory. One side asks the question: *why wouldn’t learning be facilitated if students are offered a vocabulary for and understanding of a larger classification scheme; why wouldn’t such a scheme be beneficial in building syntactic maturity and writing styles?* On the other side, the question is posed: *do the rules, definitions, hierarchies and structures of SWE really improve the writing process, or do they violate linguistic behavior by interfering with the capacity towards real communicative competence in human discourse?* A deeper examination of these surface arguments however, gives rise to more fundamental questions, questions which are as old as antiquity and whose roots are located in centuries of philosophical assumptions as to the nature of what we know and how we know it, and about which epistemological and metaphysical studies have always concerned themselves. Indeed, ancient philosophy, as far back as the second century, viewed language in light of a detailed structure of all things, and as a manifestation of a divine reason. In his historical research regarding grammar, David Blank uncovered an uncanny similarity between the arguments proposed by the theoretical Stoics, versus the Alexandrians, with the contemporary positions argued today:

...the main bone of contention, between the two schools, is a controversy over the question whether ‘analogy’ and adherence to codifiable rules prevail in language...as the Alexandrians are said to have argued, or whether the prominent characteristic of language is ‘anomaly,’ ordinary usage being the only norm...As to the nature of the controversy, the immediate tendency was to take the two positions as absolutes, as polar opposites: the anomolists held that language observed no rules, and the analogists demanded total adherence to rule.<sup>1</sup>

These Greek theorists were as interested as we are today, in the epistemological status of linguistic observations and rules. The “technicians” or grammarian’s side was arguing for “The rationalistic claim that analogy was a real principle of regularity manifest in language and capable of serving as the basis of scientific knowledge of and inference about language” and that analogy’s role is “as a tool in establishing what is correct in language.”<sup>2</sup> The anomolist’s claim however, that reason and rules play no part in the correctness of language and that there are no *a priori* standards of correctness still lingered in opposition. The terms of reference changed however. The analogists became *rationalists*, and the term took on more than just a philosophical connection to grammar but an epistemological world view, which held that all observations must be judged with reference to theory if a person is to have knowledge of them. Things are not just as they seem to be, since reality involves imperceptible, theoretical entities, and they may even be radically different from the way they seem. The anomolists on the other hand, became known as *empiricists*, and they held that all knowledge consisted in experience of phenomena and that all claims to a more profound knowledge based on theoretical considerations were untenable. It fell to the famed Greek grammarian, Appolonius Dyscolus, who lived during the first half of the second century, to reconcile the two claims, which he did somewhat, but not without severely diminishing the empirical view. In his controversial and widely read *Syntax*, he showed that it was not necessary to abandon the concerns of a philosophically reflective approach to language in favor of a technical path to grammar:

Appolonius...took a strong stand on the inherent, natural orderliness of grammar. In contrast to an empirical tendency to order only observations of grammatical usage into some kind of body of knowledge, Appolonius claimed that grammatical phenomena themselves participated in an objective, natural system of rules. As his explanation of the order of the parts of speech shows, Appolonius believed that this system of rules was valid because of its dependence on *philosophical* or *rational* truths, and that the system could be approached through these truths. Appolonius claimed further that it was only through an understanding of the rules of grammar that an adequate description of language could be attained.<sup>3</sup>

These questions today move along a similar divide as that which differentiated the empiricist and rationalist positions of the second century. Some theorists believe that language is constantly evolving and therefore fluid, making all usage relative and determined by the user. This is a profoundly metaphysical notion regarding the nature of existence itself, and its derivations are clear: if all is in a state of flux, then there can be nothing which is permanent. Motion, alteration, coming to be, passing away, are placed in sharp contrast to permanent rest, stability, fixity, immutability. Everything which exists is subject to change. According to this view there is nothing transempirical; no Alpha, no *a priori*, no transcendental. Language is not excluded from this *process*. Thus, any notions of norms and standards stand disparagingly close to the implausible and the dispensible, if not the impractical and useless. By now, Catholics should know what side they need to be on. We know we are transcended, and we know by whom. We know who our “*a priori*” is, and we know He had a Son who died for us, so that the “truth” of eternal life is ours, forever, without changing. That, of course provides a theological answer to this theory, but the philosophical response is quintessentially Aristotelian, buttressed by a long history of scholarly Catholic thought: Reality is objective; it does not depend upon a human mind to know it. Yes, there is change going on, but in all of it there is an enduring subject, an enduring *something* which undergoes the process, which is the *subject* of change. That something endures or goes on without changing, and so *endurance* as well as change is possible. When that constancy fails we no longer have the same *something*, but the origin of something entirely new.

A standard written English has *endured*. The rules have served clarity and precision. They have served functions of courtesy and respect. They have served the lofty aspiration of inclusion in a collective community, mobility among other dialects aside. They are not arbitrary and dispensible, but are ethical in a profound sense.

Think of the sentence: “People who eat that kind of mushroom often die.” Do you stand a good chance of dying if you eat that mushroom often, or might you die the very first time you eat it? As a community, we have a vested interest in excluding

this type of misplaced modifier from acceptable usage.<sup>4</sup> And so a standard English is charitable. It serves values which are universally Christian.

If learning is a good and practice a cognitive variable, then grammar is that practice. It is the language which enables us to talk about language. It is not unidimensional, but embodies the three dimensions of morphosyntax (form), semantics (meaning), and pragmatics (use). These are interdependent components; a change in one results in a change in another, and so SWE grammar is not meaningless and arbitrary; not simply a static system of rules, but a *rational*, dynamic system comprised of structures which *endure*, in spite of various changes in its utilization brought about by differing dialects and fashions in words.

I think the above arguments make a reasonable if not compelling case for revisiting the issue of instruction in standard English grammar in all

our Catholic schools. Research findings are shifting in its favor, and though not unequivocal, they provide new empirical evidence, apart from the values argued here, concerning its efficacy. Considering today's multicultural environment with its odd twists in ethnic expressions, a standard English grammar beckons like a courteous mentor; a signpost offering direction and arrival, concepts which light like torches the linguistic paths of so many different peoples, all gathered together in the pursuit of a commonality so essential, so universal, and so longed for: to communicate and be understood.



1 Blank, David. *Ancient Philosophy and Grammar* (New York: Touchstone Publishing, 1982), p.1

2 Ibid p.13

3 Ibid. p 51

4 Wallace, David Foster, "Tense Present Democracy, English and the Wars over Usage," in *Harpers Magazine*. (2001, p 41-58.)

## An Open Letter to the Open Minded

by Eugene Diamond, M.D.

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**E**very abortion decision involves a conflict of values. The rights of the developing unborn child are in conflict with the rights of the pregnant woman. Every physician who cares for pregnant women is caring for two patients - the pregnant woman herself and the unborn child. The pregnant woman is frequently called upon to act in a way that is primarily oriented toward the welfare of her unborn child. She may be asked to optimize her diet, abstain from smoking or drink alcohol in moderation for the purpose of protecting her fetus. She may even be called upon to submit to procedures such as intrauterine transfusion or various fetal surgical measures to improve the condition of the infant without producing any direct benefit to herself. There is some disagreement about the ethical obligations of the

mother in each instance but few would claim that a mother may act with callous disregard for the welfare of the fetus. No one would claim for example, that a woman is free to take Thalidomide during the first trimester of pregnancy.

The long tradition of legal constraints against the practice of abortion in the United States was derivative of English common law, operative in colonial times during the framing of the Constitution and codified into laws of every state for over a century. This tradition was interrupted in 1973 by the Supreme Court in its Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton decisions. The legalization of abortion was based on a constitutional right to privacy but it was contingent on a declaration by the Court that the pre-viable fetus lacked personhood. It should be emphasized that the Court was discussing "personhood" in the legal sense of standing before the Court. It was not considering personhood in a broader philosophical or metaphysical sense and, in fact, specifically prescinded

from a decision as to when life begins.

The existence of biologically independent life in the unborn from the time of conception is supported by the following observations:

- a. Human life can be made to begin under in-vitro conditions by the fertilization of an ovum by sperm.
- b. The zygote and embryo thus produced are independently viable and not “part-of” the Petri dish or the uterus into which it will be eventually implanted.
- c. Criteria necessary for the definition of “life” rather than “death” (e.g. heartbeat, electroencephalographic activity) are present early in the first trimester.

The unborn child has a unique dependency on its mother but it will continue to be totally dependent on others long after it is born.

The existence of life is intrinsic and demonstrable. The existence of “personhood” is extrinsic and conferred by consensus, at times, arbitrarily (the Supreme Court, for example, in the Dred Scot decision declared black slaves to be non-persons or chattel for purposes of the law). The Harvard Conference on Abortion, in both its ethical and medical committees concluded unanimously that life begins at fertilization. Expert testimony before the East Committee in the Senate regarding the beginning of life fell into two categories. 1.) Life begins at conception (majority view) or 2.) When life begins is uncertain (minority view).

If we conclude that when life begins is uncertain, we have a serious quandary. If we conclude that a human life of a human person does not exist until some arbitrary state of life after conception (quicken-

ing, nervous system development, viability, or birth) we may feel free to carry out lethal measures against preborn individuals against whom we have passed this judgment. If we are incorrect, there is no remedy for the individual who has thus suffered a wrongful death. If, on the other hand, we extend protection to all stages in the human continuum, we avoid the wrongful death without causing any injustice to the unborn individual in the process. It has been customary in other contexts in the American experience to act in favor of life where the existence of life is uncertain. When there is a coal mine cave-in, for example, we do not board up the shaft but rather we dig for survivors. In almost every instance we continue to dig even when we are morally convinced that the oxygen supply has been long exhausted. It would seem reasonable to act similarly with regard to the unborn child. That is, presume that he qualifies for protection unless and until we can be certain that he is *not* a live human person.

Recently, in San Francisco, an unborn child was partially removed from the womb in order to have a renal tract obstruction repaired. After the surgery, it was replaced in the womb to continue the pregnancy. Was it a person while out of the womb and then a non-person again when it was replaced inside? Or, since the procedure involves the removal of the lower half of the body, did he achieve personhood for his buttocks but not for his brain? These are the scientific anomalies of the Supreme Court’s decision. No wonder Justice Sandra Day O’Connor has said that Roe v. Wade is on a collision course with itself. ♦



***Speak, Lord, I am Listening: A Rosary Book***, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Christine Haapala, Illustrated by Gus Muller, Suffering Servant Scriptorium, 2004. pp. vi+57, \$12.00. ISBN 0-9703996-7-7.

Reviewed by David Paul Deavel

**O**f the making of many devotional books there is no end. And given the addition of the luminous mysteries of the rosary by Pope John Paul, there will assuredly be no end to new editions of old devotional books. This second edition of Christine Haapala and Gus Muller's rosary handbook includes the luminous mysteries as well as a study and discussion guide that includes, *inter alia*, information about where the rosary mysteries are to be found in the Bible, questions about the mysteries themselves and about Gus Muller's watercolor illustrations, and particular virtues, cardinal and theological, to imitate. It also has a nice question and answer section regarding how and why the rosary is prayed as well as a synopsis of the history of its development. Finally, since it is a scriptural rosary book, it includes a list of the books of the Bible. All these make it a good introduction to the rosary for children.

For each mystery there are at least ten biblical texts printed over a two-spread (the pages are 9" by 11"—suitable for use with a good-sized group of children who will want to see the pictures) thus making it possible to pray the mysteries in the clausular fashion. The biblical texts are well chosen, though I am personally not a fan of Muller's watercolor drawings. The impressionistic splashes of color remind me all too much of the vague devotional illustrations and stained-glass windows of the seventies and eighties. They don't resemble icons and they don't have much realism to them either. I can't imagine a group of actual children actually having their spiritual imaginations enkindled by

them. But then again, little kids are funny and, not having experienced the seventies and eighties, perhaps not so jaded. *De gustibus non disputandum*, I suppose. My tastes notwithstanding, the Catholic Bestseller List had the book in the number five spot as of September, 2004. Whether I like the pictures or not, that's probably not a bad thing.

***Prophets and Apostles*** (a volume in the *Come and See* Catholic Bible Study Series), Joseph Ponessa and Laurie Watson, Manhardt Emmaus Road Publishing, 2004, pp. 208, \$19.95. ISBN 1-931018-19-7.

Reviewed by David Paul Deavel

**E**mmaus Road Publishing's "Come and See" series of Bible study books (not to be confused with Sheed & Ward's "Come and See" series of introductory volumes on the Catholic faith edited by James Martin, S.J. and Jeremy Langford) is designed to provide introductory material as well as a plan for Catholics encountering the Scriptures for the first time or otherwise. *Prophets and Apostles* is a broad course of studies aimed at seeing some of the more noteworthy figures of both Old and New Testaments, concentrating both on their characters and their messages. Fr. Ponessa and Dr. Manhardt write engagingly and with an eye toward historical and theological issues that crop up. They take on more familiar figures like Jonah, Paul (studying Galatians), and James as well as the more obscure Old Testament figures like Haggai, Habakkuk, Baruch, and Zephaniah. They relate the figures to their period of secular history as well as their position in sacred history. They also do well at helping the reader get to the main point of the passages being pondered and helping them avoid idiosyncratic ideas about the text. In the study on Galatians they ask the readers to count the number of times

the word "son" appears in Gal. 4:4-7. They then answer, "The number is six," adding for good measure, "There is nothing symbolic about this number, it is just a highly frequent occurrence in these short verses" (57).

A nice feature of this study is that it also incorporates the teaching of the Church by including references to and questions about the Catechism. These references are nicely placed, for instance references to the Church's teaching on angels in the study on Jude (143). Also included are traditional Catholic prayers that fit in with certain lessons (again, in the study of Jude is a page on the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel).

Perhaps what is best about these books is the advice about how to run a Bible study given in the introduction. Points of common sense like having a structure at all, having a leader who is prepared to lead, not letting the talkative people dominate the discussion, and beginning and ending with prayer—and on time!—are often nevertheless forgotten in many Bible studies, leaving people to wonder if such an activity is worth it at all. Form may not be everything, but in the case of an activity like Scriptural study, it is a substantial beginning. This volume excels in both its content and its recommendations as to form. Warmly recommended.

***The Science Before Science: A Guide to Thinking in the 21st Century***, Anthony Rizzi. Baton Rouge: IAP Press, 2004. xxx + 390 pp. Cloth, \$24.25; Paper, \$16.00

Reviewed by Jude P. Dougherty, Emeritus, The Catholic University of America

**P**erhaps one of the most neglected fields of philosophy is the philosophy of nature, "physics" in Aristotle's sense. In the *Science Before Science*, Anthony Rizzi, a well-established theoretical physicist, examines the underlying assumptions

of his discipline. Trained in physics without any background in philosophy, he found himself dissatisfied with contemporary accounts of science that reduced it to mere description and prediction. Reflecting on the structure of scientific explanation, he was quickly led to discussions of nature, causality, and truth. Taking Aristotle and Aquinas as mentors in the difficult terrain of metaphysics and epistemology, he discovered with awe the larger philosophical landscape that placed his professional endeavor in a new perspective. From discussions of nature, knowledge, and God he moves to discussions of evolution, quantum mechanics, Bell's theorem, and the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen paradox. Rizzi brings to every topic a freshness denied the seasoned philosopher. He remains a physicist, but one who has discovered the insights provided by a realistic metaphysics. The book may be understood as a brief for wisdom in the Thomistic sense. It ends with an examination of evidence for the existence of God and the moral import of a teleological conception of nature.

Historical excursions lead to discussions of medieval conceptions of inertia, Galileo's contribution to astronomy, Newton's mechanics, the origin of the "big bang" theory, relativity, and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. In a critique of Hume and Kant, Rizzi finds particularly congenial Jacques Maritain's description and analysis of the empiriometric sciences. Although it can be misused, "modern science," writes Rizzi, "is the one place where one finds respect for truth, both by the public and among academics," yet it exists within a broader framework of knowledge that includes the metaphysical and the moral and as such is governed by insights not of its own making. In short, the scientist is humble before nature and human experience in all of its complexities.

Clearly *The Science Before Science*

is not written for the professional philosopher although it may be appreciated by anyone who has ever taught physics, chemistry, or mathematics to the principles presupposed by his chosen field of study, to situate his discipline in the wider framework of knowledge of nature and human nature, and to explore some of the implications thereof. As such it is a provocative book that could well be used as an introduction in any elementary science course. Given the clarity of its style, the book is accessible to advanced high school students as well as college majors.

***At the Interface: Theology and Virtual Reality***, Mary Timothy Prokes, FSE. Tucson, AZ: Fenestra Books, 2004. viii+181 pages.

*Reviewed by William E. May, Michael J. McGivney Professor of Moral Theology, John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at The Catholic University of America*

This is a fascinating and important book. In it Sister Timothy Prokes addresses virtual reality as a "sign of our times" and shows why it presents urgent issues for Catholic faith and theological study, focusing on the profound ramifications virtual reality has on basic truths of Catholic faith.

A brief opening chapter describes "virtual reality," defined by Michael Heim, a "virtual reality metaphysician," as "an event or entity that is real in effect but not in fact," and its seven levels: simulation, interaction, artificiality, immersion, telepresence, full-body immersion, and networked communication. Prokes' concern is not to question "the virtual" as a basic human experience, insofar as "virtual reality" (hereafter VR) is natural for human persons whose imaginations put them into contact with it. Her concern is with applications of VR that "distort or replace the human."

In subsequent chapters Prokes examines in depth and with great theological profundity how contemporary applications of VR relate to our understanding of the real body person, real presence, real food vs. virtual nourishment, freedom, truth, and sexuality, the supernatural. To illustrate the fascinating and profound theological significance of this book I will present Prokes' analyses of VR with respect to the following: the gift of imagination, the reality of the body, the meaning of "presence," the meaning of the supernatural.

**1. The gift of imagination.** Prokes thinks that this gift, which she calls "*the encounter point between the real and the virtual*," is being subverted and that imperceptibly, from childhood on, "viewers of electronic media are induced...to consider the living body *in its reality as a liability*, [in need of] a multitude of enhancements through products...available for the right price" (pp. 23-24). This concerns theology because understanding the lived body touches every aspect of a faith-based life.

**2. The reality of the body.** In the post-human world of VR the body is regarded merely as a biological substrate for the consciousness that is the basis of human identity. Indeed, for many today the living human body is merely "the original prosthesis that we all learn to manipulate" (pp. 45-46). Indeed, the world of VR presents us with a new *Docetism*.

**3. The meaning of "presence."** For Catholic theology "presence" has a meaning that "involves an actual, personal, relational being-there that has a positive or negative effect" (p. 58). Thus for Catholic faith we live in the "presence" of God, and "the words *Real Presence* succinctly express Catholic belief in the true, living, presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist," which in turn depends on the *Real Incarnation* of the Second Person of the Trinity (pp. 67-68). But in VR "presence"

has no real significance inasmuch as one's "subjectivity," as a practitioner of VR puts it, "is dispersed throughout the cybernetic circuit" (p. 59). But real human persons, as Prokes reminds us, are unitary beings composed of body and soul, and spiritual realities are perceived through physical signs and symbols and their presence. As John Paul II says, although Prokes does not here refer to him, the body reveals the person and is indeed the "sacrament" of the person. But this sacramental significance of bodily reality and the real presence of the incarnate Word in the Eucharist are lost in the world of VR.

#### *4. The meaning of the supernatural.*

Prokes notes that leading practitioners of VR such as Frank Tipler, Ray Kurzweil, and others specifically relate developments in the cyber-world of VR to theological matters, opening up issues for dialogue (p. 146). They deny that there is any supernatural so that "the very existence of the supernatural...is at issue in the current interplay between the real and the virtual" (p. 148). Prokes then notes the vast difference between a divine *gift* and human *acquisition*. The first is gratuitously and freely given, bestowed person to person, cannot be demanded or earned, expresses love and friendship, etc., whereas the latter requires human effort and planning, can be earned and demanded, and usually lacks the element of surprise, etc. (p. 150).

Prokes goes on to write brilliantly about *gift* as the first category of being. The one true God is a communion of three Persons whose "identity is that of *relation*, of Person-Gift poured out to each of the other Divine Persons and totally receptive of them. All created reality has vestiges of the Trinity in some way, but human persons bear the Trinitarian image and likeness as their fundamental identity." She then adds: "That is why, when there is only a simulation of *gift*, it is destructive of

persons and relationships" (155). But this is precisely what happens in the world of VR.

I have merely given a few examples of the significance and depth of Prokes' work. It is a magnificent defense of the reality of the human person as a *bodily being*, of the sacramental principle of Catholic faith, and the gratuitousness of God's gift of himself to us. It is likewise a wonderful indictment of the docetic dualism so characteristic of our culture and so central to the world of VR. When God created man, he did not make a "consciousness" to which he then added a body as a privileged kind of instrument; rather when he created man, "male and female he created him," a being of flesh and blood and sexually differentiated. Moreover, when the Eternal Word became man, the Incarnate Word, he became living flesh (*ho logos sarx egeneto*). For the metaphysicians of VR the human person is not a bodily being but a consciousness using a body as a prosthesis. This understanding of the human person is, as John Paul II made clear in *Evangelium vitae*, at the heart of the "culture of death."

Prokes has given us an exceptionally well-written, thoughtful and thought-provoking work of great theological depth that merits careful attention.

**Alexander Hamilton**, R. Chernow, R. NY: Penguin Press. 375 Hudson Street, 10014. 2004. Pp. 732. BP. \$35.00.

*Review by Rev. Michael P. Orsi, Research Fellow for Law and Religion, Ave Maria School of Law, Ann Arbor, MI.*

"**I**f Washington was the father of the country and Madison the father of The Constitution, then Alexander Hamilton must surely be the father of American Government." So writes historian Ron Chernow in

his monumental new book, *Alexander Hamilton*. This beautifully written and thoroughly engrossing biography is a fit tribute to the impoverished and orphaned immigrant of dubious paternity on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. Chernow describes how Hamilton de facto fashioned our federal system of government, applied to it capitalist principles that have made us an economic super-power, and helped set the stage for our two-party system. In the course of the saga, Chernow reveals the clashing of the powerful personalities of the founding fathers. Aside from Washington, a friend of Hamilton who remains for the most part unscathed, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe as well as Hamilton himself are revealed to be less than the paragons of virtue portrayed in much of our sanitized accounts of the revolutionary parsonages. Nevertheless, in spite of human weaknesses, this extraordinary conglomeration of talent and personal prejudice was uniquely suited for nation building. For the fixated and pugnacious Hamilton, the revolutionary war and the need to unite the 13 colonies provided an opportunity to establish himself as a person of honor and to effectuate his vision of a strong central government.

Hamilton's life reads in many ways like a morality play. His early life was filled with obstacles that for a lesser person would have been insurmountable, including illegitimacy. Throughout the book, the haunting specter of his illegitimacy is seen by Chernow as the underlying psychological cause for the overweening pride that caused him to make some poor choices and ultimately led to the fatal duel with Aaron Burr. His voracious reading habits and gift for writing enabled him to become one of America's foremost political writers and newspaper polemicists. He wrote the bulk of the Federalist Papers, which convincingly argued for

the ratification of the Constitution and provided the groundwork for a strong federal government. Hamilton was an ardent abolitionist and a firm believer in meritocracy. Chernow portrays him as a devoted family man who nevertheless had an extramarital affair which led to blackmail and public exposure. The incident haunted him for the remainder of his career. Finally, he was a religious man who, as he lay dying, begged for and received Holy Communion from the Episcopal Bishop of New York.

As Washington's trusted aide during the Revolution and, later, as his most influential advisor and Treasury Secretary, Hamilton used his influence to put forth an interpretation of the Constitution which relied on its implied powers. His argument turned on the belief that if the end was there, the means to achieve it were also there. This enabled him to build a sound federal government with a central bank, a tax system, customs service, a navy and the Coast Guard. Hamilton's deal with Jefferson to allow the nation's capital to be moved to Washington, D. C., in exchange for the right of the federal government to assume the debt of the states for the late war proved to be the glue that bonded the 13 states. It was a deal that Jefferson would long rue because it allowed the federal government to become stronger than he had envisioned. Ironically, it was also Hamilton's vision of a strong executive branch and federal powers which later enabled Jefferson to make the Louisiana Purchase.

Hamilton was a lawyer by trade and much in demand in New York State where he lived and practiced. He left an indelible mark on American jurisprudence. He was an early proponent of judicial review – a notion that high courts had the right to scrutinize laws and declare them void. Fellow Federalist John C. Marshall, who became Chief Justice of the

Supreme Court, no doubt read the Federalist Papers and had this idea in mind when deciding *Marbury v. Madison*. Hamilton was also instrumental in changing the criteria for libel. In an 1803 New York case, he showed how truth and intent were inevitably linked. He held that if a piece of writing had good intent it could not be considered libelous. This criteria is still held today in American courts.

Chernow obviously likes his subject and sees him as a man of principle, though oftentimes stubborn to the point of hurting himself. Chernow does justice to Hamilton's family life, to his wife Eliza, and to their children. The final chapters dealing with the duel and his death shed further light on a maturing Hamilton. Yet, for Chernow the fight provoked by Burr and responded to by Hamilton is deemed superfluous except for political reasons which each believed would be a boon to his waning career.

Aside from George Washington, Hamilton's contribution to the founding of the United States of America is second to none. Every student of history, law and of human nature should read this book. Without Hamilton, the America we know today would not exist.

**Dostoevsky's Spiritual Art: The Burden of Vision**, George Panichas, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004. xx + 216 pp. \$24.95.

*Review by Jude P. Dougherty, The Catholic University of America*

**A**t a time when Europe seems determined to renounce its spiritual heritage, this is a welcome volume. Not only is Christianity under attack, but the classical tradition itself. Dostoevsky stands in sharp contrast to Voltaire and his descendants as well as to Comte and the positivists of Dostoevsky's time.

Panichas presents Dostoevsky

as a metaphysician whose ontology opens one to the transcendent. But more than that, he casts him in the mold of a Hebrew prophet, albeit one who is a Russian Orthodox Christian. Dostoevsky's imagination, Panichas tells us, finds its wellsprings in a realistic metaphysics, crowned by a distinctive theological witness. One does not have to be of like mind to appreciate Dostoevsky's insights, but there can never be any doubt with respect to their source.

The book opens with a chapter on Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment. Subsequent chapters explore successively The Idiot (1868), A Raw Youth (1875), and The Brothers Karamazov (1879–80). These chapters are more than literary studies. From the perspective of Panichas, the books are time-transcendent moral treatises. Dostoevsky does not preach, but with art shows concretely the effects of moral choice for good or evil. Throughout these powerful novels we have the recognition of evil—call it what you may—that there are laws which govern human behavior that cannot be violated with impunity.

The volume is aptly called Dostoevsky's Spiritual Art. It is the product of more than 20 years of Panichas's teaching and writing about Dostoevsky's oeuvre. In focusing upon the relationship between literature and religion the author recognizes that he is swimming against the current of contemporary liberalism that "resists any standards that make for moral centrality and spiritual tradition." To paraphrase Panichas, spiritual truths, moral attitudes and judgments, metaphysical premises, and religious beliefs are elements of life and art, but these are often casualties of modern empiricism and liberalism.

Panichas's final chapter, "A Critical Note," is well worth the price of the book. It is a treatise on the role of the critic vis-B-vis the art he is ex-

amining. "The critic's burden of judgment is as sacred as the artist's burden of vision. . . . This burden is moral in essence and function," Panichas insists. A critic cannot disregard the moral meaning of the written or spoken arts without implicitly denying what is of ultimate value to art. As Joyce Cary observed, "All novels are concerned from first to last with morality," Panichas is convinced that the critic "must recognize the spiritual dimension of human existence." In an age when empirical criteria regulate the theory and practice of criticism, the power of Dostoevsky's five great novels, with all their spiritual and religious meaning, is apt to be subordinated to technical or structural considerations, if considered at all. "Between the critical spirit and positivist empiricism. . . there is a clash of first principles."

One cannot put this book down without experiencing the desire to reread some of Dostoevsky's great novels. As Panichas makes clear, Crime and Punishment and the Brothers Karamazov are part of the Western literary canon.

**The Vatican-Israel Accords: Political, Legal, and Theological Contexts**, Edited by Marshall J. Breger, University of Notre Dame Press, 2004

Reviewed by Sister Paula Jean Miller,  
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Texas

While the prevailing image of Vatican State relations consists of courteous bows, gift exchanges, and photo opportunities, this collection offers a rare, intriguing glance behind the scenes into the visionary policy and hardball negotiations of Vatican diplomacy. *The Vatican-Israel Accords: Political, Legal, and Theological Contexts* is the proverbial stone that creates pervading rings in the ocean of life and politics. While this collection of essays begins with

an analysis of the Fundamental Agreement from the vantage points of Israel and the Vatican, it soon delves into the historic and contemporary tensions that exist among the world's three monotheistic religions. Articles contributed by Jews and by Catholics research the historical, psychological, and political factors that motivated the determined struggle for an Agreement and the exchange of ambassadors, as well as the obstacles, crisis points, and creative alternatives developed to circumambulate situations of impasse. The text compares this unique Agreement with concordats and conventions of the past, as well as with the Basic Agreement made with the PLO.

The signing of the Fundamental Agreement by the State of Israel and the Holy See on December 30, 1993 constituted a watershed in Catholic-Jewish relations. This agreement was followed in 1997 by a document referred to as *The Legal Personality Agreement*, which implements Article 3.3 of the Fundamental Agreement and gives the Catholic Church long desired legal status in Israeli courts. An agreement to implement Article 10.2 was due in 1996 but is still in negotiation. At stake are rules for protecting Church property, the restitution of ecclesiastical properties, the fiscal status of the Church in Israel, and state budgetary participation in Church educational and charitable works. A final agreement to specify Article 12, dealing with issues such as spiritual assistance to persons in circumstances that restrict their freedom to move around, the issuance of residence permits to ecclesiastical and religious personnel, the review of educational materials regarding fair representation of Christianity and the Church, and the promotion of mutual respect as the foundation for dialog and equality is yet to be initiated.

Father David-Maria Jaeger, OFM, an Israeli Jew by birth who acts as legal advisor to the Vatican and the

Apostolic Nuncio to Israel, describes the Agreement as "a determined, visionary attempt by the sovereign authority of the Catholic Church to transform radically the relationship between the Church and society in the Middle East." Hence, this fundamental agreement has implications that extend far beyond these two small states: through it Pope John Paul II hopes to transform the current legal and social pattern of coexistence among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Middle East. Since the rule of the Ottoman Turks in 1516, the legal status of Christians in Muslim countries has been that of *dhimmi*, or a "people under protection" due to their obstinate persistence in unbelief. The government of Israel continued this legal arrangement after the foundation of the state in 1948. *The Legal Personality Agreement* sweeps aside this longstanding exclusion from society and establishes the basis for equality, not only in Israel, but, potentially for all countries that still operate according to the Ottoman code.

The fourth section of the book explores possible implications of the Agreement in international law, e.g., effects upon relations between Israel and the Vatican, freedom of or restrictions upon proselytism, perspectives on pilgrimage as a human right or simply as a privilege granted or restricted by the host country, and finally, the significance of the document for religious freedom and human rights in the quest for peace.

The final sections examine the real life of the Church in the Holy Land today. Ruth Lapidot explores freedom of religion and of conscience in Israel, a country that is complex in ethnic groups, languages, cultural and social traditions, and religions. Israel has a declaration of independence, but as yet no written constitution, only a Basic Law that guarantees human dignity and liberty, and the safeguarding of holy places. Though

constituted as a Jewish State, Jews themselves are strongly divided on the role of Judaism in life (marriage and divorce particularly) and government. Father Drew Christiansen surfaces the problems, conflicts, frustrations, and impediments for Christian Arab Communities trying to live their faith in Israel and the Occupied Territories, even after the signing and implementation of the Agreement. Life in the Holy Land is further complicated by the *Status Quo* relationships created under Ottoman rule and stringently adhered to by Latin and Greek Catholics, Armenian and Greek Orthodox alike. The final articles dwell on the evolution of Vatican diplomatic policy under John Paul II. Jack Bemporad attributes the success of John Paul II to his ability to accept and affirm a living Judaism, a Judaism that is bound to the land of Israel, not only as a land of refuge but as a place for the rebirth of Jewish life, as well as to his understanding of the emotional tie between the Jewish people and Jerusalem. In his first meeting with representatives of the Jewish community in March 1979, Pope John Paul II indicated the guiding principle for his Middle East diplomatic policy:

I intend to foster spiritual dialogue and to do everything in my power for the peace of that land which is holy for you as it is for us, with the hope that the city of Jerusalem will be effectively guaranteed as a center of harmony for the followers of the three great religions of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, for whom the city is a revered place of devotion. (349)

Silvio Ferrari sees the Agreement as delicately balancing two necessary goods in the Mediterranean Region. Vatican diplomacy must simultaneously achieve the changes necessary for peaceful co-existence among all Jews-Christians-Muslims in the Middle East, in the wake of wars and economic downturns and sustain the local Church in the face of Islamic Fundamentalist aggression. Ferrari

summarizes the significance of Vatican diplomacy during this papacy in a manner that highlights the importance of this volume:

it is the full translation, in the legal and political terms of the community of nations, of the affirmation that the Holy Land has a specific destiny in the history and geography of salvation as it represents the stable meeting point between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. (290)

**Reproductive Technologies: A Reader**, Thomas A. Shannon, Editor, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004. xii+145 pages. ISBN 0-7425-3151-1

*Review by Linda Showman*

The recently published *Reproductive Technologies: A Reader* is curiously categorized by the publisher as “religion/bioethics”—curious because there is no authentic religious discussion in any of the eleven short articles collected by Thomas Shannon for this volume from various medical and scientific journals and reports. The back-cover endorsements by professors of religion and bioethics at American Catholic universities compound the puzzle. Five of the pieces aim to provide statistical information about a range of topics related to Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART), and venture but little into ethical concerns. Five other pieces do make the foray into ethics but without a religious center. The eleventh piece is a sentimental poem entitled “Cloned Child”. It is difficult to reconcile the promotion of this book by Catholic teachers of religion and ethics when the relationship of the human person to his/her Creator is never mentioned. God is absent from the index and is mentioned in only one piece when quoting Roman Catholic Magisterial documents. The book is more aptly characterized as a secular review of the industry of ART with an overlay of pastoral and ethical concerns. It

includes methodology of data collection, presentations of investigations of specific health issues associated with the processes, morally inconclusive explorations of questions of parental rights, and cost and result oriented determinations of good or bad. The bases for many of the ethical conclusions are consensus, social good and the “good-life.” The inquiries encompass and often carefully dissect weighty matters, yet only glance off the concept of “right.” The book is one of a series of four which profess to provide student reading for “focus on specific topics that flesh out the ethical issues at the core of bioethics” (xii). Despite this claim, the absolute core moral question of reproductive technology is ignored along with God. The editorial hermeneutic assumes business-as-usual in the laboratory with no consideration of the issue of interference in and manipulation of the creation of a person.

The first selection, “Regulation of Assisted Reproductive Technologies in the United States” by David Adamson, is an objective report on the organizations and data collection techniques which aid in the implementation of standards for ART practitioners in the United States. It reviews government involvement, professional oversight, consumer concerns and legal actions. A primary ethical question presented is, “Is there fair and equitable access to ART in the United States and if not, what were the barriers to access?” (17). It concludes by discussing the hierarchy of interested groups and a call to ensure that all have “a meaningful role in its development” – the church is not included on the roster.

In “Progress We Can Be Proud Of: U.S. Trends in Assisted Reproduction over the First 20 Years” James P. Toner explores the expansion of in vitro fertilization (IVF) and the allied treatments of embryo cryopreservation, donor egg, GIFT, zygote intrafallopian transfer (ZIFT) and intracyto-

plasmic sperm injection (ICSI) in the U.S. since 1981. This article is strictly statistical, citing data collection methods and showing graphs of success rates of various clinical approaches.

“Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Infertility Treatment,” “Low and Very Low Birth Weight in Infants Conceived with Use of Assisted Reproductive Technology,” and “Pregnancy in the Sixth Decade of Life: Obstetric Outcomes in Women of Advanced Reproductive Age” are each a group study on the particular topic. As might be expected, great caution is advised in using ART with couples when either partner is infected with HIV. Also, as expected, birth rates tend to be low when ART is used, partially because the process results often in multiple births. The third piece deals with the success of ART with women who because of age are no longer capable of conceiving through sexual intercourse. The approach in these three items is statistical and informational.

It remains then to review the articles which purport to examine the ethics involved in ART. From a Christian religious perspective, there are really three essential problems germane to this collection. One, as previously mentioned, is that there is no concern with the morality of ART. None of the writers considers which techniques of assisted reproduction conform to the moral teaching of the church, which do not, and why. Two, the editorial hermeneutic assumes not only business-as-usual in the laboratory, but also a kind of “everyone knows” attitude when presenting an argument. Rhetoric by assumption contains no syllogism and lacks credibility. Related to this is the lack of definition of terms. There is an assumption of common knowledge about very difficult matters. The thinking is unsystematic and presumes facts not in evidence. Finally, the common knowledge and definitions

assumed are grounded in materiality. The undercurrent which appears to form the basis of conclusions is that of the “good life.” That which one ought to do is that which allows and promotes the flourishing of the individual. Several of the issues presented are serious and spring from genuine pastoral concern. Yet, material and temporal flourishing are implicit. The opinions expressed do not encompass holistic flourishing that includes the soul and the relationship of the human person to God.

Bonnie Steinbock’s piece entitled “Sex Selection: Not Obviously Wrong” exemplifies the “everyone-knows” attitude by beginning with the statement, “Let me start with the obvious. Sexism and sexual discrimination are bad things” (57). The presumptuousness of “obvious” is intellectual manipulation. Sexism is mentioned as a principle without a conclusive definition. So are “bad” and “sexual discrimination.” Though the author poses serious questions about this issue, because of the lack of specific grounding, they remain questions. In discussing methods of sex selection, including abortion, sperm sorting and preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), some aspects of all of them are found objectionable. Even when sourcing such organizations as the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), the conclusions are recommendations grounded in general thought rather than in certain moral principles. The other topics considered are attitudes toward gender and the social implications of sex selection.

“Reproductive Tourism as Moral Pluralism in Motion” by G. Pennings has a distressing basis for evaluating the travel that people do to evade their own local laws in order to achieve their dreams of producing a child. The travel is necessitated because of prohibitions against particular ART techniques in the jurisdiction in

which they live. Ignoring for a moment the issue of the morality of the proposed act, there are again gaps in logic and definition. According to Pennings, all this nonsense of traveling to another country could be avoided simply by not having any laws at all regarding ART. Or, if there must be laws, they should be based on safety and good (?) clinical practices. *Bioethics and Secular Humanism: The Search for a Common Morality* by H.T. Englehardt, Jr. (so much for a “religious” basis for this article) is quoted positively to justify “moral suspicion” toward laws which might impede the pursuit of the “good life” (103). Because of the plurality of morality that exists within society, it is argued that consensus is required to determine laws. Though no definition of morality is proffered, implicit in these prior assertions is that it has nothing to do with right and wrong in a universal sense. The stated goal of the “good life” begs the question, “What is the good life?” What, in fact, is good? The implied good life here is immediate, both materially and temporally. The Catholic Christian (religious) perspective of the “good life” and its relation to God is never considered, nor is the classic view of man’s inclination toward the good.

The article “What Are Families For? Getting to an Ethics of Reproductive Technology” by Thomas H. Murray seeks a higher good than procreative liberty and adult autonomy in approaching ART. He urges the contemplation of the central relationships in life, namely those between parents and children. From this reflection, the human person will come to understand the significance of these relationships for human flourishing. While in itself a good thing, it falls short as an adequate and complete basis for morality. There are still higher goods. Neither the concept of grace and its role in human “flourishing”, nor the promise of divinization of the human person are given mention. Though

he posits the notion of intellectual framework, he does not provide one (113). The intent of questioning procreative liberty as a basis for a moral ethic has the feel of earnest inquiry, but the argument is submitted more by intuition than sound philosophy. Unsubstantiated assumptions plant uneasiness in the reader's mind as, for instance, the statement "The most egregious defect of procreative liberty is its nearly complete disregard of the interests of children created through reproductive technologies" (114). This important point merits corroboration. However, the author cites no studies or statistics on the attitudes of prospective ART clients. (Further, there is no consideration that the most egregious defect of the idea of procreative liberty is that it exists at all, that human beings are meant to work within God's plan.) Later he states that probably a robust majority of Americans support abortion—again no substantiation—and uses that opinion to hazard the suggestion that the populace yet has qualms about the commercialization of reproduction. A deeper dig with documentation into whence these qualms could have led to moral principles, even natural law. The author advocates the consideration of the "moral significance and interests of the children created through reproductive technologies" (116). What exactly is their "moral significance?" This is a grave question with multiple ramifications which are not addressed. Family relationships are vaunted (with qualifications) and the tone segues into the quest for the good life. The idea of a morality solely based on flourishing as an end in itself overlooks the call for flourishing to assist mankind in striving for the true, complete happiness of life eternal with God.

In "Mom, Dad, Clone: Implications for Reproductive Privacy" Lori B. Andrews postulates that the "best" argument against human cloning is

its parallel to incest. The original and imaginative content of the article has value, but unfortunately the ancient and universal constraints against incest are not developed. Nor again, is there developed any religious relevance. Cloning and incest are both bad because "it is about improper parental power over children" (133). The power struggle emerges as the grounding for moral decision-making.

Finally, Thomas A. Shannon's "Reproductive Technologies: Ethical and Religious Issues" moves toward a religious deliberation of ART. God is mentioned in references to Catholic documents, unfortunately misconstrued. The conjugal act, as truly taught by the church, realizes the unitive and creative purpose of marriage. It can and often does result in the generation of children. Mr. Shannon, as he elaborates on his misinterpretation of natural law and the tired accusation of the physicality of Catholic teaching on sexuality, oversimplifies this concept by saying that the sole aim of marriage, as taught by the church, is procreation. His appreciation of *Donum Vitae*, *Humanae Vitae* and *Gaudium et Spes* (has he read any other magisterial documents?) is restricted by his limited overall grasp "of Catholic theology. He does not comprehend that in the sacramental union of marriage, the conjugal act, when unimpaired, always unites and intentionally realizes God's creative power and will. When children are the fruit, it achieves God's will. When they are not, it achieves God's will. He uses this common misinterpretation about the goals of marriage to criticize the church as being inconsistent in its teaching about marriage. Philosophically, he then postulates, any pursuit that produces children is acceptable. Consequently, he uses this distorted notion to promote as licit assisted reproductive technologies that the church does not sanction. He then turns to Catholic social teaching (dis-

associated from its theological source) as a resource for positive action in the arena of reproductive issues.

The articles in this book comprehensively endorse ART in principle with ethical reserves only for its most extreme exercises. Even then, the reservations are not based on universal principles. The ethical questions are not those proposed from a religious perspective. Though the line is drawn at human cloning, it is done so without a systematic philosophical or religious foundation. Not only is God absent from the index, so are love and spirit. The treatment of the human body as *machina operans* assails the mind and heart with clinical obliviousness to the sacramental aspect of love and marriage. The study of this body of work should be undertaken by Catholic students only from the standpoint of analyzing it in relation to the Magisterium.

**Icarus Fallen: The Search for Meaning in an Uncertain World,** Chantal Delsol. Translation by Robin Dick. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2003.

242 pp.

*Review by Tim Weldon, University of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois*

**D**oes anyone not know the story of Icarus? Author Chantal Delsol asks her readers. Professor of Philosophy at Marne-La-Vallée near Paris, Delsol understands the contemporary Westerner to be the ideological heir of the failed flier of Greek mythology, "Western man at the beginning of the twenty-first century is the descendant of Icarus." For Delsol, the contemporary is in ideological and spiritual free-fall because his predecessors soared too high, too near the lethal phantasm of utopias—communism and Catholicism being her primary examples. As such, the legacy of the contemporary is a "society deprived of transcen-

dence,” wherein “the human condition no longer makes sense” because “its foundational narratives, mythical and religious, have been eliminated.” Eliminated indeed; in linking the totalitarianism of communism with Catholicism, the author reveals the very thinking that is the source of societal deprivation and personal nihilism.

From the outset, the reader is under the impression that Delsol is much like the frustrated physician whose surprise at a failed cure is the result of a flawed diagnosis she mistakenly believes is accurate. Delsol’s diagnosis of the contemporary situation in part resembles fellow French thinkers Blaise Pascal and Gabriel Marcel. “Activities without meaning occupy his existence,” is her observation of the contemporary’s preoccupation with “idle recreation” and an echo of Pascal’s Early Modern claim that man is mired in specious activism. Delsol’s statement that contemporary existence lacks meaning and is “suddenly broken” follows, in description, Marcel’s theory of “a broken world.” But whereas Pascal and Marcel spoke of the recovery of the meaning of existence in theological terms, in the contemplation and exercise of the theological virtues specifically, Delsol resorts to the language of recycled secular humanism expressed in confusing socio-political terms which, in the end, reflect the very symptoms of her patient, the nihilistic contemporary.

With a section entitled “The Revelations of the Devil,” and a chapter entitled “God in Exile,” alongside the understanding that the contemporary is unable “to comprehend the presence of evil” and is concomitantly “without means to identify the good,” she synopsizes the present malaise as follows:

The resurgence of new corporatism and new fascisms, of the partisans of a moral order, of a Church that brandishes the furious finger of God are

responses to the failure of the modern attempts to eliminate structure-giving figures. But must the defeat of Marx mean the return of Bonald? This is why so many of us, aware of the chasms that lie behind as well as ahead of us, prefer to live with the chaotic ambiguity of meaninglessness rather than rally behind some new avatar of old fatalisms.”

Rejecting communism and Catholicism as equals in failed extremism exemplifies the very extremity she finds fatalistic. For the erroneous and odd pairing of the tyranny of a dying communism and a Catholic Church very much alive as the representative body of God’s love in the world, not only overlooks or rejects outright the latter point but renounces the source for our understanding what is good and evil—to say nothing of Catholic Church’s advancement of goodness in the world. With post-communist Poland as an example, Delsol goes as far as stating that fear of the Catholic Church is more warranted than fear of communism:

As soon as institutional Catholicism re-emerged in Poland, recovering its legitimacy after decades of communism, it hastily attempted to restore a moral order that obviously only reinforced the intuition of our contemporary concerning the danger of any religion at any point in history. Polish intellectuals, finding themselves between Scylla and Charybdis, now fear the tyranny of the clergy: “Black is worse than red,” it is said in the streets of Warsaw.

In the midst of our preferred meaninglessness Delsol sees “the urgent need for a new anthropology.” Though unclear in definition, the author understands the new anthropology as a reflection upon human dignity, “which alone is sacred,” and the subsequent promotion of universal “care-giving” which would, in the long run, “contribute to the reestablishment of a lost equilibrium”. Such anthropology is the necessary prelude to, in her words, “mastering the world in a different way”.

Delsol’s scheme for world mastery includes a return to her place and era of departure. Comparing the contemporary, the student of the new anthropology to the pre-Socratics, she declares, “We are waking up under an ancient Greek sky”. Awakened, liberated from the “pure vanity” of religious truths and the compounded errors of history, Delsol’s contemporary has a new point of departure to indemnify himself against utopia as “any new anthropology will have experience alone as its starting point”. But a call for understanding from experience alone, nebulous as it is, means the indulgence of nostalgia and a flight from truth.

Like her failed Icarus, in flight from the barbarity of the Minotaur, Delsol’s philosophy is attempting flight as well, in this case from the revealed truth that has lasted through two millennia to the romance for exalted uncertainty. Sharing the same end as the same brand of secular humanism popular since the enlightenment, and without faith as a guide, her new anthropology will remain hopelessly grounded.

***Moral Theology in an Age of Renewal: A Study of the Catholic Tradition since Vatican II.*** By Paulinus Ikechukwu Odozor, C.S.Sp. (Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ of Notre Dame Press, 2003. Pp. xi + 412. \$35.00 paper).

*Review by Joseph W. Koterski, S.J.  
Philosophy Department  
Fordham University*

This volume is a well-documented and clearly written history of Catholic moral theology since Vatican II. If the author occasionally pulls his punches and does not openly criticize some of the wayward dissidents who necessarily play so large a role in these pages, it is in service of the objectivity of an historian trying to report accurately on who said and did what to whom.

The lunacy of some of what was passed off as moral theology during this period shows its true colors simply by an historian's straight-faced report of what was said and done. Fr. Odozor's recurrent attention to the debate over contraception, both before and after *Humanae Vitae*, shows the many respects in which this neuralgic issue contributed significantly to defining the opposing camps on many other issues of moral theology besides birth control itself. As the author illustrates with many apt quotations, the battle-lines that were drawn over this document marked out not only the incompatibility of certain viewpoints in the area of sexuality but also the outlooks of the same thinkers on such questions as obedience to authority, the proper limits on autonomy, and the value of personal experience in moral questions. While some of the most important and profound voices in this whole arena "the likes of Janet Smith or the late Father Paul Quay, S.J." are for some reason not referenced at all in this book, there is a sympathetic treatment given to various statements on the question by Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II.

Another one of the sustained virtues of this volume is its appreciation for the contribution of Vatican II to the renewal of moral theology. There is considerable discussion of the call in *Optatam Totius* (On the Formation of Priests) for a more thorough and sophisticated use of the Scriptures by moral theologians, beyond the old sport of proof-texting out of context.

In addition, there is a sophisticated handling of the approach taken by Vatican II to questions of sin and grace, the relation between Church and State, and the Council's contribution to the century-long series of papal statements on Catholic Social Teaching from *Rerum Novarum* (1891) to *Centesimus Annus* (1991).

One of the most helpful parts of

this book may well be the set of chapters given to report on a question that dominated the scholarship for decades: whether there was anything truly distinctive in Christian ethics that set it apart from humanistic ethics of a secular provenance. While the answer to this question must be affirmative "a point that becomes clear as soon as one thinks about what loving one's enemies really entails" Odozor does a fine job in describing why that answer was not so clear for many thinkers for so long.

Odozor also does a credible job in reporting on a related topic that has continued to generate enormous interest to this day, the legitimate use and the true limits of natural law thinking within Catholic moral theology.

Unfortunately this is another area where he is curiously silent about some important figures in this field and restricts his discussion only to the thinkers who have been associated with the "...new natural law theory." But he is entirely lucid about the faulty principles and fallacious reasoning of proportionalism, consequentialism, and unvarnished utilitarianism that these new natural lawyers have been combatting so well. And he has a fine explication of the critique of these dissident positions that Pope John Paul II has mounted in *Veritatis Splendor*.

This volume succeeds in its project of providing a history of moral theology in the past half-century. It does so by making a generally good set of selections among the figures that could have been chosen for study and by presenting the type of reasoning that each of these schools of thought has produced, with appropriate comparison and contrast between the competing parties so as to provide a rich sense of the give-and-take of the many battles that have marked this era in moral theology.

### ***Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice***

Mark S. Massa, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003

*Review by Reverend Brian Van Hove, SJ*

**T**his well-written work has two parts. The first is longer, and examines the anti-Catholic impulse in America. The second is an analysis of the crisis in American Catholicism, using the Boston sex scandals as the example.

Anti-Catholicism is a fact. It is both old and new, but it is not the only prejudice in America. The author balances every assertion with qualifiers and counter-assertions. The core idea is that two types of imagination and language inform the American culture. The dominant one is "dialectical" and has its origin in Calvinism and certain forms of medieval dialectical reasoning pre-dating Calvin. Dialectical minds distrust institutions and groups. The second mode is "analogical" and it is very different, stressing community and the sacramental order of history. Catholics are therefore "different" from the American mainstream, and they are destined never fully to fit in. While they may not be the only outsiders, they will never be anything but outsiders when true to their identity. They trust institutions and groups, particularly the church. Individualism and community, Calvinistic pessimism (whether of the religious type or secularized) and Catholic hopefulness are reconcilable only partially at best.

Father Massa's two heroes are Andrew Greeley and David Tracy. Greeley and Tracy provide the vocabulary of "dialectical" and "analogical" to study these social questions in America. What readers think of Greeley and Tracy may determine what they think about this book.

Crossroad Publishing prints a professional and classy product, complete with detailed endnotes and a useful

index. M.'s English sparkles. At least passively endorsing the position of some of his sources, he seems to insert little liberal digs of his own on such points as the use of condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS (p. 43) and seems to imply that the Roman Curia is the problem in our church (pp. 165-166). But he strives to include a variety of opinions and perspectives on complex matters, though Greeley and Tracy remain in charge of the interpretive machinery. For another approach, see Philip Jenkins on the same subject: *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Massa writes a wonderful work for gaining an overview of the history of anti-Catholicism in America. Part one leaves nothing out of this long story – of both “blue collar” and “white collar” anti-Catholicism. The reader may find distasteful the need “to go into gory detail” about the Geoghan case in Boston. Perhaps here the author self-indulgently falls in line with the continuing outrage directed at this offender, even after his murder in prison. People who are anti-Catholic use these public scandals to say “we told you so” and win converts to their anti-Catholic way of thinking. No doubt about that. Cardinal Law let considerable ammunition fall into the hands of enemies of the church.

If you have minimized the reality of anti-Catholicism in this country, this book will open your eyes. If you tend to exaggerate the amount of anti-Catholicism in America, this book will comfort you and calm you down. In either case, it is worth reading, if only to refresh your memory on the history of this phenomenon.

**Benedicamus Domino! The Theological Foundations of the Liturgical Renewal,**  
The Most Reverend Attila Miklósházy, SJ, STD, DD, Ottawa, ON: Novalis and St. Paul's University, 2001.

*Review by Reverend Brian Van Hove, SJ*

**T**he liturgical field is a wasteland. There is no hope between the traditionalism of “let us go back to the missal of 1962” and the entrenched revolutionary camp of those who say the reforms following the Second Vatican Council did not cut deep enough and who still inflict on us their own better ideas. But in this wasteland we find an oasis in the form of the little book by Bishop Attila Miklósházy, who says: “The real liturgical renewal has not yet begun; the liturgical reform was not sufficient. The liturgical revolution called our attention to certain dangers and certain gaps. Now we should begin the true renewal by filling the forms with spirit...to develop a liturgical spirituality” (p. 18).

The author sensibly takes a broad historical perspective on the liturgy. Having lived and done scholarly work both in Central Europe and North America, he transcends the limits of current national and regional discourse on the subject. A review for the members of the Fellowship is important because M.'s work was published in Canada and, though available from Amazon, it may have escaped the attention of readers in the U.S.A.

If M. is right in believing that the real liturgical renewal has not yet begun, then let us pay close attention to the subtitle—“theological foundations.” Only when we build on solid foundations will we have quality. This book is intended for the “educated non-specialist.” The references to the history of ideas are stated clearly but sparingly. There are neither footnotes nor index, but after a long career teaching liturgy and sacraments M. is familiar with the literature of the field.

His writing is synthetic. This is both a “how to” book about celebration (six chapters on the sacraments and the liturgical books that issued from Vatican II's reform) and a “what” book (nine chapters on principles and theological roots).

The chapter on the liturgy of Christian initiation deserves emphasis here. Theologians have long debated the relationship between baptism and confirmation. After discussing infant baptism and the historical circumstances for delaying confirmation in the Western church, M. points out that baptism has a negative symbolism and confirmation a positive one. If baptism liberates us from our old self, confirmation fills us with new life in the Holy Spirit. The one sacrament of initiation has two phases; both phases signify Christian initiation, but neither does so exclusively.

In the chapter on penance or “the sacrament of forgiveness,” we learn that there are four elements in this sacrament: repentance, confession, absolution, satisfaction. The order of these elements in the first millennium was different from the second and will be different again in the third. Even if the sequence is different, all four elements are needed for the process to be complete. And it is a process. This explanation of the possibility of “general absolution” is the best you will find anywhere. The rationale finally makes sense. M. goes on to say that, as in the case of the other sacraments, an adequate spirituality needs to be developed for this one. For the moment we are midway between the attitudes and practices of the second millennium and those emerging for the third.

On the subject of liturgical spirituality, few books could be described as genuinely orthodox. One of them is *Gospel Spirituality and Catholic Worship: Integrating Your Personal Prayer Life and Liturgical Experience* by Paul L. Cioffi and William P. Sampson (Paulist Press, 2000). Another is *Benedicamus*

*Domino! The Theological Foundations of the Liturgical Renewal* by Bishop Attila Miklósházy, who has given us a complementary, readable, and urgently needed study. There is even an appendix: the joyous, upbeat homily the bishop once gave called “Some Forgotten Truths About the Priesthood.”

**Roman Catholic Political Philosophy,**

James V. Schall, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, (2004), pp. xx + 209, hardcover, 0-7391-0745-3 \$65.00

*Review by Raymond Dennehy, Ph.D., University of San Francisco*

This book, written by the preeminent Catholic political philosopher in North America, is a brilliant inquiry into the nature and limits of political philosophy. It is also a remedy for complaisance. So who's complaisant? For starters, try those who insist that the wall of separation between church and state is not enough for liberal democracy and argue instead that the latter must be secular as well. Next try Catholic voters who see no problem with Catholic politicians who would justify their support for abortion legislation with the excuse that they cannot in conscience impose their personal religious beliefs on the public.

Not that Schall addresses such issues. In fact, he makes clear in the book's introduction that it is not a work on political philosophy or about the best form of government and thus implies that it does not address the contemporary political scene in the United States or Europe. But, as with all masterful inquiries into foundational principles, their practical consequences, both good and bad, spring forth in the minds of discerning readers. Schall's disclaimers notwithstanding, *Roman Catholic Political Philosophy* is a powerful warning about the dangers to religion, specifically to the Catholic Church, and democratic government that are currently sur-

facing on both sides of the Atlantic. Consider the strenuous and unrelenting efforts of the European Union to secularize itself unto the point of trying to eliminate even reference to God in its constitution or John Paul II's recent warning that the enemy of the Catholic Church in the United States will be the State.

Schall makes sure that his readers understand how crucial the project of establishing the nature and limits of political philosophy is by reminding them what happens when politicians and philosophers forget Aristotle's warning that politics is not the highest science since man is not the highest being in the universe. What happens? Socrates' trial and death on trumped up charges, for one thing. The philosopher must be free to talk to the politician without fear of being killed. A culture that recognizes no science above politics cannot be expected to take kindly to Socratic-type questions about the meaning of piety, virtue, justice, and the state. But if politics is not the highest science, what is?

Schall's title answers the question. “Roman Catholic Political Philosophy” refers to a political philosophy that is illuminated by Catholic theology. Only then can political philosophy understand itself, for only then can it understand its boundaries. He is not, of course, saying that Roman Catholic political philosophy demands, or even leads to, a theocracy. Schall calls attention, on the contrary, to the Catholic teaching that grace builds on nature; it does not denigrate or nullify it, as Christ made clear with his words, “Pay unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's...” in response to those trying to trap him into uttering theocratic statements, thus branding himself an enemy of the Roman state.

That response invites the question, “If not a theocracy, then what is the relation between theology and political philosophy? Since political philosophy is a branch of philosophy,

the precise question is, “What is the relation between theology and philosophy? That inquiry has lathered everyone from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure down to Jacques Maritain and John Courtney Murray. Schall takes the position that is, if not unquestionably Thomistic, nevertheless embraced by Thomists, such as Maritain. Theology illuminates philosophy in two ways. The first is by divine revelation, revealing knowledge that humans could not attain by their own unaided powers of intellect, for example, that we can do nothing without God's grace, that Christ who is both God and man was born of a woman and died for sins, etc. The second way is by revelation's indirect illumination of truths that, although capable of being discovered by unaided reason, were hitherto only vaguely grasped before the advent of Christianity, for example, the concept of personhood.

A contemporary and crucial inference that follows from Schall's discussion of the relation between theology and philosophy is this: When Catholic politicians protest that they are “personally against abortion,” but cannot in conscience impose their religious beliefs on others, the charitable estimate is that they have been poorly schooled. For the claim that human life begins at conception is not a doctrine of belief, such as the Immaculate Conception or the divinity of Christ, but a conclusion of science. In short, it can be rationally and rightfully proposed in the public square as the reason why direct abortion is morally unjustifiable.

Thus theology shows us that politics is not the highest science and that man has a dignity not conferred by the state and a destiny beyond the state. Because the highest things come not from the state but from God, the philosopher's (and theologian's) credentials for talking to the politician become manifestly authoritative. Tyr-

anny accordingly loses its semblance of authority, for if politics is seen not to be the highest science, then that of which it is the science, temporal polity, can no longer justify its claim to be man's highest end. But if theology is Queen of the Sciences (*scientia maxima*) and philosophy its handmaid, the relationship between the two disciplines is nevertheless synergistic. Philosophy's contribution to the relationship is its ability to defend the reasonableness of revealed religion to the secular world. Although the classic example would be St. Augustine's *Of True Religion* and his lengthy arguments against Varro's defense of astrology in *The City of God*, Schall concentrates on what is destined to be one of the classic documents on the relation between theology and philosophy, John Paul the II's *The Splendor of Truth*.

Clearly, then, *Roman Catholic Political Philosophy* is, as stated above, a remedy for the contemporary complaisance about the demise of theology's importance. It does not require rocket science to understand that the legally approved destruction of 1.3 million unborn persons yearly in the United States alone cuts the heart out of the democratic ethos: the right to life is no longer "God-given" and "inalienable but state-given and negotiable. If the mere fact of widespread legal abortion were not sufficient to prove the case, consider the academic and social respectability that has been conferred on apologists for infanticide and physician-assisted suicide; for example, Peter Singer, Michael Tooley, and James MacMahon. And if the right to life ceases to be honored, it is only a matter of consistency that the other rights should follow suit. Consider, for example, the recently passed Canadian law that makes the moral condemnation of homosexual conduct (Didn't we used to call it "sodomy"? ) a "hate crime."

**American Catholics and Civic Engagement: A Distinctive Voice.** Volume I of the American Catholics in the Public Square Series. Edited by Margaret O'Brien Steinfels. A Sheed & Ward Book, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. New York, Toronto and Oxford, 2004. Pp. xx + 293.

Reviewed by Anne Barbeau Gardiner, Professor Emerita, Department of English, John Jay College, C.U.N.Y.

Peter Steinfels and Robert Royal begin by explaining that the authors of these twenty-three essays are all "leading Catholic scholars, journalists, lawyers, business and labor leaders, novelists and poets, church administrators and lobbyists, activists, policy makers and politicians." One would infer from *leading Catholic* that all these authors are Catholic. Yet on p. 62 one contributor notes that another (W. Galston) is "not Catholic," while on p. 171 another author declares that she attends the Episcopal Church. It would have been useful if the editors had defined the term *Catholic* and included religion in the notes on contributors. For a number of these papers—which were originally read at meetings sponsored by the Commonweal Foundation and the Faith and Reason Institute—could arguably have come from non-Catholics.

In Part I, on "Catholic Social Thought," John A. Coleman argues that, for Catholics, even a pluralist society like ours can have a "politically legitimate, non-coercive, and substantive common good." Agreed, but then he adds that any truth we hold must "be revisable, based on testable hypotheses or new data," and besides this, that Catholics should not "emphatically stress the objectivity of public goods while totally downplaying the other, important role of societal consensus in constituting the common good." Thus he opens the door to moral change by consensus. Is it *Catholic* to allow the "consensus" of a single decadent

generation to trump the moral consensus of sixty previous generations?

In response to Coleman, Jane Mansbridge insists that the common good in society is "irreducibly plural" and "perpetually in contest." State schools might promote "honesty," but certainly not a "more substantive understanding of the good for humankind." She calls John Courtney Murray "wrong in thinking that the social compact must rest at least in part on 'the objectivity of the good.'" This sort of thinking is not noticeably *Catholic*, is it?

After her, Stephen Pope declares that since Catholics are united by the "symbolic power" of the Eucharist and by such "symbols" as the Incarnation, the Trinity, and the Resurrection, they should infuse public life with their "humane ethic." Then he points out that the difficulty of reaching a moral consensus in our pluralistic society can be seen in the obstacles faced by Catholics trying to build a "common ground" with fellow Catholics. One obstacle they face is the "bigotry" of Catholic parishioners who recognize "the dignity of gay people, but not in their parish school." Hold on! The word *gay* denotes an overt, proselytizing homosexual, so how is it *bigotry* for Catholic parishioners to prevent "gay people" from spreading in "their parish school" what their own Church Catechism calls a "grave disorder"?

Next the non-Catholic William Galston speaks of Catholic social thought as "incompatible" with "any account of liberalism that takes philosophical pluralism as foundational." True enough, but then he warns that liberalism requires the Church to "adopt a stance of severe and principled self-restraint in the face of the temptation to impose its beliefs on others through state coercion." What "temptation"? The example he gives is of the Church using natural-law arguments and persuading "a solid

majority of American citizens” to “use the power of the state to outlaw abortion.” So even if the Church were to convince a majority of voters to repeal the abortion laws, this would amount to imposing Catholic beliefs on others by “coercion.” What course does he advise Catholics to take? Simply to *endure* the “abominable” laws promoting the culture of death: “It is one thing for Catholics reasoning within the premises of their community to reach conclusions about abortion, assisted suicide, and homosexuality that are held to be binding on the faithful; quite another to impose those views on others. Catholics may be affronted by a legal code that permits acts they view as abominable. But in circumstances of deep moral diversity, the alternatives to enduring these affronts may be even worse.” Worse? Do Catholics need to be pushed like this into deeper silence and invisibility?

At the end of the first section, Michael Lacey and William Shea present themselves as communitarians who are “critical of doctrines of moral relativism as corrosive of the foundations of political order and justice.” But while they admit that abortion is “a social evil as well as a sin,” they reject “single-issue politics of the right-to-life type.” For them the challenge of modernity is getting over the “tribal” focus of one’s religious community without “losing the faith.” But their faith does not seem to include doctrine or dogma. They refer to the condemnation of “Modernism” by Pius IX and Pius X as a fleeting thought: “The same kind of thought has crossed the minds of clerics in other traditions.” And for them, the “natural-law tradition,” which held “universal values” to be “real” and “true standards of justice” to “exist,” is passé. Why? Because secular thinkers have dismissed it as “merely Catholic.” So they want to be the Catholic presence in the public square and emphasize the “sacramental” aspect of

the community and nature. Without dogma and doctrine, though, this new Catholic presence will be like a large amoeba – lots of wobbly flesh, with no skeleton to make it stand and walk.

Part II is on Catholic institutions in the public square. It starts with an overview of Catholic parishes in the U.S. by the late Philip Murnion, who thought parishes should have broad goals, like lobbying for social justice and sponsoring assisted housing. Catholics, he found, are “more likely than others to see the world and human nature as basically good.” But what about sin abounding in this culture of death? What about the utter neglect of the sacrament of confession? Murnion assured us that “forgiveness has been made more abundant but less costly, because of the penitential rite at the beginning of each Mass and the seasonal celebration of a communal rite of penance, in which confession is directly made to God rather than to the priest as representative of the community.” The Pope will be surprised to learn that private confession is supererogatory.

The two next essays are informative about the work of Catholic state conferences: William Bole covers the entire U.S., while Edward Dolejsi focuses on California. These conferences are a “well kept secret,” even though they are active in 33 state legislatures, promoting reverence for life, religious freedom, and family life. They lobby for such things as tuition vouchers and conscience clauses to protect Catholic hospitals from having to engage in practices our Church condemns. Bole sees Catholics as “simultaneously engaged with and estranged from a culture of compulsory pluralism,” but he warns that the temptation in politics is to become a “player” and mute the Gospel message. Then Dolejsi explains how the Catholic state conference in California makes short-term, informal coalitions with such “unlikely partners” as the ACLU (to

limit the death penalty) and the Mormons (to support Proposition 22 in defense of marriage). Such coalitions are meant to show “broad support” for a controversial bill, but there are limits for Catholics: they had to refuse to join a coalition to promote access to health care because Planned Parenthood, which calls abortion “prenatal care,” was part of it.

Part II ends with an essay on Catholics in health care. Clarke Cochran claims that “most Catholics” do not agree with Rome in condemning genetic engineering, stem-cell research, and other such developments. He begins by discussing the merger of one American Catholic hospital with a public one that resulted in the new Catholic hospital giving “contraceptive and sterilization services” by “contracted providers.” When “the Vatican got wind of the matter,” the local government was obliged to set up a separately licensed “hospital within a hospital” to handle these “services.” Cochran complains that Rome’s interference in this case only reinforced “suspicion of Catholic hierarchy among Catholics and non-Catholics.” He then gives another case, this one of a religious order that sold its hospital, set up a foundation, and got into counseling that included advice on contraception and abortion. Now Cochran thumbs his nose at Rome: “It’s one thing for the Vatican to inquire about the use of surgery suites in hospital obstetric units, another to inquire about what is said in confidential counseling sessions.” How can this sneer at the teaching authority of the Church be called *Catholic*?

Part III consists of a series of short autobiographies of prominent Catholics, and these accounts are on the whole quite engaging. Take David Carlin, who is involved with pro-life Democrats in Rhode Island and tells how he served for years in the state senate, where his “natural-law convictions” made him work for social

justice. After retirement in 1990 became the unpaid adviser to the Respect Life office of the Diocese of Providence and helped launch a sign-up of almost 5,000 volunteers for LifeNet – i.e. pro-life voters who call their local legislators on particular bills. He explains that since pro-abortion voters are concentrated in a “small number of high-income legislative districts” and outnumbered in the other 80 to 90% of the districts, this strategy has led to pro-life victories in the state legislature, changing its perception of public opinion and resulting in “two pro-life Democrats” being elected to the U. S. House. Some other appealing memoirs are those of David Gonzalez, John Sweeney, Thomas Donnelly, and W. Shepherd Abell: the first tells of how he used to cover the South Bronx for *The New York Times* and now covers Central America and the Caribbean, places where he sees the Catholic Church playing a major role; the second, who heads the AFL-CIO, writes eloquently about the sacramental nature of work; the third speaks of his fruitful involvement with Americans United for Life, the legal arm of the pro-life movement, with Morality in Media, the legal arm of the anti-obscenity movement, and with Bread for the World, a interfaith group addressing global hunger; the fourth is engaging for his candor, as when he writes about his decision not to pursue politics: “it would have been impossible for me, as a prolifer, to be elected as a Democrat—at least in my part of Maryland. Since other fiercely held beliefs, or perhaps they were family prejudices, would not have allowed me to be a Republican, politics became a distinctly unpromising career.”

On the other hand, the memoirs of Mary Jo Bane and Dotty Lynch leave us wondering what they mean by the word *Catholic*. Bane identifies herself as “pro-life,” then explains that this has not prevented her from having

a job paying Medicaid bills for abortions under Cuomo and serving in the Clinton administration. Why? Because she has always held that the law in a pluralist society “should not rigidly outlaw all abortions,” but only “regulate and discourage” them. She knows this view of hers will not “satisfy” what she sneeringly calls “the orthodox Catholic thought police.” One may well ask, why should she, in this book, represent a *Catholic* in the public square, when her view is much closer to that of a *non-Catholic*? Next, Dotty Lynch explains how she found her nascent liberalism confirmed by Vatican II, Marymount and Fordham. While still attending Mass, she started working on “strategies” for the Democrats on how to “handle” the abortion issue; she also helped friends arrange for “safe abortions.” Finally, on Easter 1986, she had a “personal epiphany” when she looked on a relative’s child whom she had suggested five years earlier might be aborted. Now she claims that she is known at CBS as a “practicing Catholic,” but that this identity affects her work only “in a peripheral way.” Her colleagues think her pro-life view is the result of her being “brainwashed by the church” (evidently she never told them of her “epiphany.”) In her conclusion, Lynch declares that while she remains “fond of the Catholic Church,” she now attends the Episcopal. So why include her among *Catholics* in public life? Is *Catholic* supposed to be a genetic identity?

Don Wycliff begins by defining *Catholic* as accepting the Pope to be the chief authority of the Church: “I can’t imagine *not* thinking of the pope as the head of my church, the vicar of Christ, the principal teacher and shepherd of the faithful.” Good and clear. But after six pages, he has an entirely new definition. First he recounts how for fifteen years he wrote editorials, first for *The New York Times*, and then for *The Chicago Tribune*. In these

newsrooms he found an “enormous amount of anti-Catholic sentiment,” but this was nothing “compared to the wounds the church has inflicted upon itself. It will be decades before the anguish and anger generated by the clergy sex abuse scandals dissipate.” Wycliff concludes by saying that American Catholics now speak with so many voices he no longer knows what the Catholic position is on any issue: “Not only am I unable to speak authoritatively about Catholic positions, I am unable any longer to *feel* authoritatively.” You see, he started by saying that the Pope is the chief authority for Catholics, and he ends by saying that any Catholic with access to the media has *the same* authority as any other: “Catholics for a Free Choice is the same as any other Catholic group or opinion—or at least that’s what that Catholic professor on CNN or ABC or in the *New York Times* said.” How does such confusion clarify the role of *Catholics* in the public square?

Paul Moses, a journalist who was on the “religion beat” at *New York Newsday* agrees that there was hatred for the Church in the 1990s newsrooms: the “prevalent view in the news media [was] that religion in general (and, I think, the Catholic Church in particular) did not have a valid role in the public square. Religion was supposed to be kept private.” His “solution” was to write about the role of religion in the life of parishes, giving a voice to “the poor and immigrants” instead of the hierarchy. But why did it have to be either-or? And was that a truly *Catholic* decision? After him, Kirk Adams, a labor organizer, recounts how he stopped going to Mass in the 1960s, but rediscovered the Church in the 1970s among Catholics who were making a difference in the lives of African villagers. He goes on to complain bitterly about the “degree of intensity in the church’s public pronouncements on reproductive issues.” He accuses the Church, in

the last twenty years, of using its “fire-power on the abortion issue and other reproductive questions, at the expense of issues like the rights of immigrants, access to healthcare, and poverty in general.” He insists that these are *equally* “life and death” issues. No, not so. The poor and the immigrants are not being cut up and vacuumed out in pieces at the rate of a million and a half a year. Is it *Catholic* to reduce this crisis to an either-or choice—the poor, or the unborn?

The concluding section of this book is on Catholic voters. David Legee and Paul Mueller begin by citing a lot of statistics to give reasons why Catholics have been moving to the Republican Party in the last thirty years. They downplay the *moral* and *religious* reasons for this defection and argue rather tendentiously that prejudice is the underlying reason. The new Catholic Republicans are allegedly against helping blacks, giving new “roles” to women, and legislating “civil rights for homosexuals”; he claims they are “less willing to respect human life except for that of the

unborn.” But in the essay that ends this book, William Bole points to the “ambiguity” of the statistics cited by Legee and Mueller, saying that such findings have much to do “with the way the questions are asked.” Yes, we know that statistics are a nose of wax that can be shaped at will.

Then E. J. Dionne Jr argues that American Catholics are the “ultimate swing vote,” as Clinton realized when he appealed to them with his mantra about making abortion “safe, legal, and rare.” The Catholics latched onto that last word, voted for him, and were then disillusioned, defecting in numbers to the Republicans for the next election. Protesting that he is no “Marxist,” Dionne says that he believes the difference between a Catholic Republican and a Catholic Democrat is only a matter of income, not “doctrine, theology or interpretation of the faith.” Surely not. Just like the previous essay, this is a very reductive analysis of Catholic voters.

In contrast, Kate O’Beirne insists that the defection of Catholics to the Republican party has been mainly

over “cultural issues.” She shrewdly observes that far more Catholics today call themselves “conservative” than “Republican,” betraying their discomfort with that party label. She is spot on, too, when she says that the Republican party would not be the majority party today “if it were not pro-life.”

In the last essay, William Bole expresses the hope that American Catholics may prod the two parties toward a greater awareness of the common good. He mentions “research” that shows Catholics as “somewhat to the left of other Americans on bread-and-butter issues and to the right on lifestyle questions.” So a unique role for them might be to curb the “exaggerated individualism” in both parties. If Catholics could accomplish this, Bole thinks, it would be a “distinct contribution.” It would, but is it enough? Surely Catholics, who comprise about a quarter of the electorate, should make a stronger, united stand against the culture of death. But first, they would have to define what it means to be *Catholic*, something this book failed to do.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### Creation of the Murphy Institute—May 2004

The University of St Thomas announces the creation of the Terrence J Murphy Institute for Catholic Thought, Law, and Public Policy. Named after the University’s longtime former president and chancellor, the Institute will explore the various interactions between law and Catholic thought. It will examine how the law might be affected by a “vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel” (Pope John Paul II, *Ex corde ecclesiae*). As a collaboration between the University’s Center for Catholic Studies and its School of Law, the Institute will draw on the

resources of both programs, as well as on other academic disciplines and other faith traditions. In exploring the connections between law and Catholic thought, the Institute will emphasize developing curricular resources, facilitating scholarship and scholarly discussions, and engaging and serving the community through public events and public policy analysis. The Institute plans to hold its first major conference in the spring of 2005. The co-directors of the Institute are Professor Robert Kennedy of the Center for Catholic Studies and Professor Thomas Berg of the School of Law. ☩

## BOOKS RECEIVED

If you would like to receive a complimentary copy of one of the books below in order to review it for a future issue, please email your request to Alice Osberger at osberger.1@nd.edu

*American Saints: Five Centuries of heroic Sanctity on the American Continents*, John F. Fink, Alba House, NY (2001) 157 pp. Paper.

*Bridging the Great Divide: Musings of a Post-Liberal, Post-Conservative Evangelical Catholic*, Robert Barron, Rowman and Littlefield Publishing, Lanham, MD., (2004), 287pp. Paper.

*Caring for a Dying Loved One: A Comprehensive Guide*, Bob Fischer, MSN, RN, Alba House, NY, (2001) 97 pp. Paper.

*Christian Humanism: Creation, Redemption, and Reintegration*, John P. Bequette, University Press of America: Lanham, MD, (2004) 162pp. Paper.

*Contemporary Philosophical Issues in Historical Perspective*, Joseph M. De Torre, University of Asia and the Pacific: Philippines, (2004) 150pp., Paper.

*Daily Readings in Catholic Classics*, ed. Rawley Myers, Ignatius Press: San Francisco, (1992) 302pp. Paper.

*Daisys Will Grow Anywhere: A Survivor's Story*, Elizabeth Ammons, Xlibris unknown (2001) 519pp. Paper.

*Exploring the Catholic Church: An Introduction to Catholic Teaching and Practice*, Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D., Servant Publications: Ann Arbor, MI, (2001), 137pp. Paper.

*Figures Around the Crib: Preparing for Christmas with Isaiah, John the Baptizer, Joseph, and Mary*, Rev William F. Maestri, Alba House, Staten Island, NY, (2001) 144pp. Paper.

*Figures Around the Cross: A Lenten Journey from Death to Life*, Rev William F. Maestri, Alba House: New York (2002), 234 pp. Paper.

*Have You Heard the Good News?: Reflections on the Sunday Gospels, Cycle A*, Edward T. Dowling, SJ, Alba House, Staten Island, NY (2001) 180pp. Paper

*Healing: Questions and Answers for those who Mourn*, Rev. Terence P. Curley, D.Min., Alba House: New York (2002), 109 pp. Paper.

*The Heretic, A Novel*, William Baer, PublishAmerica, Baltimore, (2004), 211pp., Paper.

*I Am: Eucharistic Meditations on the Gospel*, Concepcion Cabrera de Armida (Conchita), Alba House, NY (2001) 102 pp. Paper.

*Introduction to Catholicism, A Complete Course: The Didache High School Textbook Series*, Midwest Theological Forum: Chicago, IL, (2003) 388 pp. Cloth.

*An Introduction to the Love of Wisdom: An Essential and Existential Approach to Philosophy*, James A. Harold, Rowman and Littlefield, Publishers: Lanham, MD, (2004), 380 pp. Paper.

*Light on Light: Illuminations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the Mystical Visions of the Venerable Anne Catherine Emmerich*, by Hurd Baruch, MaxKol Communications (2004), 259pp. Paper.

*Moral Wisdom: Lessons and Text from the Catholic Tradition*, James F. Keenan, S.J., Rowman and Littlefield, Publishers, (2004), 190pp. Paper.

*A Mother's Rule of Life: How to Bring Order to Your Home and Peace to Your Soul*, Holly Pierlot, Sophia Institute Press, Manchester, NH, (2004) 203pp. Paper.

*No One Else Can Sing My Song*, Fr. Edward J. Farrell, Alba House: New York (2001), 204 pp. Paper.

*The One in the Many: A Contemporary Reconstruction of the God-World Relationship*, Joseph A. Bracken, S.J., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co: Grand Rapids, MI, (2001) 235 pp. Paper.

*Our Lady of Guadalupe: History and Meaning of the Apparitions*, Manuela Testoni, Alba House:NY (2001), 140pp. Paper

*Our Moral Life in Christ, A Complete Course*: The Didache Series, Midwest Theological Forum: Chicago, IL, (2003) 326 pp. Cloth

*Praying the Sunday Psalms: Reflections on the Responsorial Psalm Years A-B-C*, Michael Goonan, SSP Alba House, Staten Island, NY (2001), 203pp. Paper.

*Priest: Portraits of Ten Good Men Serving the Church Today*, Michael S. Rose, Sophia Institute Press: Manchester, NH (2003), 185 pp. Paper.

Extra copies of *The Catholic Citizen: Debating the Issues of Justice*, edited by Kenneth D. Whitehead, Proceedings of the 26th Annual FCS meeting in Arlington VA, St Augustine's Press, South Bend, IN are available.

and

*Voices of the New Springtime*, edited by Kenneth D. Whitehead, Proceedings of the 25th Annual FCS meeting in Philadelphia, PA, St Augustine's Press, South Bend, IN are available.

*The Rapture Trap, A Catholic Response to "End Times" Fever*, Paul Thigpen, Ascension Press: Westchester, PA, (2001) 261 pp. Paper.

*Rationality and Religious Experience: The Continuing Relevance of the World's Spiritual Traditions*, The First Master Hsian Hua Memorial Lecture, Henry Rosemont, Jr. Open Court: Chicago, (2001) 111pp. Paper.

*The Spirit of Jesus in Scripture and Prayer*, James W. Kinn, Rowman and Littlefield Publishing, Lanham, MD, (2004) 231pp. Paper.

*Ugly as Sin: Why they Changed our Churches from Sacred Places to Meeting Spaces—and How we can Change Them Back Again*, Michael S. Rose, Sophia Institute Press: Manchester, NH, (240 pp). Cloth.

*The Whole Truth about Stem Cell Research: What Hollywood, Biotechnology, and the News Media Leave Out*, William L. Saunders Jr. And Charles A. Donovan, Family Research Council: Washington, DC, (2001) 27pp. Paper.

*Young and Catholic: the Face of Tomorrow's Church*, Tim Drake, Sophia Institute Press: Manchester, NH, (2004), 235pp. Paper.

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## ONLY A GAME

**I**t could be argued that it was via athletics that Catholic colleges and universities sought first to insert themselves into the national picture. How better establish parity than by playing and perhaps beating teams that had long since acquired excellence. In those days, athletics and academic pursuits were more integrated, but with the semi-professionalization of college sports – youngsters come to college en route to the pros, at least that is their dream; classes and the like are merely a means to that end -- there is enmity between athletics and the academic.(It is perhaps apocryphal that a student thought Jock Maritain used to play for Notre Dame). And of course the means are adjusted, with courses in basket weaving and the like devised, lest one be deflected from preparation for a career as a professional athlete. There is one draft that has never been protested on our campuses.

Annually, there is a national pool of high school athletes pursued by all athletic directors and even, alas, university presidents. By and large these kids have no

interest in a college education, save as a ticket to the pros. In some sports, there has been immediate passage from high school to pro ball. The national athletic culture is one that Catholic institutions should be opposing, but there is little evidence of that. We seem content to be farm teams for the NFL and the like.

Of course this mirrors confusion on the academic level, where our universities accept as standards of appraisal criteria which, if met, would spell the defeat of our stated mission. A decent respect for the opinion of mankind is one thing, but obsession with rankings is the path to destruction. Maybe sports can now lead us back to where we belong. Resisting the professionalization of sports, returning to the student athlete, eschewing the big bucks of the bowls, could have a salutary effect on how universities regard their academic efforts as well. The great cultural tradition we stand in institutionally provides the sufficient measure of how we are doing. ♣

*Ralph McInerny*

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