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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 LETTER

by Dr. Bernard Dobranski
Dean, Ave Maria School of Law

Love is not far from my thoughts since I'm writing this letter on Valentine's Day. No doubt the romantic feelings aroused by Cupid, the gifts of candy and flowers, and the intimate dinners can't help but express the human desire to love and be loved. Pope Benedict XVI's eagerly awaited first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, investigates love as the foundation of our lives, the proper attitude for the interaction of persons, and the ultimate goal of our existence. The richness of Benedict's insights leads to a renewed reflection on love as a word or sentiment that far surpasses the banal connotation it has assumed in contemporary culture.

As the universal pastor, it is only proper that the Pope should return to the basics of our faith. God is Love! And man is made in God's image and likeness. So often we speak of the natural law, and Benedict wisely reminds us that love is the foundation of human nature. Built into our very being, this desire for union with others and, in particular, the natural desire for intimacy between man and a woman, is at the very root of our being. More than this, it is also the first inkling that we have a transcendent nature that calls us to go beyond the physical to communion with the divine. While scholars and saints may parse the meaning of eros and agape, Benedict shows them to be part and parcel of a divine romance built into our very being and a most potent impetus in our quest for full humanity. What makes the encyclical especially exciting is that everyone can understand its language and relate to the sentiments expressed. Benedict gives us hope that we can all be better persons by following our basic instinct for love and God who is Love.

Benedict digresses on the love of God so manifestly present in Christ. Jesus' life of love and service for others is a model for humans to move out of self-centeredness and to live for others. This grounding in love, according to the Pope, forms the fabric of our social life and is, therefore, the guiding source for all human interaction and law. It is the gold standard for human behavior. This foundational recognition alone allows for the just society built on human dignity and the freedom of persons and for the implementation of justice in a world often inimical to true love.

The Pope also reminds Christians of the critical role we have as evangelizers of the truth. He also, I believe, recalls Europe to its roots, since, without constant reference to its foundation in the one true God who is love, its very existence is in jeopardy. The demographics of Western Europe are indicative of how selfish love—the separation of life giving from love

making—will so decrease the indigenous populations that in a few generations Europe will be a far different place. Failure to love as God loves leads to self-destruction.

The Pope further reminds the state of its obligation to create a fair and just society so that humans may flourish. The guidelines for the state have been well established by past popes in the social encyclicals: the dignity of the person, subsidiarity, solidarity, and the common good, as well as the demands for commutative and distributive justice. Benedict says the Church's compunction must be to remind the state of these obligations but never to become excessively entangled with the state. Our witness must be in the charity the local Church extends to all those in need. It is the personal love of persons serving the poor and sick that touches

lives and brings physical and spiritual healing that causes the recipient to experience God's love and to grow in virtue. Whereas the state can only fulfill a physical need, studies in the efficacy of faith-based charity attest to its power of love to change lives. The encyclical thus forces us to move our faith to its practical application to love of neighbor.

In closing this reflection, I can't help but recall our mission as Catholic scholars to teach the truth. Yet after reading Benedict XVI's first encyclical, I must remind you that since God is love, the truth can only be taught in love. *Veritatem in Caritate*. Let us take our cue from this gentle pastor that God has given us and make it our resolve to put his words into action. This encyclical is Pope Benedict's Valentine to the world. ✠

Freedom of the Press vs. the Right to Privacy

Some reflections from the viewpoint of natural law ethics¹

by Leo J. Elders

The German Constitution Art.5, § 1 states that the freedom to communicate with others is a basic right of man. As a thinking, emotional and social being man wants to enter into contact with others, to express his thoughts and feelings. This right comprises the right to diffuse one's views. This article is nothing particular to Germany. In France the freedom to express one's opinions was stated in a law of July 29, 1881. The constitutions of most European states have similar articles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has reconfirmed it. Article 18 speaks of the right to freedom of thought and religion and to manifest one's religion. Article 19 declares that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression..., to receive and to impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. The European Council for Human Rights echos the same stipulation and urges its implementation. Actually we find a first formu-

lation of these freedoms in the constitution of the kingdom of Württemberg of the year 1829.

Remotely awareness of these human rights flows forth from the Judeo-Christian tradition, but more immediately it is a product of the spirit of the Enlightenment and of the opposition against absolute monarchy. The intelligentsia among the citizens wanted to be protected against interference and control by the state.

When formulating these rights it is difficult to determine their range. Handicapped people and youngsters may claim a right to sexual gratification or to the sunshine in Florida. However, the long lists of "rights to something" might well come into conflict with somebody else's rights. Marx thought that these human rights were an expression of bourgeois individualism and wanted to oppose them by what he considered the real rights of the workers. There are political, social and cultural situations in which these rights cannot be claimed. How for instance to implement the right to full employment? What to think of the right to free movement and to asylum

when hundreds of thousands of Africans try to establish themselves in Europe?

The general background

When attempting to discover the very foundation of this freedom to gather information and to express one's views, it is important to determine the point of departure of our approach. Is it man as a totally autonomous individual or man as a social being living in a community. As a matter of fact, the right to express one's views, to gather information and to diffuse it presupposes man's social nature and his membership of the human community. In some Western countries the tendency prevails to stress the rights of the autonomous human individual over and against the rights and duties consequent upon his belonging to community. We do think that the social dimension of man must always be taken into account.

But there are other considerations: the freedom to form one's opinion on the basis of the available information (gathered by oneself or provided by others) and to express it is, in the view of the Bundesverfassungsgericht, absolutely necessary in a democratic state². The Justices apparently feel that each citizen has a right or even a duty to participate in government and that he is unable to do so if not well informed and unless he can dispose of sufficient information. A democratic state cannot exist without well informed citizens.

Difficulties appear when one tries to delimit this right to information: what is meant by "expressing one's opinion"? According to the jurisprudence of the German Constitutional Court it does not matter what its contents are or which ethical and religious ideas one recommends or rejects. Even advertising comes in under this heading. The freedom of the press is derived from this personal right. However, there are difficulties: does a community have the right to protect its values against the diffusion of ideas, if it believes that these ideas undermine its very tradition and national character? This question raises another problem: does the well-being of a state depend on a certain set of values? In an individualistic and positivistic approach experts in law are likely to answer that there are some common values to be protected, but

these may change, and jurisprudence should keep pace with changing moral values. The natural law approach is obviously different and accepts certain basic values which deserve to be protected and defended at all times.

Legislation as it is now in most countries appears to favor the right to express one's opinions and the right to be informed. However, there are some restrictions:

(a) the personal honor of people must be respected.
 (b) youths must be protected against dangerous influences.

(c) extremely wild opinions which hurt an important section of the nation cannot be spread. I refer here to a law, passed in France on July 13, 1990, which makes it a crime to deny that the Holocaust has taken place or that it does not have such an outstanding importance when compared to other genocides in our times. In Germany the right to information is predominant over many restrictions which have been imposed in the past³. The tendency is to enhance the individual's freedom to express his views. A well published case is that of a school teacher who painted a slogan on his car: "Soldiers are murderers". The man was condemned for spreading lies, stirring up feelings of hatred and offending the German army. Surprisingly, on appeal, the Supreme Court annulled his previous condemnation. The majority of the Justices felt that the right to express one's opinion prevailed over a possible offense to the army. Needless to say that the verdict raised a storm of protest. It rests more on an individualistic ideology than on the appropriate concept of man as a social being and awareness of one's obligations to the community.

The right to be informed

In order to understand and to evaluate the task of the press to inform the citizens one must first consider those to whom this information is destined. Do people at large, do the citizens of a particular country have the right to be informed? Legislators and the press insist that the public does have this right. Moreover, by some implicit conclusion it is suggested and assumed that it must be the press and the broadcasting corporations to inform

the public. However, although for all practical purposes they fulfil this task, this conclusion is by no means certain. One can imagine a country in which the government and local administrators provide the necessary information through public announcers. It seems meaningless to say that the individual citizen has a right to be informed about all accidents happening elsewhere in the country or about wars and earthquakes in other continents. It may have certain advantages to know about some of these events, but their very number and frequency make that knowing about them is quite useless, especially when this sort of information is taking the place of more useful knowledge. It seems difficult to deduce from natural law a broad right to be informed about what nowadays makes up 80 or 90% of the news

One has the right to learn the things one needs to know to live in this world, to be a member of a particular society and to carry out one's tasks. There is also a more remote right to gather knowledge in general. Intellectual knowledge is a most important good and contributes greatly to man's perfection. However, gathering certain types of knowledge which do not contribute to improve human life, turn the mind away from more important things and are not referable to man's true end, is without value. Occasionally the pseudo and shallow information which makes up the greater part of the programs nowadays diffused by the media even promotes vices.

On the other hand, one may also argue that people need some distraction and that many of the programs carried by the press and the TV contribute to turn their minds away from the difficulties and problems of their professional life and help take away stress. However, this hardly seems to constitute a title for justifying the spreading of the totality of the information the media carry. Our conclusion is that from the point of view of natural law the «right to be informed» must be qualified. It does not seem to cover the flood of rather useless news items placed before us day after day. For instance, it seems doubtful to me whether we have the right to be informed about all the details of the vices of leading statesmen, especially when the media keep hammering on a certain case for weeks and months. If much of the information spread is naive or irrelevant one cannot speak of a "right" to it.

The right to inform

The "right of the public to be informed" is often brandished by the press as something absolute which justifies the means by which reporters investigate and which makes them condemn secrecy on the side of the police, attempts by the state prosecution to keep the lid on certain cases, the refusal of the military to grant access to sensitive information and, above all, which makes them invade the sphere of privacy of people. In general the press and the broadcasting corporations do not sufficiently take into account the fact that the so-called interest that the public is informed does not have priority over the privacy rights of persons⁴. Furthermore, the claim that it is the press which has the mission to inform the public is not so easy to demonstrate.

Insisting on an indispensable task of the press goes into the direction of promoting it to the status of a *fourth power* and tends to give the media the feeling that it is their sacred mission to supervise, control, criticize and expose the executive, legislative and juridical powers. The media claim the right to start parallel investigations. One wonders whether we have to do here with an intrusion into the area reserved to the judiciary. Even if widespread corruption lends some title to this claim of the media, instead of speaking of a right to such investigations it would be better to say that, with regard to informing the public, the press can make a contribution and be of some importance. Unfortunately, the way in which the self-styled mission of the press is affirmed brings with it the danger of violating the private sphere of the citizens. Furthermore, in opposition to politicians and judges reporters are not elected and not subject to control, other than a sort of intern supervision by the direction of their newspaper or broadcasting corporation.

The French language has a word to express the enormous power of the media, sc. *mediacracy*. The term suggests that the political leaders of a country show the tendency to speak and sometimes even to act in function of the press and television, that is to say, as a sort of appendix to the media which decide who is going to win the sympathy of the people. The one who controls the media, controls the elections. Since for many politicians their first term in office

is the period during which they do the groundwork for being re-elected, it is obvious that to a considerable extent they depend on the media. In this way the media undermine the democratic functioning of political life. It is a sad thing that our societies seem to be going back to the situation in the formerly communist dominated countries where the media were the exclusive organ of the party. Nowadays their power is far more insidious, they spread an anonymous ideology, a set of values which only partly express the dominant thinking of the more outspoken part of the people, and partly the ideology of the redaction of the newspapers and of the staff of the broadcasting systems⁵.

This ideology can be that of a particular newspaper or broadcasting system, but it is sometimes shared by several newspapers and reporters. In this way a sort of "pensée unique" is imposed upon the public. An example is the propaganda the Newspaper *Le Monde* and some other publications make in favor of legislation which assigns a legal status to two homosexuals living together and gives them the same fiscal benefits as married couples have. This propaganda is based on the an appeal to human rights, to personal freedom and superficial emotions. In Germany publications such as *Der Spiegel*, *Der Stern*, *Die Zeit* and others provide unilateral information and sometimes resort to open attacks against Christianity. The attacks are so virulent that many compare the situation to the pre-war years when the Nazis systematically slandered the Christian churches.

While representatives of the media stress the right to inform they show a surprising tendency to forget the *duties* accompanying these rights and to overlook some surprising inconsistencies in the way they carry out their task:

(A) the press has the duty to inform *objectively*, to make a careful study of issues and their details. Now everyone knows how time consuming an objective, in-depth study is and how relatively few people are able to carry it out. When I read the reporting on Church news and the activity of the Holy See in a leading newspaper as *Le monde* or in some Dutch papers like *NRC* and *Trouw* I am horrified at the lack of knowledge and sometimes at the show of bad will displayed. They write in such a way as to

please a section of their readers who love to hear some criticism and sarcastic remarks about the Christian Church. But the same may sometimes apply to certain other sections of the news. I remember that some 30 years ago *Time* once carried an extensive report on the Dutch company Philips. I thought it was quite good, but when I asked a befriended director of this company what he thought of it, he said he could only smile, because much of the report was besides the truth. There are reporters who do have a good knowledge of certain fields and write very well, but others gather hear-say about a certain topic, make assumptions and suggestions, if possible in a sensational way. I recall the recent accusations against the US Army of having used the poisonous gas Sarin in Vietnam. Reporters are for ever in a hurry. They inform quickly but not always correctly. They want to present the actuality, but actuality alone is poor nourishment, for what today is actual, is no longer so to-morrow. As Kierkegaard said, a person who marries the trend of his time, will soon be a widower.

It is also a fact that most, if not all newspapers and TV boards, follow a definite trend, in favor of a particular party, of liberalism or conservatism. Some specialize in scandals, others are vaguely Christian or, on the contrary, rather anti-Christian. Many reporters pass through the experience that their articles are rewritten by the editors, and sometimes state things quite differently from what they originally had written. There is much internal censorship. The board of directors, in its turn, is exposed to all sorts of pressures by owners or shareholders and the need to watch the circulation numbers, etc. In certain countries the political situation is such that, at the slightest criticism of the government, a newspaper will be forbidden and reporters imprisoned.

Newspapers and TV programs seldom give full coverage of opinions and events that do not fit into their particular creed or policy and, on the other hand, impose certain programs on the public, such as the world cup, as if this sports event is all of a sudden so important that people have the right to be informed about it.. Apparently the media mix their so sacred duty to inform objectively about what is important with a good deal of entertainment.

What I am saying is not unknown. During the summer of 1992 the presidential election in the US

was coming up. For a period of some two months the *Boston Globe*, the largest New England newspaper, gave a very favorable coverage of Clinton's personality and campaign, whereas president Bush was treated as an orphan, hardly got 20% of the space and often his program was not favorably presented. Some people checked the time devoted in the programs of the Süd-Deutsche Funk to love and marriage. It appeared that in the course of one year more than 80% of emission time was devoted to divorce, adultery, free love and homosexual unions, whereas the normal marriage found only scant attention. Critical observers suggest that this way of doing cannot but instill the conviction that ordinary married life is unusual, if not abnormal, and that one best acts according to the standards set by the TV programs.

In the eighties more than a million people in Cambodia were chased from their homes, starved and finally terminated. This genocide attracted little attention in the media. In four years time ABC, CBS and NBC together devoted some 59 minutes to the events there. Do we still speak of objective information about world events, or should we say that television systems even more than the press are inclined to adapt themselves to the less lofty interests of their audience and their shareholders in order to strengthen their economic position?

I found an interesting reflection on the issue in a German publication entitled "Our Daily Disinformation"⁶. When farmers cheat with their products, when vineries adulterate their wines, when witnesses in court lie, they are liable to be prosecuted. When the newspapers do so, most of the time nothing happens. In theory publishing false news is punishable. A French law of July 29, 1881, stipulates that prosecution is possible when the facts published are not true, are likely to threaten public peace and when the authors acted in bad faith. More frequent are cases where the news is deformed. Various means are at the disposal of the reporters and the direction: the selection of a title, omissions, adding unconfirmed messages and gossip. In this connection it has been argued that sometimes the media themselves become the message, that is they propose a certain view, place the facts in such a context as to promote this view and use their technical means to massage the mind of the public⁷.

To inform objectively the papers should also give sufficient space to readers who send in letters of protest, something which they do not always do.

On the whole the sensational, the emotional, the extraordinary constitutes a great part of the news. This is so because there is no particular concern for informing the intellect (despite what they say) but feelings are stirred up, the curiosity of the public is satisfied as long as it gets a daily portion of this drug. A sort of addiction may develop.

In many countries the TV and movie industries enjoy a great measure of freedom, because it is assumed that they fulfil a useful task. There are doubts, however, about the benefits coming to the public: (a) The public is confronted not with reality itself but with a reproduction, with a virtual reality. (b) The natural relation of word and image is inverted. Images should illustrate the word, but in many TV programs images dominate while independent thought suffers. Spectators let themselves float along on the stream of images. Thus TV can easily work like a drug and charm its spectators. One is reminded of George Orwell's manipulated man. (c) The sheer abundance of images, their rapid succession create a loss of direction. People become puzzled as to what to choose. (d) Finally, various programs promote the process of further commercialization of society.

Another fact to which some analysts have drawn attention is the unavowed partiality of most of the media, which profess a sort of anonymous ideology which dissolves political as well as moral life. We call this ideology anonymous in so far as it constitutes a climate rather than an argued system, It tends to cut people loose from their roots in reason and history as well as in religion. It suggests that any evolution is irresistible and that, in order to become happy, one must adopt the model of happiness presented by the media. This anonymous ideology is materialistic, recommends the values of the body, the total freedom of the individual to be expressed and renewed in his free choices by which he cuts himself loose from his ties with the past, his education, his ethical code, his religion. It impregnates our daily life and influences our behavior. It replaces patient learning by the culture of shocking people, of enticing them by ever new images. It tells us: you better act as we show most people to act. Everyone does it, why not do the

same? It excludes permanent truth. It opposes what it calls dogma, for it does not want to have its hands tied, it does not want to believe in ultimate truth. In the European media attacks against Christianity are becoming more frequent. The reason probably is that Christianity, and in particular the Catholic Church and the Pope, are one of the very few instances who uphold some definite truths and defend a permanent ethical code.

In this predicament only natural law ethics and a strictly scientific approach can bring improvement. One should perhaps separate totally the entertainment media from those who communicate information. It might also help if more privately held broadcasting systems were created which can present the dominant views held by the main groups in society.

(B) Another question is *whom the press should inform*. If we consider the principle stated above (the right to express one's views and of being informed), it follows that this information should be for everybody, The government should be informed but also other newspapers so that they could help spreading the news and transmit it to more people. However, we know how important a scoop is to an individual reporter and to his newspaper. Economic interests are at stake, so that special news is jealously kept secret until the moment of its diffusion by a particular paper or TV station.

C) The press must use *honest means* to obtain information. If a reporter obtains information through infraction or graft, his reporting is no longer covered by the right of the press to freedom⁸. It is debatable whether information gathered in an illegitimate way may nevertheless be published⁹. It is commonly acknowledged that a reporter cannot be obliged to indicate his sources. In June 1998 a reporter of the TV Station France 3, Gilles Millet, was arrested. While investigating the terrorist movement on the island of Corsica, of which the governor was assassinated three months earlier, he had associated with some of the terrorists and had come into the possession of secret reports of the police and the internal revenue service. You can imagine the storm of protests because of his arrest: such a well deserving and capable reporter... It is not uncommon for investigative reporters to resort

to devious or unlawful means to obtain information. Unfortunately one cannot say that this is always done out of idealism to bring the truth to the public. In many cases the motivation is rather a financial issue; the reporter's fame, his career, the desire to unmask abuses, to cause sensation or to prove the underlying assumption that everyone in power is corrupt.

The actual situation is quite bad. Under the pretext of informing the public and resorting to the right to do so, a lot of other interests, economic, political and ideological, play a role. The theory of the freedom and task of the press is based on an idealistic view of democracy: the citizens are mature and have a lively interest in state affairs; the press is serious and objective, without any prejudice and not exposed to undue pressures; learned reporters devote their time to studying the various fields of human life and activity assigned to them. Yet the real situation is often a far cry from these principles.

The limits imposed on what the media may inform about

(A) The German Constitution¹⁰ states that a person's *personal honor* is a good that restricts the right to communication and the freedom of the press. This good is protected by law. However, the text does not put it on the same level as such other goods as one's life, freedom of expression, freedom of choosing one's profession, personal property. A man's honor is a good highly regarded in ancient Athens, in Rome, and is acknowledged in the constitutions of many states. For instance, one finds it back in Art. 10, section 2 of the European Convention for Human Rights. The first president of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Theodor Heuss, commented on this article saying that the right to express one's opinion freely is limited by the protection of personal honor. False information about people's private or public life is not admissible¹¹. The protection of one's honor comprises the right that his human dignity be respected, and the right to his reputation in society a person has acquired in the course of time.

It is not right away clear how to solve the numerous conflicts between the freedom to gather

information and to express one's opinion on the one hand and the protection of the honor of individual citizens and of groups on the other. Analogous to this problem is the question how to reconcile the right to gather information with the protection of a sphere of privacy. Investigative journalism does not entitle reporters to trespass on other people's property. It is often not sufficiently taken into account that the so-called right of the public to be informed cannot claim priority over privacy rights of persons¹². Dutch jurisprudence assumes that there is no priority of either of these two rights over the other, although the conviction is growing that the personal sphere must be protected¹³.

As for the first question, I do not dispose over many data, except for Germany. Over the past 20 years the Supreme Court systematically gave priority to the freedom of the media over the protection of one's honor. A person's right to his honor was vindicated when the media had deliberately falsified the data or had used grossly offensive terms. Especially noteworthy is that insinuations and assumptions against which a person can hardly defend himself are practically always tolerated. This means that one can say anything concerning public officials. French law stresses the right to response¹⁴. A newspaper must insert the response to attacks upon one's honor. Insertion can be refused if the text incriminates a third person or attacks the honor of the reporter.

This means that whenever a question is debated in public one can say almost anything. Public debate has become a sort of supreme value because of which the respect for individual persons and politicians is dwindling. Moreover, in certain countries, public debate is sometimes conducted in uncouth terms and civilized forms are lost. With regard to the situation in Germany some see here the influence of the Frankfurter Schule which teaches as one of its main themes that we should put an end to the oppression of people by their fellow men and should criticize as many institutions as possible. The redaction of progressive newspapers took over this program and reporters began to dish out accusations and criticism. Although the reporter's first task should be to provide objective information, a number of reporters began to write in order to change the people's way of thinking and to make them critical with regard to

authorities. The star example of such a policy is provided by the weekly *Der Spiegel*.

Considering the protection of one's honor from the point of view of natural law, contemporary ways of proceeding in certain countries seems to go against it. The secret of instruction is frequently violated. Persons under investigation are assumed to be innocent as long as they have not been condemned, but the newspapers spread the information and in many cases the reputation of those investigated is permanently damaged. However, natural law forbids that one's defects are made public, unless by the court. Those who spread the news sometimes have the intention of harming or even of destroying the suspect's good name. The media can go so far as to exercise considerable pressure on the court and to influence the outcome of the procedure¹⁵.

(B) *The sphere of privacy.* Art 12 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* says that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks". The right to gather information may not go so far as to be an intrusion in this private sphere. Those aspects of a person's work and life which are in the public sphere do not come in under article 12. The distinction between these two spheres may not always be easy. A person's medical record belongs to the private sphere, but it is another question whether the public has the right to know when because of a serious illness a president, a pope or a prime minister may no longer be able to accomplish their task.

The German Supreme Court reads in Article 5 of the Constitution that every citizen has a private, autonomous, inviolable sphere of his own life, to which he may retire and has to be left alone if he wishes so. In certain European countries much attention is given to the protection of this private sphere, especially now that data banks are constituted. In Germany every citizen must decide himself to what extent his personal data can be made public¹⁶. In the Netherlands judges consider that there must be a proportion between the importance the gathering of news may have in certain cases and the demands of the individual citizen to protect his private sphere. British law

states that personal data must only be collected fairly and lawfully, sc. with legitimate means and ordinarily from the person who is concerned himself

(C). In addition to this private sphere there is also *public life*. There is a growing conviction that the doings of the government and of the administration of the European Union should be open for control. The more complex government becomes, the more the citizens and the media demand transparency and openness. The feeling is that at the higher levels of the administration of the community's affairs there is too much secrecy. The terms transparency and openness first made their appearance during the negotiations leading up to the Maastricht Treaty. However, in the legislation of some individual states it had been acknowledged earlier. In 1966 Lyndon Johnson signed the *Freedom of Information Act* which states that a democracy works best when people have all the information the security of the nation permits. In Europe it was acknowledged that openness would bring the citizens of the member states closer to Europe when there would be more transparency¹⁷. However, the European Council of Ministers, the highest organ of the European Union, is not very

open. Deliberations of the Council of ministers are considered secret as inter-governmental deliberations are. Decisions are taken without democratic process and are kept out of the public eye.

There certainly is a need for more openness, in order to help solve the crisis of confidence in the institutions of the European Union, to increase the interest of the individual citizen and to function as a check on the activities of the apparatchiks. On the other hand, one can also understand that in many deliberations confidentiality is required. Confidentiality of the proceedings is the reason most often invoked by the General Secretariate of the Union for refusing access to a document. There is also the secret of national defense and the secrecy surrounding delicate negotiations on political and economic issues. However, the European Court increasingly decides in favor of openness. At the Amsterdam meeting of 1997, article 191a declares that any citizen of the Union shall have a right of access to the proceedings of the European Parliament.

It is obvious that from the viewpoint of natural law openness, transparency and access to proceedings must prevail, unless superior interests impose a certain confidentiality. ☒

Homosexuality: Is the Catholic Church Guilty of Discrimination?

By Kenneth D. Whitehead

I.

The Holy See's new Instruction on homosexuality and the priesthood has been sensationalized in some places in the media as if it represented some kind of radical new departure for the Catholic Church. However, only someone ignorant of the Church's constant teaching against homosexual acts—or persuaded that this teaching could somehow be changed in accordance with modern ideas—could ever have seriously imagined that the

new Instruction would turn out to be anything other than a solemn reiteration of the Church's traditional teaching and practice with regard to homosexuality.

In the permissive moral climate of today, however, many people nevertheless go on thinking that the Church is simply going to have to reconcile herself and come to terms with modern society's current acceptance of homosexuality as natural and normal—as well as with contemporary society's at least passive acceptance of practically every other kind of voluntary sexual activity whatever (provided only that it is "consensual"). Spawned by the so-called sexual revolution beginning in the 1960s, this is the

general attitude the Church faces today in the modern secular world in which she lives; and, it is widely thought, the Church will eventually have to accept this new morality, at least in some respects.

Hence the new Instruction from the Congregation for Catholic Education generally barring homosexuals from admission to seminaries or to the priesthood except in extremely limited circumstances has encountered the same kind of negative and critical reaction that has so often been given in recent years to other authoritative Church documents upholding traditional teaching and practice in the face of contemporary wishes and expectations. This negative and critical reaction comes from inside as well as outside the Church. Although the document has not been attacked head-on as much as it has been belittled and nit-picked, this too inevitably undermines its authority and credibility, and there are other signs that it is not universally being accepted as settling the question about homosexuality in the priesthood. In the minds of many, this question is considered to be still an open question.

Some accounts contend that what the document says and prescribes is not really clear. Other accounts speak of the need to “interpret” or even “decipher” it. It is noted that Roman documents are not seldom subject to modification in practice, and, in this case, many bishops, major superiors of religious orders, and seminary rectors are said to be at loggerheads about this particular document, and this will inevitably lead to divergences in how it is implemented. Yet other commentators have asked, sometimes querulously, what is meant by such expressions employed in the document as “deep-seated homosexual tendencies”—as if the meaning of this particular expression were not pretty clear; it appears, for example, in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC #2358).

Meanwhile, a number of priests have “come out” openly as homosexuals since the document was issued, apparently determined to register their defiance of the Roman decision; a few of them have even resigned from the priesthood. Finally, there have been a few open letters signed by priests, both here and abroad, declaring that homosexual priests make such a great contribution to the Church’s mission that—the suggestion is—this new Roman document cannot really be considered the final word in the matter,

or be expected to stand for long.

One of the main impressions left in the minds of anyone dependent on typical media reporting for whatever knowledge they may have of the nature and contents of this Instruction is surely that the Catholic Church is—once again, the suggestion is!—gratuitously insulting an entire class of men, homosexuals, by stigmatizing them and trying to deny to them their legitimate “rights.”

In reality, the document is quite clear about what it says and prescribes. It says that homosexuality is an “objectively disordered” condition which as a general rule renders men unfit for ordination. Hence homosexuals as a rule should not be ordained; nor should they be admitted to seminaries for priestly training, either. The document specifies in very plain words that “the Church, while profoundly respecting the person in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies, or support the so-called ‘gay culture.’”

However, the door to ordination is not entirely closed to them, since it is recognized that homosexual tendencies are sometimes only “transient,” and can sometimes be overcome with what the document calls “affective maturity.” Such tendencies must have been overcome at least three years prior to ordination to the diaconate, however. Thus, the document does not deny in principle that men with homosexual tendencies are capable of leading the life of chastity required by the Catholic priesthood; it is granted that men with such tendencies have been good and holy priests. It also means that bishops, major superiors, and seminary rectors do have some small discretion in the matter of admission of some of them to the seminary and to ordination.

In the climate of today, though, this area of discretion will undoubtedly be stretched to the limit, while the achievement of “affective maturity” in the case of given candidates will very likely be claimed more often than the Roman drafters ever imagined. At the same time, however, the major thrust of the document quite definitely is to deny admittance to the seminary and to ordination of men with “deep-seated homosexual tendencies” or a history of homosexual involvement, and that decision will surely have a profound influence on the selection of future

candidates for ordination.

Nowhere, though, does the Instruction even suggest that the ordinations of homosexual men might be invalid. But at the same time it nowhere accords the slightest recognition either to what the modern world has generally come to consider the main point about homosexuality, namely, that it supposedly results from a natural (and presumably permanent and irreversible) “orientation.” The Instruction never speaks of “sexual orientation” at all as such, but only of “homosexual tendencies.” It thus does not even recognize the category of “sexual orientation”; nor does it employ the term on which so many of the modern world’s ideas and conclusions about homosexuality have come to be based.

In the view of the Holy See, so-called sexual orientation does *not* define one’s identity or tell “who one is,” as so many homosexuals claim. While the American Psychiatric Association ceased considering homosexuality an illness or pathology as far back as 1973, acceding thereby to prevalent modern thinking as well as greatly influencing it, the Church continues instead to consider homosexuality to be, in effect, a pathology; this is implicit in the Church’s characterization of the condition as a “disorder.”

In short, this document, which bears a title that perhaps only the Holy See could have come up with—“Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in View of their Mission to the Seminary and Holy Orders”—presents an entirely traditional Catholic position on the subject of homosexuality and on the Catholic moral teaching and practice with regard to it. Once again, in the face of tremendous contrary pressures, the Church’s magisterium is found standing serenely firm on the Church’s traditional understanding of a contentious and controversial issue.

Dated November 4, 2005, and issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Instruction has been in preparation at least since 1996. Reportedly, the suggestion that led to its preparation came from Pope John Paul II in 1994. The document is thus not a reaction to the Church’s clerical sex-abuse crisis, although it mentions in passing that its issuance has been made “more urgent by the current situation”—even while it does not specify what the

“current situation” is; that is thought to be well understood.

What is perhaps most surprising about the Instruction, in the end, is how long it took to produce it, especially since it contains so little in the way of breaking any new ground on the substance of the question. Rather, it simply reiterates in plain and unmistakable language what the Catholic teaching about homosexuality has been all along—and what official Catholic practice with regard to homosexuality and what admission to the seminary and to ordination are supposed to have been all along (except that, in some now notorious cases, this official Church teaching and practice have not been consistently followed in recent years in the United States as well as elsewhere).

A 1961 document from the Holy See on selecting candidates for the priesthood expressly excluded homosexuals in a single sentence using language reflective of that time: “Those affected by the perverse inclination to homosexuality or pederasty should be excluded from religious vows or ordination.” The present document makes reference to two other subsequent official documents in the same vein, one dating from 1985 and the other from 2002. The 1985 document discussed such terms as “practice,” “orientation,” and “temptation” in relation to the chaste celibacy required by the priesthood, and concluded that the term “temptation” was to be preferred to that of “orientation”; thus, it is not just a matter of not employing the language concerning so-called sexual orientation; the Church has specifically rejected that language. This 1985 document also noted that “people have to face many and diverse temptations in life, and the mark of the Christian is in bearing them and resisting them, with the grace of God.”

The 2002 document referred to in the present Instruction came from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments and stated that “ordination to the diaconate and the priesthood of homosexual men or men with homosexual tendencies is absolutely inadvisable and imprudent, and from the pastoral point of view very risky. A homosexual person or one with a homosexual tendency is not, therefore, fit to receive the sacrament of holy orders.” This latter 2002 document caused quite a stir at the time it was issued and

should have alerted people to what was coming. The present Instruction is nothing if not consistent with these earlier Church documents on the subject.

In fact, practically the only seemingly new things in the present document are a couple of bare sentences stating that a priest must achieve “affective maturity” in order to be able “to relate correctly to both men and women, developing in him a true sense of spiritual fatherhood towards the Church community.” In other words, priests representing Christ must be bridegrooms to Christ’s bride, the Church. The Instruction contends that the homosexual condition “gravely hinders them from relating correctly to men and women.” Apart from mention of this particular impediment, the present document speaks only in the most general terms of the “negative consequences” that the Church believes would follow upon the general acceptance of homosexuals for priestly ordination.

With regard to those homosexuals who in the past may have used the priesthood as a refuge from social and family expectations of marriage and family life, this document introduces a salutary note of *honesty*—much needed today with regard to the whole question of homosexuality. The Instruction states: “It would be gravely dishonest for a candidate to hide his own homosexuality in order to proceed, despite everything, toward ordination. Such a deceitful attitude does not correspond to the spirit of truth, loyalty, and openness that must characterize the personality of him who believes he is called to serve Christ and his Church in the ministerial priesthood.”

Thus, in a very brief compass, this Instruction re-establishes what was never really changed or dis-established by the Church in the first place. However, it is hardly any secret that both Catholic teaching and practice with regard to homosexuality, especially as they relate to the priesthood, have hardly been consistently followed in certain quarters in recent years; and, indeed, have often been seriously called into question, especially as a result of the rise of the contemporary homosexual-rights movement, and of the increasing acceptance in contemporary society at large of homosexuals as supposedly constituting a legitimate class of people in society—not deviant, but merely pursuing “alternative lifestyles”—and of homosexual practices as suddenly natural and normal—

and not, let us say, perverse and immoral, as once was almost automatically considered to be the case. From being the love that dare not speak its name, homosexuality became transmuted, as some wag remarked, into the desire that won’t shut up.

In recent years, what is considered by some to be “enlightened opinion” within the ranks of Catholics has similarly moved quite markedly towards tolerance and even acceptance of active homosexuality. In modern society, in which discrimination of any kind is one of the few things now considered plainly wrong or immoral—and indeed at a time when almost nothing else is any longer characterized as such—not a few Catholics too have not wanted to be seen as guilty of “discriminating” against homosexuals.

In the past several years, during which rumors of a forthcoming Roman document on homosexuality and the priesthood have been rife, not a few voices of theologians, members of religious orders, and even a few bishops have been raised making a definite point of affirming a seemingly unqualified acceptance of homosexuals. At the same time, some bishops have shown no hesitancy or reluctance in ordaining openly homosexual candidates to the diaconate or priesthood. Similarly, many dioceses and parishes have continued with active gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, or transsexual (GLBT) “ministries,” thus inevitably affixing a moral stamp of approval on these more than highly questionable categories and on the activities associated with them. Similarly, some dioceses or parishes have sponsored (or, at any rate, have allowed) the celebration of so-called “gay pride” Masses. This same kind of moral blindness has been exhibited on ostensibly Catholic college campuses, where “gay” student organizations are too often given official recognition, and where pro-“gay” speakers and programs are not only allowed, but are sometimes even favored.

All of this remained more or less true, even following the revelations of the clerical sex-abuse scandals beginning in 2002, after which it soon became widely known and publicized that most of the sex-abuse cases being exposed were not the result merely of “pedophilia,” as the media and elite opinion continually tried to claim. Rather, fully 81 percent of these clerical sex-abuse cases, according to the report of the U.S. bishops’ own National Review Board,

involved homosexual priests in relationships with post-pubescent boys. Those who, even in the face of such statistics, continue to argue that homosexuals are not the only, or even the majority of, sex-abusers, not only fail to explain how a statistic such as this 81 percent can simply be blithely ignored; they are also failing to come to grips with such studies as one that appeared in a professional journal showing that the less than 3 percent of the population consisting of male homosexuals was responsible for more than 36 percent of the recognized cases of abuse of children.

Then there were the revelations of the homosexual networks in the priesthood and in seminaries and religious orders, again involving a number of bishops, some of whom had to step down in disgrace as a result of these revelations. One might have thought that all of these evil and offensive manifestations, so contrary to the Church's firm moral teaching, would have given some pause to those within the Church attempting to promote the normality of homosexuality. To some extent, perhaps, they have given pause at least to some of them.

Still, the critical reception given to the Holy See's Instruction on homosexuality and the priesthood from so many within the Church's official structures cannot be anything but disappointing and disquieting. Many, apparently, simply do not see what is at stake. Thus, it does not appear at the moment that this authoritative Church Instruction will really settle the homosexual priest question—any more than other similar authoritative Church documents intended to settle such controversial questions as theological dissent within the Church or the ordination of women have, in fact, succeeded in settling the important questions they addressed.

At the very least, though, this new Instruction should perhaps cramp the style of some of those within the Church who continue to think that the affirmation and practice of homosexuality can somehow be made compatible with Catholic teaching and practice, or that the Church's long-standing moral condemnation of any homosexual acts whatever could now, somehow, be modified or abandoned simply because the modern world no longer considers these acts to be wrong. This is not going to happen.

II.

Among the reasons why the new Vatican Instruction on homosexuality and the priesthood has not definitively settled the on-going controversy on the subject are the various and sometimes conflicting reactions not only of some Catholic theologians and other ostensibly expert commentators on the subject, but even of some of the Catholic bishops themselves. It is not just that the document has been subjected to criticism (and the criticism has largely been allowed to stand); many of those responsible for its implementation have also not displayed very much enthusiasm for it, either.

One of the most widely reported of the episcopal reactions to the document was that of the current president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) himself, Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Washington. Bishop Skylstad had written in his diocesan newspaper in October, prior to the actual issuance of the Instruction, that "there are many wonderful and excellent priests in the Church who have a gay orientation, are chaste and celibate, and are very effective ministers of the Gospel... Witch-hunts and gay-bashing have no place in the Church." The suggestion here could only be that homosexuality, whatever else it might be, was surely not any bar to the priesthood, in the opinion of the USCCB president.

In numerous press reports, this statement of the president of the U.S. bishops' conference was contrasted with that of Bishop John M. D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, who was quoted in the press as saying that Bishop Skylstad's position was "simply wrong." The media, of course, enjoy the spectacle of bishops contradicting each other in this way—but only rarely is there such a good clear-cut example of it as in this case. In Bishop D'Arcy's opinion, the new Instruction "*does* bar anyone whose sexual orientation is towards one's own sex, and it is permanent" (emphasis added). Bishop D'Arcy's view that the ban is total was not entirely borne out in the text of the actual Roman document itself, of course, but it seemed closer than the viewpoint of the USCCB president. Moreover, Bishop D'Arcy's viewpoint certainly represented a healthy realism about the possible consequences of indiscriminately ordaining homosexuals, as many apparently wanted.

Both Bishop Skylstad and Bishop D'Arcy were then among the American bishops who issued formal statements on the Instruction when it came out. The statements of both bishops reflected their positions as quoted in the press. The statement of Bishop D'Arcy, no doubt representing at least one current of opinion among the American bishops, strongly supported and even echoed the language of the Instruction itself: "The document reaffirms and makes more specific things the Church has taught for decades," he wrote. "Not everyone is called to be a priest." Bishop D'Arcy described the exclusion of men practicing homosexuality or possessing deep-seated homosexual tendencies or supporting the so-called "gay culture" as a position which he himself had "supported in writing for over 30 years, going back to a time when [he] was a spiritual director in a seminary." He pointedly cited the figure of the 81 percent of the clerical sex-abuse cases being those of homosexual priests abusing young males.

Bishop Skylstad's statement was more nuanced, and his views probably represented those of more American bishops. Accurately restating the positions announced in the Instruction, and making clear that these were the Church's official positions, he nevertheless then went on to urge his fellow bishops and major superiors "to make this Instruction the occasion for a comprehensive *discussion* with seminary rectors and vocations directors about the affective maturity which every priesthood candidate should manifest" (emphasis added). A number of other bishops similarly stressed the need for further discussion. The document was thus widely seen not as a finished or cut-and-dried thing but as a matter for discussion among those who will principally be applying it. There *are* "interpretations" of it that can be made, in other words. Claiming the achievement of "affective maturity," for example, will be probably be seen by some as a possible means to continue to admit men with homosexual tendencies.

This kind of reaction was not untypical of how the USCCB quite regularly "receives" authoritative Roman documents. It has been the long-standing custom of the American bishops to accept publicly and even praise such Roman documents when they are issued, and this is exactly what Bishop Skylstad did in the name of the conference in the present case.

However, how the USCCB or individual bishops implement a given Instruction can be another question, just as a call for further discussion can be a not very subtle signal that there *will* be variations in how the document is understood and put into practice.

In his statement in the name of the USCCB, Bishop Skylstad also made a point of mentioning the need to "respect...all people irrespective of sexual orientation"—as if lack of respect for homosexuals were the basic problem here. In harmony with his earlier article in his diocesan newspaper, he also addressed the question of whether "a homosexually inclined man can be a good priest." "The answer," he asserted, "lies in the lives of those men who, with God's grace, have been truly dedicated priests." While this is true enough, the continuing anxious concern evidenced here with trying to appease pro-homosexual opinion (while the grave evil of homosexual acts as well as the excesses of the contemporary "gay culture" are generally passed over in silence), along with considering this clear and unmistakable Instruction from the Holy See to be merely a matter for further discussion, is troubling, especially coming from a president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It points to a strange reluctance, unfortunately encountered not seldom today among some American bishops—just as the same reluctance is practically all-pervasive in American society at large today—to recognize the harmful consequences of accepting homosexuality as natural and normal. Bishops who emphasize the "respect" owed to homosexuals are failing, in other words, at least in some degree, to treat homosexuality *as* the disorder which the Church very plainly teaches that it is.

This reluctance to come to grips with the seriousness of the moral problem posed by the acceptance of homosexuality today was reflected in the reactions to the Roman document of some other American bishops. It is almost as if these bishops, and not infrequently other Church spokesmen as well, were *ashamed* of the Church's teaching on homosexuality. Certainly some of them apparently find it necessary to be quite *apologetic* about it. Even while affirming the Instruction in words, as Bishop Skylstad does, the tone and emphasis of his comments, like those of the comments of some other bishops, reflect an apologetic attitude that seems to concede that

homosexuals have a genuine grievance against the Church on account of her teaching about them.

Another example of the same phenomenon came from the newly appointed archbishop of San Francisco, George H. Niederauer (formerly bishop of Salt Lake City). In a press interview, Bishop Niederauer championed the same view that Bishop Skylstad did to the effect that homosexuals were perfectly capable of being good priests. So they are in some cases, but that for good and sufficient reasons, and only after long and careful study, the Holy See has seen fit to take a different, and indeed much broader, view of the total problem anyway, is surely a responsible decision that archbishops should not be contesting in public. As Pope John Paul II reminded the American bishops—in the city of San Francisco, no less, back in 1987—when they fail to uphold the legitimate decisions of the Holy See, *they undermine their own authority*—and this at a time when respect for episcopal authority in the Church in America could hardly be lower because of the way the clerical sex-abuse scandals have mostly been handled. That a bishop with the views on homosexuality in the priesthood of Bishop Niederauer is being sent to San Francisco, of all places, does not bode well for the effectiveness of the Church's mission there in the face of the obstreperous and vulgar—and dismayingly successful—"gay rights" movement.

Then there were the lukewarm reactions of other members of the hierarchy. While again affirming the legitimacy of the Roman document, at least in words, statements such as those issued by Archbishop Theodore McCarrick of Washington, D.C., or Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany, New York, blandly made the claim that seminary and ordination practices in their respective dioceses have all along reflected the norms now set forth in the Holy See's document. This may well be so, but again to come out with a public statement to this effect at this particular time can strongly imply there was never any real need for the issuance of the Holy See's Instruction.

Similarly, the U.S. Conference of the Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) issued a statement averring that the policies of men's religious orders "agree with the statement as it delineates the need for personal discernment with the aid of one's spiritual director"—but at the same time not explicitly stating

its agreement with the Instruction's judgment that homosexual men should not generally be ordained at all. The CMSM statement, again, includes the apparently now obligatory phrase, "regardless of sexual orientation," as if the problem of the homosexual seminarian or priest were not the primary concern for the issuance of the Instruction in the first place.

But if the homosexual proclivities of some seminarians and priests, and the undeniable fact that some of them have acted on these proclivities, were not precisely the problem being addressed, what has the fuss been all about? It almost seems that the Congregation for Catholic Education is being taxed, however mildly the manner of it, for being concerned with something that is supposedly not really a problem at all. In truth, of course, practically the whole world knows and understands by now the ravages inflicted on the Church by the clerical sex-abuse crisis, caused, for the most part, by homosexual priests engaged with adolescent boys. Practically the whole world knows and understands this, except, apparently, some of the Church's own leaders who are charged by their office with remedying the problem.

Acceptance of the idea that homosexuals are gravely harmed and are somehow owed apologies because of the Church's truthful characterization of their same-sex attractions as disordered amounts to something perilously close to an abandonment of the Church's teaching in the face of today's admittedly terrific contrary pressures to accept homosexuality as natural and normal. Often the Church's full teaching gets tacitly laid aside for any practical purposes when the question comes up; when that happens, many Church leaders like to quote the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the respect owed to homosexuals. This would be fine if only they would quote the *Catechism's* entire teaching on the subject; instead they like to quote selectively only the article which specifies that homosexuals:

...do not choose their homosexual condition; for most of them it is a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided (CCC#2358).

As if "unjust discrimination" against homosexuals were the major problem in American society today! To the contrary, the organized homosexual move-

ment in America today is currently on the verge of gaining through the courts full legal recognition and approval for homosexual liaisons and practices. And when that occurs what could then be in the offing are legal penalties imposed against those who are opposed to homosexual practices (such as anyone taking seriously and following Catholic teaching in the matter). The logic of this is perfectly clear: placing obstacles in the way of homosexual “rights” would then indeed be “discrimination,” as that term is currently understood. Nor is the danger to those who believe that homosexuality is a disorder and that homosexual acts are evil and immoral at all hypothetical. Instances of the penalization of such people have already occurred in Canada and in some Scandinavian countries.

Yet even in the face of such a looming danger, many in the leadership ranks of the Catholic Church in America nevertheless apparently go on imagining that the real danger is—“unjust discrimination” against homosexuals! One wonders what kind of a world these people think they are living in. Do they even know that we are engaged in a culture war about all these things? They are so sensitive and tuned in to what contemporary culture thinks and expects that they fail to take with due seriousness what the article in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* coming just before the one quoted above teaches, namely, that:

...homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved (CCC #2357).

Yes, homosexuals—along with everybody else—must assuredly be treated with “respect, compassion, and sensitivity,” as the *Catechism* specifies. But they must be treated this way because of their inherent human dignity, not, for heaven’s sake, *because of* their homosexual deviance! Nor does respect for their human dignity require giving in to their outrageous demands that society, and presumably the Church as well, has to accept and approve of their deviant practices and lifestyles. To go on and on, as a Bishop Skylstad does, about all the “wonderful” and “excellent” homosexual priests there are out there—again, they are surely “wonderful” and “excellent” in spite

of their homosexuality, not because of it—is to misconceive the nature of the problem encountered today by the Church and by Christians in our society. That the current president of the American bishops’ conference seems more concerned with the feelings of possibly insulted and injured homosexuals than with the threat to Catholic moral teaching and the salvation of souls and the moral fabric of American society posed by the gains being regularly being made today by the organized homosexual movement evidences a really badly misplaced list of episcopal priorities.

In any case, the question of the celibacy and chastity of homosexual priests can hardly be so readily assumed, or passed over as a question of no great importance, when the elevated numbers of them who have died of AIDS is considered—not to speak of the numbers of them verifiably involved in the clerical sex-abuse cases that have been exposed. These are painful facts, but they must be taken into consideration when deciding what position the Church must maintain with regard to homosexuality and the priesthood.

On another question, Bishop Skylstad’s very use of the term “gay bashing” without quotation marks points to a tacit acceptance of the current *definition* of the homosexual question that is offered by today’s organized homosexual movement. To accept and use the coined terms, “gay” and “straight,” in the same way that the homosexuals regularly do, is already to concede a considerable degree of normality to homosexuality—and this before any substantive discussion or argument about its real nature ever gets joined. These categories should not simply be accepted in the same way that the homosexuals have seen fit to define and popularize them.

Unfortunately, though, the vice president of the USCCB, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, also made use of the same terms, even while strongly defending the Holy See’s Instruction. He concluded the excellent statement that he issued on the document by declaring that “to portray the Instruction as ‘gay bashing’ or ‘gay banning’ is to misrepresent it.” Yes, but why not speak of “homosexuals” instead of, in effect, tacitly recognizing the existence of a special class of—perfectly normal, just different—people that is implied by the use of the word “gay” to designate them?

Unlike Bishop Skylstad, Cardinal George at least placed these terms within quotation marks (as the Roman Instruction itself did). Better still, though, no member of the American hierarchy—any more than Christians generally—should concede to today’s organized homosexual rights movement the right to change and distort the language and the meaning of words. Unhappily, this has become the reality, with the successful introduction of the terms “gay” and “straight” into contemporary discourse.

III.

If the response to the issuance of the new Roman Instruction on homosexuality and the priesthood has been less than adequate on the part of some of the American bishops, one gets the impression, at least from published accounts, that the “cognitive elites” in the Church today have been almost unanimous in deploring and rejecting the document. In this case, many of them have not so much attacked the Instruction head-on, as has so often been the fate of so many documents from the Holy See for so long—following the prototypical public revolt against the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* back in 1968 (from which the Church has not recovered yet). By now, though, even many in the ranks of the dissenting cognitive elites have learned that the Holy See is not going to change the Church’s teachings in response to their criticisms. This has been amply confirmed by the actions of the Holy See during the three pontificates that have followed that of Pope Paul VI.

Thus, the effectiveness of the documents issued by the Holy See must be undercut in other ways, by damning them with faint praise, for example, or by administering a thousand small, critical cuts. Suggestions can be offered to the effect that Rome does not really understand how things are in America, or perhaps that the “theology” underlying the latest Roman Instruction fails to take into account the latest developments in the field. And so on. Documents issued by the Holy See in the expectation that they will be received and applied here have instead regularly been allowed to become fair game for sustained public criticism in exactly this way. Once it has been established in the minds of the critics that the Roman document does not quite measure up, then it can then be widely criticized with impunity. This

criticism is then generally followed by eventual relegation to the shelf of the disputed document itself, while things then continue to go on pretty much as before. Think *Personae Humanae*. Think *Donum Veritatis*. Think *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Think *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. For that matter, think the American bishops’ own 2004 statement that public figures are no longer going to be allowed to undermine Catholic teaching within Catholic institutions or on Catholic campuses.

This process of “studied inattention” to or even “benign neglect” of elephant-in-the-living-room-type problems in the Church in America was already going on in the case of homosexuality and the priesthood even before the Instruction itself was issued. Various, mostly self-appointed experts, as often as not members of the clergy, have long been accustomed to advance such arguments as that the priest shortage will surely be worsened by discouraging good candidates who also happen to have homosexual tendencies or that the clerical sex-abuse crisis can in no way be laid at the door of homosexuals in the priesthood.

Typically, such statements never seem to elicit any reaction or answers from the hierarchy (sometimes it is members of the hierarchy who are advancing them!); nor do those who advance them ever seem to be disadvantaged as far as their official positions in the Church are concerned. As far as anybody might be able to tell, the dissidents who typically issue such statements could be speaking *for* the Church in America. At the very least, the idea gets across with a great many people that just because Rome has spoken does not mean that that is necessarily how things are going to be. The contemporary reversal of the old maxim, “*Roma locuta est, causa finita*” could hardly be more complete.

What is constant in all this today is that there are plenty of people out there in the Church’s “middle management” or among her cognitive elites who evidently do not have to conceal their disagreement with various Roman decisions and policies. Not a few working pastors were quoted in the press speaking out against the new Instruction virtually as soon as it was issued. The Rev. Richard J. Prendergast, pastor of St. Josaphat Catholic Church in Chicago, for example, was quoted in the *Washington Post* as saying: “We reject the assertion or implication that persons

with a homosexual orientation cannot offer valuable service in leadership roles in our Church.” The Rev. Fred Daley, pastor of St. Francis de Sales Church in Utica, New York, was quoted in the same newspaper as declaring: “I’m a deeply-rooted homosexual and I’m proud of that ; it’s who I am and how God created me; it’s not something transitory...I’ve been ordained for 31 years,” he added, “and I’m committed to the Church’s discipline of celibacy” (but not, evidently, to compliance with the Church’s official and authoritative decisions and directives).

Among the fairly well known, self-identified Catholic intellectuals attacking the document was the journalist, Andrew Sullivan, who strongly articulated the idea that one’s sexuality does define “who one is.” Author of a book advocating same-sex “marriage,” Sullivan has long been prominent among those holding that the Church can and must change her teaching regarding homosexuality. The new Instruction was thus no doubt deeply disillusioning for him. He blamed it all on Pope Benedict XVI personally, during whose pontificate, of course, the document was finally issued.

“What the new pope has done is conflate a sin with an identity,” Sullivan explained. “He has created a new class of human beings who, regardless of what they do, are too psychologically and therefore morally disordered to become priests.” This, according to Andrew Sullivan, is exactly contrary to the teaching and practice of Jesus, whose position he characterizes as “always to ignore the stereotype, the label, the identity... The new pope has now turned that teaching on its head. He has identified a group of people and said, regardless of how they behave or what they do, they are beneath serving God...”

It would probably be impossible to mis-characterize the Roman Instruction and its message more thoroughly than this. To state that the Church’s judgment about homosexuals is made “regardless of what they do” is, precisely, to get the whole thing wrong and backwards. The problem *is* “what they do,” what they insist they should be able to do because of their alleged “orientation,” namely, engage in homosexual acts considered by the Church to be intrinsically evil. In any case, what Jesus did, of course, was to tell sinners to go and sin no more (see John 8). Jesus, precisely, did *not* say: “Persist in

your sin because that is who you are.”

Among the experts hastening to prove the Holy See wrong for the Nth time was a psychologist, Mary Gail Frawley-O’Dea, Ph.D. She turned out to be one of the very same experts called in to address and instruct the American bishops about the clerical sex-abuse crisis at their famous meeting in Dallas in the summer of 2002. How or why the bishops and their staffs manage to find such people to advise them is surely one of the great mysteries of the contemporary Church. In this case, Dr. Frawley-O’Dea, in an article in the *National Catholic Reporter*, cited a number of experts published in professional journals dealing with sex offenders showing that “research indicates that homosexuals are not more likely than heterosexuals to violate minors generally.” These “criminal behaviors,” she tries to explain, “stem not from their sexual orientation but rather reflect their psychological immaturity, arrested development, or anti-social criminal proclivities.” These characterizations, of course, are largely semantic in relation to the equally vague and unspecific kind of term that “sexual orientation” itself is. To cite them is *not* to establish that they themselves could not stem from or be affected by homosexual impulses or tendencies.

Frawley-O’Dea’s citations are thus unconvincing, especially in the face of the 81 percent of clerical sex-abusers engaged with post-pubescent males; if this is not homosexuality being acted out, it is not clear what it could possibly be. Any objective observer is tempted to conclude that the field of “research” she cites is perhaps as confused and even as intellectually and morally corrupt as the kind of “scientific” or “medical” research today that justifies abortion, embryonic stem-cell research, and cloning as if these were morally neutral questions: such “research” is too commonly produced by professionals who are evidently unwilling to state honestly what it is they are talking about.

Thus, Dr. Frawley-O’Dea speaks of “psychosexually mature adult homosexual men”—but they are precisely *not* “psychosexually mature” if they have homosexual impulses which they are willing to act on. Her position amounts to yet one more claim that homosexual impulses are somehow normal (not disordered). She speaks of homosexual predations as “crimes of power,” not of any misuse of the sexual

faculties, much as some radical feminists attempt to describe rape in the same way. The idea seems to be to locate the moral wrong of sex abuse (or rape) in coercion, exploitation, and lack of consent. To locate it in the misuse of the sexual faculties themselves, of course, would mean, logically, also condemning homosexual acts—but that will obviously not do. These acts must remain doable by “mature adult homosexual men,” just as fornication and adultery too must apparently remain doable so long as they are done consensually; otherwise, the freedom secured for people today by the sexual revolution would no longer be operative!

Thus, along with her flawed approach to the actual facts about sex abuse in the Catholic Church, Dr. Frawley-O’Dea employs language indicating that she is anything but an objective observer: she actually claims that “the Vatican’s policy under the new Instruction will *persecute* gay men who have accepted their homosexuality enough to speak about it” (emphasis added). The goal, evidently, is to “accept” one’s homosexuality not transcend it.

It is bad enough that the *National Catholic Reporter* should bring in the ramblings of a Frawley-O’Dea as a supposed *answer* to the Congregation for Catholic Education’s thoroughly thought through and carefully drafted Instruction. With the paper’s editorial in the same issue (12/9/05), it gets worse. Entitled “For What It’s Worth, Our Condolences,” the journal, in a few breathless paragraphs, reprises most of today’s clichés about homosexuality and the priesthood which the organized homosexual rights movement has been promoting all along—and which too many Catholics have quite uncritically bought into. Here are a few samples:

To all those in positions of leadership in the Roman Catholic Church who also happen to be homosexual, we offer our commiseration and sorrow that once again you have been forced to hear your sexuality, an element intrinsic to your humanity, described as an objective disorder...

The description is repugnant, of course, to all those in the church, gay and straight, who understand that homosexuality is, in the overwhelming number of cases, not a chosen orientation but an essential part of one’s nature as heterosexuality is for others... Already the document is being parsed to shreds, but to little avail. Without being too dismissive of the efforts of

canon lawyers and other church authorities, the document will remain a puzzling and unclear instruction because it is, itself, fundamentally disordered...

There is more, but these excerpts more or less sum up the NCR’s whole anti-Instruction case. One wonders from what height of moral ground the *National Catholic Reporter* presumes to correct (and despise) the solemn teaching of the Church of Christ or to offer “condolences” to those supposedly adversely affected by it. On the evidence of their own words, the NCR editors can hardly be imagined any longer to believe that the Catholic Church is “the teacher of truth,” as Vatican Council II taught (*Dignitatis Humanae*, #14). They can hardly be thought to believe this when they are so quick to set aside and denigrate carefully considered and clearly articulated teachings of that same Church in favor of the ideology of the modern homosexual rights movement. What if the teaching that homosexuality is a disorder is *true*? It is no one else but “the teacher of truth” herself, after all, that declares this to be the case.

For the editors of the *National Catholic Reporter*, though, homosexuality is not the only issue on which they have openly declared themselves against the teachings of the Church. On the contrary, *disloyal* opposition is regularly and almost invariably the stance they adopt towards numerous teachings, which nevertheless remain the teachings of the Church. For them it is apparently still the 1960s and “Question Authority” is still the reigning slogan. In the present case, like many other contemporaries, they have simply accepted the claim of the modern organized homosexual rights movement that homosexuality is natural and normal and not a disorder. From this, it follows for most people that homosexual acts are not morally wrong, either.

The main point of asserting the naturalness and consequent acceptability of homosexuality, after all, is to legitimize a condition whose principal defining characteristic is the claim that sexual attractions and hence sexual relations between persons of the same sex are indeed natural and normal and hence not disordered or immoral. Yet a basic contradiction lies at the heart of asserting this position. On the one hand, homosexuality is held to be natural and homosexual acts normal and hence not immoral for those with same-sex attractions. On the other hand, to assert this

is to claim that there *is* no natural and moral use of the human sexual faculties (e.g., in marriage between a man and a woman for mutual self-giving and possible procreation of children). How can homosexual acts be natural and normal for homosexuals if there *are* no natural and normal sex acts?

Once again, it is the Catholic Church that has correctly judged this issue in the recent Instruction on homosexuality and the priesthood. And it can be affirmed without fear of contradiction that, in severely restricting men with deep-seated homosexual

tendencies from entry into the seminary or the priesthood, the Church is in no way guilty of unjust discrimination. ☩

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Language, Truth, and Wittgenstein

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Ludwig Wittgenstein published only one book in his lifetime, the impressively titled *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), but he wrote incessantly, and many works bearing his name have been published since his death in 1951.¹ It is safe to say that very few, perhaps none, of these works would have been considered by their author as completely finished, meeting his satisfaction as being fully ready for public perusal. Because of the general condition of the writings he left behind him, they had necessarily to be subjected to a considerable amount of editing before seeing publication. Perhaps the most important of his posthumously published works is *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), and closely behind that would be *Philosophical Grammar*, the work which will be the focus of this article. The second paperback printing of *Philosophical Grammar* was issued by the University of California Press in 2005. It is the longest of his published works, and is especially valuable for offering as comprehensive a presentation of Wittgenstein's thought as can be found in a single volume. Because of the "work in progress" flavor of most of the books in the Wittgensteinian corpus, there is to be found in them a good deal of repetition and overlapping. But because he seldom treats any one topic in the same way in any two works (or, for that matter, in any one

work) anyone aspiring to become a serious student of the Austrian philosopher would want to acquaint himself with his entire published corpus.

Doing justice to a serious work in philosophy is a demanding task, but it becomes especially so when dealing with a book like *Philosophical Grammar*, for, in the first instance, this is to be regarded as a "book" only in a qualified sense. It lacks the controlled, systematic development of subject matter, the structured form, the clear and careful language, that one ordinarily associates with a book, especially a book in philosophy. It is very loosely organized. The various parts of the volume, though each invariably interesting and intellectually stimulating in its own way, are not knit together into a coherent whole. The history of the work explains its present condition. *Philosophical Grammar* was first published by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, in 1974. It was edited and arranged by Rush Rhees, who was a student of Wittgenstein at Cambridge during the 1930's. The basic source of the work was a large typescript which Wittgenstein completed in 1933. Referring to this typescript, Rhees comments that it "looks like a book. Everyone who sees it first thinks it is. But it is unfinished; in great many ways."² Rhees estimates that Wittgenstein himself regarded the typescript as only "one stage in the ordering of his material."³ Most of the passages in the typescript are to be found in the earlier notebooks, and it would seem that Wittgenstein arranged the

material gleaned from those notebooks in something like a cut and paste fashion. After the entire typescript was completed, apparently typed by someone other than Wittgenstein, he then set to work revising it. Only half of the revision was completed, some 350 pages. Rhees describes the revised pages as “so overwritten with changes, additions, cancellations, questions and new versions, that no one could ever find the ‘correct’ text here and copy it—saving the author himself should write it over to include newer versions and make everything shorter.”⁴ In sum, the reader has before him in *Philosophical Grammar* a very difficult text to contend with. Anthony Kenny, the translator of the work, remarks appositely in his separate book-length study of Wittgenstein, that “what is conspicuously lacking in the *Gammatik* [i.e., *Philosophical Grammar*] [is] a clear overall view of where the argument is moving.”⁵

What is the best way to approach a highly problematic text of this sort? I have decided to concentrate on a set of key issues pertaining to Wittgenstein’s thought, and to report as accurately as I can how they are treated in *Philosophical Grammar*. These issues can be most clearly laid out by putting them in the form of questions. What is language? What is meaning in language? How does language relate to reality? What is a language-game? What is a game? What is philosophy? How does metaphysics relate to philosophy? I shall deal with these questions more or less in the order listed, but I shall also be switching back and forth among them as we proceed. What will be discovered by this inquiry is that no clear, unambiguous response can be given to any one of the questions, and that in itself provides us with a valuable insight into the nature of Wittgenstein’s thought.

Philosophical Grammar is divided into two major parts, roughly equal in length, which are titled respectively “The Proposition, and its Sense,” and “On Logic and Mathematics.” The volume has a lengthy, and helpful, descriptive table of contents, which was composed by the editor. He also divided the text into chapters, supplied chapter titles, and numbered the sections within the chapters. Given the challenges that would have to be met in trying to construct one, it is understandable that the book does not have an index.

Wittgenstein’s main preoccupation as a philosopher was the analysis of language. What did he think

language to be? How does it relate to philosophy as a whole? It first has to be recognized that Wittgenstein’s understanding of the nature and function of language underwent a significant change over the course of his philosophical career. In his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* he took a position which was quite similar to that of Bertrand Russell, who in the *Principia Mathematica* (1910–13, co-authored with Alfred North Whitehead), made an attempt to give a rigorously “scientific” cast to logical discourse, creating for it an elaborate symbolic notation which, by avoiding the ambiguities that inevitably accompany ordinary language, was intended to communicate ideas with precision and clarity. Central to Russell’s system was what he called an atomic proposition, the simplest type of proposition, representing an elementary “fact” in the world. What Russell called molecular propositions were composed of atomic propositions, and were truth functions of atomic propositions, meaning that their truth depended on atomic propositions. Wittgenstein, for his part, had his “elementary propositions,” paralleling Russell’s atomic propositions, and these, as in the Russellian scheme, were the simplest components of more complex propositions. In the early Wittgenstein, the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, we find that his understanding of language is informed by an epistemology which is in the main realist in orientation, and in this too he reflects Russell’s influence. This realist orientation remains in evidence throughout all of his writings, but always accompanied by a decided penchant for idealism, which became increasingly stronger over the years. That penchant is prominently displayed in *Philosophical Grammar*.

Wittgenstein saw representation as the key function of language, hence his picture theory. Language is like a picture, he argued, in that it is a construct that shows—faithfully if it a good picture—how things really are. The picture theory was introduced in the *Tractatus*, and though he was to give it less emphasis in later years, he never completely abandoned it.⁶ At first glance, Wittgenstein’s picture theory seems a helpful way of describing language and how it works. But when we reflect on the various accounts he gives of it, we encounter serious problems regarding the relation between language and the world, between the subjective and the objective. By the manner in

which he treats of language in *Philosophical Grammar*, it is not at all clear that Wittgenstein saw language (the picture) as really distinct from what was depicted (the world). The strong impression is left, in much of what he says, that both picture and depicted originate in the language-using agent. The picture appears as something autonomous and puzzlingly self-referential. “So what the picture tells me is itself,” he writes.⁷ It is not easy to see what it might mean to say that a picture in effect pictures itself. Is not a picture, by definition, always *of* something, pointing beyond itself? Wittgenstein stresses his peculiar point of view: “Anything can be a picture of itself....”⁸ Again, we are baffled by the possibility of a picture being “of itself,” while yet retaining the status of a picture. Are we to conclude that representation is, somehow, non-representative?

According to Wittgenstein, language, if rightly analyzed, should reveal the grammatical structures the appeal to which will tell us if language is talking sense or nonsense. It is up to the analytic philosopher, Wittgenstein contends, to set certain limits to language, so as not to allow it to appear to be making a genuine reference when in fact it is not. This careful policing of language to make sure that it is making sense has much to recommend it, but it surely seems that its success would depend entirely on maintaining a clear distinction between language and referent, between the picture and the depicted. The seemingly autonomous status he gives to language has the effect of reversing the proper order of things. Language becomes something that is antecedent to reality rather than following upon it as response. “Logic *precedes* every experience—that something is *so*,” he tells us in the *Tractatus*.⁹ (emphasis his) The concentration is all on language, and we are left with the impression that the non-linguistic world, the objective order of things, is of only secondary importance. “There isn’t any question here,” he writes, “of a connection with reality which keeps grammar on the rails.”¹⁰ Rather, the supposition seems to be that it is grammar that keeps reality on the rails. Wittgenstein suggests that we put “the expression of thought in place of the thought.”¹¹ But if that suggestion is to be followed, why not take the next step and put thought in place of reality? With the conflation of language and external referent comes the conflation of language and

thought. “When I think in language, there aren’t meanings going through my mind in addition to the verbal expressions; the language is itself the vehicle of thought”¹² Is language to be thought of as a vehicle with nothing in it, all vehicle as it were?¹³

Wittgenstein also speaks of language as a calculus, but “a free-floating calculus which can only be extended and never supported,”¹⁴ which is to be understood, the suggestion is, as a self-determining calculus, i.e., a calculus that does not refer to anything beyond itself. Yet another way he has of regarding language is as a set of tools.¹⁵ One would think that this concept brings us back to a more practical, down to earth view of language, but Wittgenstein disabuses us of that thought by the surprising assertion that, “Language is of interest to me as a phenomenon and not as a means to a particular end.”¹⁶ If we were to take an assertion like that at face value, we would be hard pressed to make sense of most of the things he has to say about language in *Philosophical Grammar*. The difficulties involved in arriving at a clear picture of what Wittgenstein understands by language are formidable, and we might be tempted to declare them insurmountable when he informs us that the concept of language is as indeterminate as the concept of a living being.¹⁷ We cannot say with any kind of precision what a living being is. So it is too with language.

What is meaning or sense in language? Wittgenstein had much to say about sense and nonsense, and a large part of his philosophical efforts were devoted to the attempt of separating one from the other. One specific way he talks about sense in language is in terms of use, or application. Whatever else we might say about the meaning of a word, we should say that its meaning is revealed most directly and reliably by how the word is used. “We ask ‘How do you use the word, what do you do with it’—that will tell us how you understand it.”¹⁸ The sense of a proposition is “what is given as an answer to a request for an explanation of the sense.”¹⁹ If that were to mean that the explanation does no more than spell out the use of a proposition, that would serve to keep things on a fairly objective basis. As it turns out, though, “explanation” carries with it highly subjective implications, with the result that it offers little help in enabling us to achieve anything like a “fixed sense” for any given

word. At times Wittgenstein would seem to be taking a very down to earth approach to words and their meanings; at other times he speaks of them in quasi-mystical terms.²⁰

Doubtless the most famous of the ways Wittgenstein looked at language was as a game. The notion of language-game is one of the hallmarks of his thought. It is a daring and provocative notion. Just what did Wittgenstein understand by a language-game? I would suggest that the following are the principal components of the notion. Language is to be regarded as a game because: (1) it is a self-enclosed, independent, structured activity; (2) its structure is founded upon and determined by the rules that constitute it; (3) its meaning is explained entirely by the rules themselves. Compare the game of language to the game of chess. Just as in chess the “meaning” of the elements of the game, the chess pieces, is explained by how they function on the chess board, how they are employed (e.g., “knight” means a piece that can make only such-and-such moves), so the meaning of the elements of language, words and propositions, is explained by the rules that govern their use, how they are actually employed in the language-game. “If you ask me,” Wittgenstein said, “where lies the difference between chess and the syntax of language, I reply: solely in their application.”²¹ Chess and language differ only because they are games with different uses.

There is not a single language-game, but many, and having them all available for reference is what permits us to keep language honest and insure that it is making sense. A proposition is properly designated as nonsensical when we are able to show that it is being interpreted by rules of the wrong language-game. It would be like judging a chess move according to the rules of tennis. Wittgenstein offers, “I’m cutting red into bits,” as an example of a senseless proposition. It is senseless because it “doesn’t belong to the particular game its appearance makes it seem to belong to.”²² Now, it would appear that the correct way to justify calling such a proposition senseless is to appeal to experience. We would point out that red cannot be cut into bits because, considered abstractly as a quality, it has no extension. Qualities such as color inhere in physical substances. If I were to consider the color red as inhering in a physical substance, let

us say wool, then it would make perfectly good sense for me to aver that I am cutting my sister Suzie’s red sweater into bits. That analysis, seemingly, would put the proposition in the right language game. But Wittgenstein would not look with favor upon my clarifying effort. I am being altogether too empirical. He writes: “I must *begin* with the distinction between sense and nonsense. Nothing is prior to that. I can’t give it a foundation.”²³ (emphasis his) The foundation that cannot be given, and which I would be relying on, is experience. Sense and nonsense, as understood by Wittgenstein, look very much like *a priori* categories. If they cannot be given a foundation, that means that they are themselves foundational; they serve as first principles.

What such a state of affairs sanctions is the promiscuous labeling of certain types of propositions—i.e., metaphysical propositions—as *prima facie* nonsensical. It is of course well known that Wittgenstein took a jaundiced view of metaphysics, a fact Anthony Kenny calls pointed attention to when he observes that, for Wittgenstein, “the right method of philosophy, in both the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*, consists in putting a stop to metaphysics.”²⁴ It was to become one of the central dogmas of the whole analytic movement, of which Wittgenstein was a principal shaping influence, that metaphysics is to play no part in philosophy. (One recalls the title of the first chapter of A. J. Ayer’s *Language, Truth, and Logic*—“The Elimination of Metaphysics.”) The specific problem with metaphysical propositions, for Wittgenstein, was that they were commonly mistaken for propositions pertaining to natural science; that is, they were interpreted as saying something about the actual state of things, when in fact they were not.

But, on the basis of the principles that govern Wittgenstein’s own theory of language-games, could metaphysics be justifiably precluded from philosophy? He cites two key traits of language-games: there are many of them, as already noted, and they are on equal footing. “And if the games are really distinct from one another,” he writes, “then one game is as good, i.e., as interesting, as the other. None of them is more sublime than any other.”²⁵ Moreover, if language-games with their respective rules are our own inventions,²⁶ as would seem to be the case, what is to prevent us from inventing a language-game called

“metaphysics,” which would have rules proper to itself? Abiding by these rules, metaphysical propositions could be asserted with full confidence, and would be making just as much sense as propositions which obey the rules laid down by other language-games.

But Wittgenstein is by no means consistent in the equality he seems willing to accord to all language-games. Based on his rejection of a metamathematics, i.e., a single language-game whose rules govern the whole of mathematics, one might conclude that he was averse to there being a master language-game which would serve as the court of final appeal for all philosophical analysis,²⁷ a meta-language-game, as it were. However, such a conclusion would have to defend itself against the main current of his thought, as expounded in *Philosophical Grammar*, which is flowing strongly in the opposite direction. A central assumption of his whole philosophy is the notion that there is in fact a “sublime” language-game—call it “philosophy,” or “logic,” or “grammar”—whose job it is to ride herd on all the other language-games.

Consistent with Wittgenstein’s view that we are the inventors of games, the rules of those games are to be taken as arbitrary; they originate solely with the inventors. “The rules of grammar,” he tells us, “are arbitrary in the same sense as the choice of a unit of measure.”²⁸ The arbitrariness of the rules of the language-game would serve to reinforce the view that language is not to be regarded as indicating a link between itself and the world. “The rules of grammar cannot be justified,” Wittgenstein writes, “by showing that their application makes a representation agree with reality.”²⁹

In the end, it is extremely difficult to offer a coherent explanation of what Wittgenstein means by a language-game. Anthony Kenny correctly points out that Wittgenstein “does not give us any general account of what a language-game is, nor a criterion of individuation for language games.”³⁰ He does, however, provide us with a number of examples of language-games, among which is to be found activities as diverse as giving orders, reporting an event, making up stories, telling jokes, cursing, translating, greeting, and praying.³¹ Though a language-game may not be precisely defined, it can be generally described, and that is because of what Wittgenstein calls family resemblances, a set of traits at least some of which are

shared by all language-games.

Putting aside the more complex notion of language-game, what can be said of Wittgenstein’s understanding of the simpler notion of game? He makes the point that there is no single characteristic that is common to all games.³² This is an interesting point; however it is not true. There is a characteristic which is common to all games, and that is the fact that every game is a made thing, a consciously constructed human artifact. And it is just this that radically differentiates a game from a language. Contrary to what Wittgenstein believed, we do not make up languages. They are not artifacts. Languages are organic systems, representing the spontaneous (albeit complex and developing) responses on the part of rational creatures to the world in which they live. Language is the means by which man holds converse with the world. The world can be said to speak first; it opens the conversation, and provides the substantive matter for it. Specifically, the world supplies the things to which the words and propositions of language are the concrete responses. We refer to languages as “natural” precisely to emphasize the point that they are not the result of a process of calculated production on our part. We are born into language. We do not invent it, though we would be incapable of invention without it. And it is no argument against the natural quality of language to cite the existence of artificial languages such as Volapuk, or Esperanto, or various sign languages. These are no doubt made things, consciously constructed human artifacts, but rather than arguing against the radical distinction between language and game, they emphatically reinforce it, and that is because they, and all like constructed languages, are firmly based and dependent upon natural languages, and would be inconceivable without them. They could not in any meaningful way be described as games.

It is a serious mistake to confuse language and game. They are not the same, nor even productively comparable. Because Wittgenstein saw language as an instance of a game—i.e., a human invention that could be shaped according to the specifications of the inventor, and then put to work to function in the ways the inventor intends—the end result is a pronouncedly inadequate appreciation of the true nature of language. And it was Wittgenstein’s thinking

of language as a game which allowed him to commit himself to the idea that it was possible to invent an ideal language that could rid the world of linguistic nonsense. In *Philosophical Grammar* he writes that “we are *constructing* an ideal language which contrasts with ordinary language....”³³ (emphasis his) He is not referring here to a language that contrasts with ordinary language in that it is composed of symbolic notation, as he makes clear later when he writes: “the task of philosophy is not to create a new, ideal, language [i.e., one built around symbolic notation] but to clarify the use of our language, the existing language.”³⁴ This all seems reasonable enough, until we remind ourselves that the “existing language” he refers to is what he understands to be a game, and that brings us back to the original question: What did Wittgenstein mean by a game? Unfortunately, the texts provide us with no definite answer to that question. And when Wittgenstein claims, almost defiantly, “I reserve the right to decide in every case whether I will count something as a game or not,”³⁵ it seems pointless to press the question.

What did Wittgenstein take philosophy to be? What did he regard as its central task? Several commentators have described Wittgenstein’s view of philosophy as therapeutic, meaning that he thought that its aim was “to cure us from talking nonsense and being tormented by problems that have no solution.”³⁶ As Wittgenstein himself succinctly put it: “The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts.”³⁷ In *Philosophical Grammar* he tells us that “philosophy isn’t anything except philosophical problems, the particular individual worries that we call ‘philosophical problems.’”³⁸ He could be so optimistic about the possible success of philosophy, as a dissolver of problems, to imagine the coming of a day when all problems would have been definitively disposed of. With that, philosophy would have no further reason for being, and it could then contentedly wither away. Philosophical problems, as Wittgenstein saw them, are simply language-based misunderstandings. Now, it would seem that the very notion of *misunderstanding* necessarily implies understanding. We suppose a situation in which there is an object of thought which has been gotten wrong, a misunderstanding, but which it is possible to get right. The misunderstandings which constitute the logical

problems “must be removed by clarification of the rules according to which we are inclined to use words.”³⁹ With the continued favoring of language over the world, philosophy, logically enough, becomes essentially a matter of linguistic analysis. It has all the earmarks of being a self-enclosed process. Philosophy seeks to clarify language and to cleanse it of nonsense. It is dedicated to removing misunderstandings, but, Wittgenstein informs us, “not to produce a real understanding for the first time.”⁴⁰

Are we to worry ourselves over trying to understand how language relates to the world beyond language? It would seem not. “We are only concerned,” Wittgenstein writes, “with the description of what happens and it is not the truth but the form of the description that interests us.”⁴¹ He is interested in the form of the description, the language which couches it, only to insure that it is not communicating nonsense. Well and good. However, this can only be successfully done, not by adverting to another language, and then perhaps to another beyond that, but, in the end, by appealing to extra-linguistic reality. Sooner or later, a reality beyond language, and upon which language depends, must be acknowledge and dealt with. “Certainly it would seem that to account for this versatility of language,” one British scholar writes in an article on Wittgenstein, “we must admit at some point some non-conventional relation between language and the world.”⁴² However, this is an admission that Wittgenstein is reluctant to make, with the result that the analysis of language becomes something of an island enterprise, cut off from the main continent of reality. “No sign leads us beyond itself,” he confidently asserts, “and no argument either.”⁴³ One wonders: Is this the kind of clarifying language that is well calculated to rid the world of its philosophical problems? A sign that does not lead beyond itself simply does not qualify as a sign, and the same can be said for argument.

Ludwig Wittgenstein is a quintessentially modern philosopher, a direct heir of René Descartes. It was Descartes who first decided that with him philosophy had to start all over again. The philosophers of the past all got it wrong, more or less, and the only thing to do now was to raze the old edifice and put up an entirely new one. It was a heavy burden for the modern philosopher to take upon himself, but

he owed it to posterity to do so. The philosophic past need not be consulted during the reconstruction process. "I give no sources," Wittgenstein writes in the Preface to the *Tractatus*, "because it is indifferent to me whether what I have thought has already been thought before me by another."⁴⁴ For Descartes, one begins with methodological doubt; for Wittgenstein, the commencement exercise is linguistic analysis. In either case, the purpose is the reconstituting of philosophy. "Therefore we come along," Wittgenstein modestly comments, "and create a new order."⁴⁵ There is a salient difference between the two, of course. Descartes, though rejecting the philosophy of the past, believed that it could be replaced by a newer and better philosophy. For Wittgenstein, as we have seen, the chief aim of philosophy was to put itself out of business. There is no denying the value and importance of the careful analysis of language, which Wittgenstein advocates, but that is not to be equated with philosophy. It is more a preparation for philosophy, clearing away the extraneous so as to make room for the essential—the encounter with being. Wittgenstein's views to the contrary notwithstanding, metaphysics is the very heart of philosophy. Philosophy without metaphysics is little more than an idle juggling with words.

But Wittgenstein was not without metaphysical views of his own. It is of no small significance, I think, how very often the term "reality" is to be found in his writings. Epistemology is an integral part of metaphysics, and Wittgenstein's thought would be totally incomprehensible were one unaware of the epistemological assumptions on which it is based. Those assumptions, as has already been indicated, do not all run in the same direction. To the extent that Wittgenstein can be called a realist, he was ambivalently so, and, to repeat, his dominant orientation was toward idealism. In this admixture of realist and idealist leanings he was much like his mentor Bertrand Russell, the difference between the two being that with Russell it was the realist orientation that dominated.⁴⁶ In *Philosophical Grammar* we can read any number of passages that are resonant with realism, such as: "What he says is true = Things are as he says."⁴⁷ Here we have crisply expressed the venerable correspondence theory of truth, according to which a proposition is true because it mirrors how

things actually stand in the objective order. When treating of his picture theory of language, Wittgenstein explains that a true proposition, like a picture, can only set forth what is the case.⁴⁸ And what could be a more straightforward statement of the realist position than: "Logic depends on there being something in existence and there being facts."⁴⁹

But there is considerably more in *Philosophical Grammar* that reflects the idealist position. "So what we must do is describe spatial propositions," Wittgenstein writes, "but we can't justify them, as if we had to bring them into agreement with an independent reality."⁵⁰ And we read: "Grammar is not accountable to any reality. It is grammatical rules that determine meaning (constitute it) and so they themselves are not answerable to any meaning and to that extent are arbitrary."⁵¹ To claim that language determines meaning is of course to have it just backwards, but it is also to have it exactly how the idealist would want it to be.⁵²

Something comparable to what Rush Rhees had to say about the text of *Philosophical Grammar* can be appropriately applied, I believe, to Wittgenstein's thought as a whole: no final, "correct" interpretation of it is possible. The chief reason for this, something I have already called attention to, is the generally unfinished condition of the texts. Those texts will keep assiduous graduate students busy for generations to come, offering virtually inexhaustible possibilities for interpretation. But assuming that anything like a definitive interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy is out of the question, would things be different if we were say: Wittgenstein did not leave us with a philosophy, but with a method. Even with that point of view, the problem would remain essentially the same, only with a different focus: how to come up with a "correct" interpretation of the method.

It is a common practice among certain of Wittgenstein's disciples to charge his critics with a failure to understand him. This is a reaction which seems to have been initiated by Wittgenstein himself. In 1933 he wrote a letter to *Mind* in which he accused a fellow Cambridge philosopher, R. B. Braithwaite, of misrepresenting his thought, which thought, he explained, would be made abundantly clear in a forthcoming book of his. Braithwaite replied that the judgment as to whether or not he had in fact misrepresented Wittgenstein's thought would then have

to await the appearance of that book.⁵³ The book Wittgenstein referred to, which never saw publication, was what was eventually to become *Philosophical Grammar*.

It is difficult to imagine what would count as misunderstanding Wittgenstein. How would it be demonstrated? For every text that could be cited to back up the charge, perhaps two could be cited to counter it. “Disagreements among Wittgensteinians,” Peter Hacker writes, “over both the interpretation and application of his ideas, have been almost as extensive as the disagreements between Wittgensteinians and other philosophers.”⁵⁴ Not only is this not surprising, it would seem to be inevitable. Wittgenstein’s thought invites contention, fosters it, for in so many respects it is in contention with itself.

Whatever assessment, in the final analysis, one might want to bring to bear upon Wittgenstein’s writings, there is no gainsaying the pervasive and powerful influence they have had. As noted, he was a founding father of the British analytic school, which in turn held great sway in philosophic circles in the English speaking world throughout the 20th century. Logical positivism publicly acknowledged its debt to him in the philosophic Manifesto that was published by the Vienna Circle. To date, over 7,000 books and articles have been published on Wittgenstein. Peter Hacker writes that “the evolution of philosophy this century would be as unintelligible without his work as would that of twentieth century art without Picasso.”⁵⁵ This is very probably true, but how precisely one interprets that statement would depend, I suppose, on what one thought of Picasso as an artist. But what are we to say of Wittgenstein’s influence? Was it in the main good or bad? Opinions will no doubt differ sharply on that question, but there is at least one aspect of his philosophy which, to the extent that it influenced younger philosophers, did so negatively. I refer to the way he expressed that philosophy, his style. Much of the responsibility for the difficulties that come with interpreting Wittgenstein must rest with Wittgenstein. He did not write clearly.

NOTES

1. Anthony Kenny notes that within the first two decades after Wittgenstein’s death, in 1951, nine volumes of his works had been published. See Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein*. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 1. Kenny’s book provides an informative and balanced overview of Wittgenstein’s thought.

2. In the section, “Note in Editing,” by Rush Rhees, p. 488, in Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Grammar*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978. 2005.
3. *Ibid.* Rhees notes that many things in the *Blue Book* are found in *Philosophical Grammar*.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 489.
5. Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, p. 141.
6. Anthony Kenny makes a good case for this point of view. See his *Wittgenstein*, pp. 224–29.
7. Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Grammar*, p. 165. For simplicity’s sake, henceforth in these notes I will cite this title as *PG*.
8. *PG*, p. 163.
9. Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. (trans. C. K. Ogden) Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999, p. 86.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
13. At the time he wrote the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein was fascinated by solipsism and was prepared to take it seriously. One can wonder if he ever completely overcame that fascination, and, if not, how it affected the subsequent development of his thought. He writes in the *Tractatus*: “This remark provides a key to the question, to what extent solipsism is a truth. In fact what solipsism *means* is quite correct, only it cannot be *said*, but it shows itself. That the world is *my* world, shows itself in the fact that the limits of the language (*the* language which I understand) mean the limits of *my* world.” (P. 89) And a few pages later we read: “Here we see that solipsism strictly carried out coincides with pure realism. The *I* in solipsism shrinks to an extensionless point and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it.” (p. 90)
14. *PG*, p. 313. Wittgenstein uses “language,” “grammar,” and “logic” almost interchangeably, and I cannot see where he anywhere makes a clear distinction among them.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 67. “Language is like a collection of various tools.”
16. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
20. Wittgenstein tells us: “The sense of a proposition is not a soul.” (*PG*, p. 131) And yet: “The word has a *soul* and not just a meaning.” (*PG*, p. 69, emphasis in the text) “It cannot, I think, be said,” Anthony Kenny writes, “that Wittgenstein resolved these problems [concerning the sense of a proposition] in his *Notebooks*, and the pages in which he worried over them are among the most difficult he ever wrote.” (*Wittgenstein*, p. 84)
21. Quoted in Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, p. 10.
22. *PG*, p. 126.
23. *PG*, pp. 126–27.
24. Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, p. 231.
25. *PG*, p. 334.
26. Wittgenstein writes: “To invent a language could mean to invent an instrument for a particular purpose on the basis the laws of nature (or consistently with them); but it also has the other sense, analogous to that in which we speak of the invention of a game.” (*PG*, p. 192)
27. Mathematics, for Wittgenstein, was just another game. See *PG*, pp. 296–98.
28. *PG*, p. 185.
29. *PG*, p. 186.

30. Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, p. 164.
31. The fullest list of language-games is to be found in *Philosophical Investigations*. Those I mention in the text, and more, are to found in Kenny's *Wittgenstein*, p. 165.
32. *PG*, p. 75.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
36. Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, p. 18.
37. *Tractatus*, p. 52.
38. *PG*, p. 193.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
42. "Wittgenstein," in Anthony Flew. *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. New York: Gramercy Books, 1999, pp. 374-77. The quotation in the text comes from p. 377. The article is unsigned, and although I assume it was written by Anthony Flew, I am not certain.
43. *PG*, p. 114.
44. *Tractatus*, p. 27.
45. Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Occasions, 1912-1915*. ed. James C. Klagge and Alfred Nordmann. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993, p. 173.
46. The tension in Russell between realist and idealist is especially in evidence in *The Problems in Philosophy* (1912).
47. *PG*, p. 123.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
49. Quoted in Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, p. 109.
50. *PG*, p. 324.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
52. Though both realist and idealist elements can be found in Wittgenstein, that the latter dominate is clear, so much so that I do not think it would be distorting simply to identify Wittgenstein as an idealist philosopher and be done with it. Anthony Kenny is of the opinion that Wittgenstein did not rule out the possibility of innate knowledge (see his *Wittgenstein*, p. 184), and O. K. Bouwsma tells us, significantly, I think, that Plato was the only philosopher that Wittgenstein read. (O. K. Bouwsma. *Wittgenstein Conversations, 1949-1951*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986.
53. "Letter to the Editor of *Mind*," in Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Occasions, 1912-1951*, pp. 156-57. In his letter to *Mind*, Wittgenstein explained that the book he was working on was being delayed because of "the difficulty of presenting it in a clear and coherent form." This was a difficulty he was never to overcome, the evidence for which is found throughout his writings.
54. Dr. Peter Hacker. "Wittgensteinians," in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 916-17.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*

The Ultimate Meaning of Existence

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"It might well be that at the end of history the only people who will examine and ponder the root of all things and the *ultimate meaning of existence*—i.e., the specific object of philosophical speculation—will be those who see with the eyes of *faith*"
—Josef Pieper, "The Possible Future of Philosophy."¹

"The world hates Christians...."
—St. Cyprian, Bishop, d. 258 A. D., "Sermon on Man's Mortality."

"We who are Christians never knew the great philosophic common sense which inheres in that mystery until the anti-Christian writers pointed it out to us. The great march of mental destruction goes on. Everything will be denied.... We shall be left defending, not only the incredible virtues and sanities of human life, but something more incredible still, this huge impossible universe which stares us in the face. We shall fight for visible prodigies as if they were invisible. We shall look on the impossible grass and the skies with a strange courage. We shall be of those who have seen and yet have believed."
—G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics*.²

I.

The most penetrating question that a man can inquire of himself about himself is the obvious and simple inquiry, "why do I exist?" Or to state it another way, "why am I rather than am not?" No subsequent question is asked that does not anticipate and expect a prior answer to the existence question. I am quite well aware that I do not cause my own existence. I am likewise aware that "existence" is a special kind of word that refers to an "aspect" of our being unlike anything else about us. My existence belongs to me, no one else.

Even if it is phrased as a general noun, "existence" is really a verb that we have abstracted from its reality and universalized. "To exist" means to stand outside of nothingness. It is an act. It is the most vivid and radical of the predicates we can apply to ourselves, the affirmation that "I am." This predicate is different from all the other possible predicates, the

one without which nothing else much matters, at least to us. Without it, we are not. We realize, likewise, that it is possible for us not to be. We are somehow fragile, contingent beings. Not only is it true that we are, but *what we are* also stands outside of our own powers to accomplish or formulate. We can only recognize it. We do not make either what it is to be a man or that even as a man, “I am” at all. Yet, we are both one and the other. We are what we are and we exist.

“Why am I, rather than ‘am not?’” Of course, if I were not, the question of existence, mine or anyone else’s, would hardly have arisen. “Not-being” does not blithely ask questions about its own non-beingness. Only existing beings of the kind that also have within them a rational power can ask about *what is* and *what is not*. Even to arrive at the notion of “non-being,” we have to begin with something *that is* that we already know. We then proceed mentally to deny of it existence, while recognizing that this denial does not happen in reality, only in our minds. No non-existing or non-rational being can ask questions of any sort. Those beings that can and do ask such questions seem to have a special place in existence, in the levels of being. These are the beings that add something to mere existence, namely, its articulated relation to mind and will. Limited existence by itself implies a relation existence that is not limited.

Many things exist. Things come to exist and cease to exist. Not many of these things have the powers to ask “why do I exist?” And, of course, if I can ask, “why do I exist?” I have to wonder “why do you, someone not me, exist?” Failure of attentive inquiry about our “to exist” implies, I suspect, a fear to know the answer to this question in case such knowledge of existence would put certain untoward demands on us. It might make us, in some fundamental sense, responsible for what becomes of us, not just immediately but ultimately. We can theoretically protect ourselves from the implications of these questions only by embracing philosophical positions that systematically deny any order or meaning to existence and hence to existence questions. The easiest and most common way to accomplish this avoidance is to embrace a theoretic relativism or determinism that conclude that no particular reason can be found either for “why *what I am* could not be otherwise”

or for “why I, as a unique being, exist at all.” But if either of these latter propositions are true, that what I am is not an order, that I exist only by chance, it makes no sense to ask questions or to anticipate answers to them. Philosophy of this persuasion is an illusion, especially if its purpose or “reasoned” conclusion is to inform us that there is no reason in things. It has the dubious audacity to give us a “reason” why there is no reason.

II.

Josef Pieper remarks that, in the end of history, the only people who really will philosophize by taking reality as their starting point are likely to be those who also believe, who believe that there is a purpose to existence, particularly our own existence. They are not afraid of genuinely philosophical questions because such questions are also demanded by the faith itself to be confronted philosophically. We do not know there are revelational answers to philosophic questions until we first know the adequacy of the answers philosophy gives to its own inquiries.

Chesterton puts it even more graphically. In the end, it will take faith not only to philosophize, but yea, even to affirm that the grass is green and the skies are blue. If we do not want to know why we are, we must, to be safe, systematically doubt even our own powers to know, beginning with the capacity of our senses to manifest to us what is seen or heard, touched or smelled or tasted. If we cannot pass from our mind to things in such a way that things first indicate to our minds *what is*, then we are left with the apparently exhilarating conclusion that we can create our own world. If we do not actually know *what is*, nothing can contest the world we make for ourselves. We are free from any fear that our lives should be ordered on principles that we did not give ourselves, which might happen if the world really existed and we could know it.

St. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, early on, said, almost as if it were an abiding truism that was obvious to anyone, that the world “hates” Christians. We find such statements blunt and upsetting. It goes against our democratic instincts. We like to think that if we are good, we will automatically be loved. Indeed, we like to think we are loved no matter what

we do or hold. But it is not so. Good people can be and in fact often are hated precisely because they are good. The good can be hated insofar as it is opposed to my good as I define it.

Christ, in the Gospel of John, said pretty much the same thing—“if the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you” (15: 18). Such frank affirmations go against the grain of modern multi-cultural, tolerance, and ecumenical theory wherein we are supposed to be abidingly nice to each other and all things can be resolved by “dialogue.” How seriously, then, are we to take these warnings about the hatred of the world? Even after we distinguish the several usages of the word “world”—what is created, the totality of existing things, what is not the Church—we are today little prepared, in spite of much evidence to the contrary, to accept the truth of Cyprian’s rather laconic observation that “the world hates Christians.”

Yet, I suspect that some subtle relation exists between the epistemological problems of modern philosophy by which we defend ourselves against the truth of things by doubting that we can know things—“all is relative”—and what Pieper and Chesterton predicted, that finally only believers would also philosophize. They held that it is largely believers today who can be or are in fact the metaphysicians, the only ones still capable intellectually, on the basis of reason, of affirming of *what is* that it is. The fear of knowing why we exist leads to a denial of any ordered existence but what we ourselves project into reality. This projection provides the theoretical background that allows us to do whatever we wish, no matter how contrary to any objective order in things. It leads to the claim that whatever we do is a “right,” and, as a consequence, leads to and grounds the establishment of “democracy” on its basis. In this sense, democracy is designed precisely to prevent any serious existence question from being asked. Its purpose is to protect “rights,” whatever they are.

We live in a liberal and ecumenical age, at least if we are in North America or Europe. The Chinese, Indian, and Islamic worlds, strikingly larger than our own, are not nearly so open to these “democratic” values and rights that have no content but what is willed to be there. Or perhaps better, they have their own version of these says “rights,” ones equally as

arbitrary. We believe in a multi-culturalism and diversity that presuppose no standards or measures even more than we believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth. Indeed, we believe in the former, in “rights” and “values,” so that we do not have to admit the truth of the latter as a source of order.

Yet, more than one author have pointed out that Christians, insofar as they hold and practice what is laid down in their books, not all do, are in fact hated and, yes, feared. To the Muslim, they are the hated Crusaders. To the liberal they are the one legitimate object of bigotry and intolerance precisely because they stand for something definite as true. Ultimately, the Christians are the ones who have, as Nietzsche suspected, inherited the Socratic principle that “it is never right to do wrong.” It is this principle that multi-culturalism and diversity theories hold to be most dangerous and the main source of “fanaticism.”

When Nietzsche told the Europeans, in words that remind us of nothing so much as their recent debates over the constitution of the European Union, that “God is dead,” he did not address this proclamation to God or metaphysics. He addressed it to those who did not live and act as if God existed even when they still claimed to believe in Him. This inauthenticity was what scandalized Nietzsche about Christians. The limits of tolerance are quickly found when we affirm that something is indeed true, true not just for us, but true for any mind, for any culture, for any public order. This claim was at the heart of natural law theory. Its denial results in the establishment of cultures and nations whose diversity is at bottom radical, based the impossibility of moral absolutes, and hence the impossibility of criticizing or judging any culture. It also excludes any rational discourse other than that of interest or power as a means to resolve controversy and disagreement. For with no common grounds, there is nothing on which to agree.

III.

In the New Testament we read that the children of light are less enterprising than the children of darkness. We wonder about this resourcefulness of what are called “the children of darkness,” even if it seems observationally true that such energy against what is good exists. A friend of mine remarked, “here is the mystery: why does wrong have more energy

than right? Or so it seems—I mean, the standard situation is that those committed to the worst—homosexual agenda, heresy, Islam, eliminating the name ‘Christ’ from all Christmas displays—spend or have more energy than ‘we,’ who are on the right side of the issues, have to combat their efforts.” One only need to think of the abortion, euthanasia, and human experimentation movements to reaffirm the truth of this penetrating observation, already touched on in the New Testament itself.

Such wonderments are, as I said, modern formulations of an ancient problem. We have been curious from the beginning, for instance, about why the fallen angels not only had great power, but great energy and zeal to achieve their will. They were pictured as not content with their expulsion from their Paradise. They went about seeking to poison the Paradises and Edens of other races, particularly our own. In the Epistle of Jude we read, “Sodom, Gomorrah, and the town thereabout indulged in lust, just as those angels did; they practiced unnatural vice. They are set before us to dissuade us, as they undergo a punishment of eternal fire.”

In more and more political jurisdictions today, such a passage, and those similar to it in Scripture, cannot be read in public discourse or perhaps even in the Church. The Bible, it is said, has to be “amended” according to a higher political doctrine, generally that of the notion of “rights.” Many rights are defined by the individual and protected by the state from any criticism even of public opinion. Churches increasingly censor themselves so that what Scripture contains is either not published or not commented on. The new culture defines what elements in the old religion can be retained.

The question at hand is not an issue of what is right and what is wrong. Rather it concerns the energy shown by those whose views, by explicit teachings of revelation or the normal conclusions of reason, are erroneous. Burke is famous for stating that evil will prosper when those good men who oppose it do little or nothing to combat it. The energy that goes into efforts to insist that homosexuality is perfectly “normal” or that Christmas should be removed from public expression is not just that effort devoted to a normal political or economic cause. We do not need to seek too far in the proponents of

these movements to find a hatred for Christians for being so rash as to uphold what they are understood to stand for. Christians who compromise on these issues are fine. Again, why this lethargy on the part of believers to acknowledge that they are under attack, that they are indeed hated? Why this energy that insists that Christian principles be politically forbidden?

In the case of Islam, if we read its history, the lessons that clearly comes across is that it is very dangerous, personally dangerous, to oppose it, particularly when it has gained political power. There is remarkably little organized attention from Christian sources over the persecution and civic disabilities of fellow Christians in Islamic states over recent decades. And when there is, it is often the result of prodding by Jewish sources. Islam generally speaking makes no bones in affirming that the world should be Muslim. Its history of holy war had no other object than to carry out this belief. It is still very much a goal of many Muslim movements.

In the West the sort of “death” that arises from opposing an evil is more in the nature of an attack on one’s reputation or style, of not being with the cultured or the powerful. It is very unpopular to oppose abortion either in the clinics where it is regularly performed or in courts and legislatures where it is proposed as a good, as a “right.” Leading proponents of abortion in the public order are often those who claim religious belief, not a few Catholic religious belief. Needless to say, it is also very difficult to oppose intrinsic corruption in civil bureaucracies. For many states in the world, crime and corruption are the major issues, particularly when the control of dope and other large scale vices are at stake. The ability of police and army to stay ahead of organized crime is often limited. And behind this corruption lies the demand within a citizenry for those things that usually make crime possible by financing it—drugs, prostitution, theft, pornography.

The question of good government thus unavoidably brings up the more fundamental concern about “what is good?” Already in Plato and Aristotle, we are aware that government can be in the service of almost any end, whether it be decent or corrupt. We will never have a world in which these tendencies to promote what is evil do not exist. No doubt, this fact is not a formula for doing nothing. But it

does remind us of the meaning of Paul's remark that our warfare is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. Paul seems to be aware that evil is not an abstraction but somehow an option, a choice that evidently wants to justify itself, that makes a case for itself as something good. C. S. Lewis said that the greatest evil would be the effort to define what is evil to be good and what is good to be evil. Perhaps we should say that those who do define what is evil to be good are endowed with a surprising energy and zeal, almost as if to say, that error has no alternative but to justify and protect itself both with philosophical arguments and with political power.

We hear much about the fact that "terrorists," as they are quaintly called, seem to epitomize what is evil in a world in which the content of evil is not discussed or defined. That the "terrorists" themselves do not think they are terrorists seems remarkable. In their own terms, they are pursuing a good cause by necessary means. They reject the standards by which we define them as terrorists. If they succeed, however, the world will be at "peace" and there will be no more violence. Violence is caused by those who oppose this effort to subject the world to Allah, not by the terrorists.

Moreover, since, presumably, there is no universal culture, no natural law, what principles are defined as "rights" in any given culture are as good as those in any other culture. To pursue a cultural good by means accepted and fostered by the culture is itself a good that cannot be opposed on the basis of some other view that has as much or as little status as the cause embraced by "terrorists."

Josef Pieper also wrote, "Non-violent totalitarianism is the most inhuman form of totalitarianism—among other reasons because it can always cite what appear to be valid arguments to prove that it is not what in fact it is."³ We often hear that war is the greatest evil. But it is suggested here that it is precisely when war is no longer possible that the worst evils will come about. If we mean by "peace" no fighting, and no possibility of fighting, we are already in an absolutist state. Peace never meant "no fighting." Rather it meant no unjustified fighting.

IV.

At the end of his essay explaining the basic outlines of his work, Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote:

All true solutions offered by the Christian Faith hold, therefore, to these two mysteries (Trinity and Incarnation), categorically refused by a human reason which makes itself absolute. It is because of this that the true battle between religions begins only after the coming of Christ. Humanity will prefer to renounce all philosophical questions—in Marxism, or positivism of all stripes, rather than accept a philosophy which finds its final response only in the revelation of Christ. Foreseeing that, Christ sent his believers into the whole world as sheep among wolves. Before making a pact with the world it is necessary to meditate on that comparison.⁴

Here St. Cyprian's "the world hates Christians" links up with von Balthasar's warning about making a pact with the world. We also see in this passage just why it is that a realist philosophy must be rejected at an early stage lest it is forced to see the relation between, what John Paul II called in his famous Encyclical, "Fides et Ratio," faith and reason.

What is also significant about von Balthasar's remark the implication that a failure of philosophers to defend reality with their minds would in fact justify Christ's remark about sending us as sheep among wolves. Christians think that they are hated because of some defect or sin that they have committed. The lesson of Christ was rather the opposite, namely that believer would be persecuted and ostracized precisely because of what was good. The fact that someone is good does not guarantee that he will not be persecuted on the grounds that he is evil.

"We shall be of those who have seen and yet have believed." It will take courage to say of *what is* that it is. The reason for this intellectual courage is precisely because the human mind anticipates where it does not want to go, even if reason points in that direction. What modern philosophy and ideology primarily are, I think, is an effort to provide an alternate world to the one *that is*, in order to be exempt from any relationship to or obligation to an order to which man is related. It must aggressively formulate and impose its philosophy. Otherwise, the mind, reflecting on *what is*, does point thought in the direction of what is found in revelation.

Von Balthasar's very sober reminder of what it actually says in Scripture makes sober reading. Both in Plato and in the New Testament, we have incidents—the one of Alcibiades at the Symposium, the other at the stoning of Stephen—in which men closed their ears so that they would not hear the truth. Instead of doing anything quite so dramatic as putting our hands over our ears so that we would not hear, we accomplish fundamentally the same thing by formulating a philosophical position that does not have to confront the implications of revelation to reason.

So, in conclusion, what is the source of the energy that is displayed by the children of darkness, an energy that we see displayed with growing force in our world? Basically, it is the conflict between creating a world of our own and acknowledging a world of gift that is already presented to us as something better than anything we could concoct for ourselves. The hatred of Christianity is the necessary product, I think, of a bad conscience that suspects that these man-chosen worlds do not compare to the one that is revealed to us. The philosophy that must be true if Christian revelation is true is a philosophy of realism no where better outlined than in Aristotle. If we suspect this relationship between realism and revelation, in order to protect from admitting the implications of the relationship, philosophy itself must be rejected. This conclusion leaves us with the suspicion that the only people still defending philosophy, as such, are the believers. They defend it both on philosophical and theological grounds.

Let me again refer to the growing opposition to any public expression of Christmas, the loveliest of feasts and the most basic of the truths that indirectly ground philosophical realism. Chesterton remarked

that on Christmas eve, we should close our doors and spend the time with those we love. But it is the truth of the Nativity, of “a Son is born to us,” that makes this feast so joyous. Those who do not believe in Christmas, in its truth and therefore in its reason for celebration, insist on taking all of what makes Christmas out of the public order. So we have “winter holidays,” not Christmas. We have Christmas songs and symbols without Christ. Even those signs that could be seen as symbols are stripped of their significance. The real reason of the opposition of Christmas as a celebration is that those who reject its truth cannot stand its celebration, cannot understand the joy that comes with this feast.

“At the end of history the only people who will ponder *the ultimate meaning of existence* will be those who see with the eyes of faith.” Whether it be the “end of history,” I shall not claim knowledge. But whether philosophy is now more and more related to the stand we take on revelation's basis truths, I have no doubt. The world hates Christians because they affirm its own proper and philosophic meaning in the light of their revelation. At bottom, however, the invention of alternate philosophies is a deliberate construct made necessary by the fact that the philosophy that revelation points to is a realism of *what is*. If we suspect that there is an order in things that makes demands on us for our own good and salvation, we must reject philosophy first if we realize that it does lead to truths that are presented to us as gifts. We are sent as sheep among wolves because the world cannot bear the fact that ultimately it choose not to accept what it is. This profound unsettlement is, I suspect, the real cause of the strange energy of the children of darkness.

Who Were Our Adam and Eve?

by Rev. Anthony Zimmerman, Nagoya, Japan

We rightly feel familiar with the Adam and Eve of Genesis, whom we honor as our first parents. We assume that their bodies, like ours, were of the *Homo Sapiens* species. Nevertheless the fossil record provides practically irrefutable evidence that peoples of species other than *Homo Sapiens* once lived on our planet. We need to come to grips with this hominid history, though it may jar us out of our comfortable complacency. I use the term *species* in the genetical meaning, namely that reproduction is possible by way of union within the species, but not with members outside of it.

Cardinal Christoph Schoenbron has not addressed this issue specifically, but he has vigorously reputed a literal interpretation of Genesis in the sense that the earth is only 6,000 years old.

The Catholic position on this is clear. St. Thomas says that ‘one should not try to defend the Christian faith with arguments that are so patently opposed to reason that the faith is made to look ridiculous.’ It is simply nonsense to say that the world is only 6,000 years old. (*Catechesis, Creation and Evolution*, Zenit News, Dec. 19, 2005).

With this in mind, we seek to know more about our first ancestors, whom Genesis names as Adam and Eve, in a friendly dialogue of Catholic doctrine with natural science.

Our first parents were members of the “Homo Sapiens” species

Our first consideration is that Jesus, in His human nature, is a member of the *Homo Sapiens* species, the one and only species of humans that now inhabits the earth. Why not *Homo Habilis* who made stone artifacts in Ethiopia 2.5 millions years ago? Or *Homo Erectus*, like Peking Man of 500,000 years ago? Or *Neanderthal* who was for a time a contemporary with *Homo Sapiens* some 200,000 years ago?

Christ was born as a son of David, son of Abraham, son of Adam, whose descendants and kinfolks are with us today. As Pope St. Leo the Great wrote:

Luke going backwards step by step traces His succession to the first of the human race himself, to show that the first Adam and the last Adam were of the same nature. (*Letter 31*).

Was this “Adam” also a *Homo Sapiens*”? That is the topic of this essay. We begin our chain of logic with the indisputable fact that our Adam and Eve were intelligent and free persons. We know this because God held them responsible for their mortal sin, which is a sure sign that they had sufficient knowledge and freedom of the will. As the CCC states:

1859 Mortal sin requires full knowledge and complete consent. It presupposes knowledge of the sinful character of the act, of its opposition to God’s law. It also implies a consent sufficiently deliberate to be a personal choice.

We follow through with the logic that a mature knowledge and freedom is an index of an accomplished speaking ability. Even though speech itself is not identical with knowledge and freedom, in effect it is a reliable index of their presence and use. In order to think and to act freely we need to use a language. An awareness of knowledge and freedom is anchored on the sensible phantasms of words and sentences. Saint Thomas teaches that “In the present state of life in which the soul is united to a passible body, it is impossible for our intellect to understand anything actually, except by turning to the phantasms” (*Summa Theologica I-I, 84, 7*).

From credible scientific data and evidence gathered from the fossil record we can deduce that peoples other than *Homo Sapiens* did not have the facile ability to speak as we do. In consequence of their linguistic underdevelopment, we cannot attribute to them the knowledge and freedom that is associated with the mortal sin of our first parents. Our thesis stands or falls on the basis of the credibility of the admittedly limited and still disputed interpretation of the data. I believe that the arguments and deductions that follow are sound and present them with this conviction in mind.

The fossil record of man

1) *Homo Habilis*: The fossil record indicated that stone tools were made in Ethiopia 2.5 million years ago. The ones who made them must have been reasoning humans. However, though the fossil record is scant, it indicates that they were not members of the *Homo Sapiens* species. The species is not extinct.

2) *Homo Erectus*: The record indicates likewise that *Homo Erectus*, who existed between 1.8 million and 300,000 years ago, was not of our species. Like *Habilis*, the face had protruding jaws with large molars, no chin, thick brow ridges, and a receding brow. The species is likewise extinct.

Peoples of the *Erectus* type are said to have fanned out from Africa into the areas where Italy, Spain, France, England, and other European countries are today, as well as to India, Java, and north into China. The diggings near Peking in China indicate that *Erectus* lived there for a very long time.

Erectus people of the Peking type, for example, probably spent much of the day hunting and gathering, and then spent the evenings around the fires. They must have had a considerable division of labor, they communicated linguistically with each other, and exercised considerable skill. They may very well have developed significant human culture and manners, and perhaps discussed the meaning of life as they ate their meals and warmed themselves around the fires. Yet, they were not of the *Homo Sapiens* species, not of the same human species as Christ and our Adam and Eve.

3) *Neanderthals* existed between 230,000 and 27,000 years ago, and are now extinct. Their bodies were robust, and like *Erectus*, they had a protruding jaw and a receding forehead. The fossil record indicates the likelihood that *Neanderthal* and *Sapiens* remained genetically and culturally separate from each other.

Archaeologists believe that there was no cultural connection between *Neanderthal* and *Cro-Magnon* peoples. The stone tools of the *Cro-Magnons* seemed markedly more sophisticated than *Neanderthal* implements. And when archaeologists dug down through successive layers in caves, they sometimes found sterile layers between the *Neanderthal* deposits and the deposits left by *Cro-Magnons*, indicating that no one had occupied the cave for a time. These layers containing no sign of human occupation were interpreted as having proof that

the *Neanderthals* had become extinct without having given rise to their successors in Western Europe. (Bernard G. Campbell, *Humankind Emerging, Sixth Edition, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1992, p. 381*).

An evaluation of successive layers of fossils indicates likewise that for long periods of time *Homo Sapiens* lived contemporaneously with *Erectus* in some areas (in Java), though they remained isolated from each other. The artifacts characteristic to each are not found together.

4) *Homo Sapiens* appeared perhaps 200,000 years ago. The forehead is high and erect, the face is proportioned beautifully, the chin is prominent, the base of the skull is so mounted on the upper vertebrae that there is place for our speech organs.

***Homo Sapiens*, first human with modern type speech abilities**

From the fossil record we can infer that *Habilis*, *Erectus*, and the *Neanderthals* did not possess speech organs such as our own. The point of this writing is that their limited linguistic abilities could not support the knowledge and freedom that is evident in the couple who committed original sin. God would not hold people responsible for original sin if they had not yet developed matching powers of reason. Underdeveloped speech ability indicates underdeveloped knowledge and freedom. From this we can make a logical leap to conclude that it must have been members of the *Homo Sapiens* species who committed original sin.

Modern organs of speech began with *Homo Sapiens*

Habilis, *Erectus*, and *Neanderthal* fossils do not have the configuration of the basicranium and upper vertebrae that can accommodate our very sophisticated type of speech organs and the neural substrate to support their functioning. The type of comparatively primitive speech organs that *Habilis*, *Erectus* and *Neanderthal* could have possessed were inadequate to produce our modern type of sophisticated rapid and well articulated speech that can carry advanced spiritual thought.

The *Catechism*, No. 54, tells us that God “wishing to open up the way to heavenly salvation, he

manifested himself to our first parents from the very beginning. He invited them to intimate communion with himself and clothes them with resplendent grace and justice.” We must assume that they were capable of understanding this revelation, of making it their own, and of teaching it to their children.

The revelation included belief in God, in the afterlife, and a code of commandments that we might term the “Ten Commandments of Eden.” All this is implied in the doctrine that our first parents received the Primeval Revelation from God, and together with it sanctifying grace, and that they subsequently committed the mortal sin that we inherit in the form of original sin.

The two-tubed speech organ of *Homo Sapiens*

Homo Sapiens has what is called the two-tubed speech airway (see Phillip Lieberman, *The Biology and Evolution of Language*, 1984, p. 325 ff.). This includes the vertically positioned larynx and a prolonged pharynx extending vertically from the trachea, followed by the sharp turn into the horizontal oral cavity. A constriction at the turn creates the two tubes. In the two tubes we format the vowels, stops, and consonants. We format the vowel “A” (as in about) mainly in the pharynx, the “E” (as in meet) mainly in the oral cavity, and the “U” (as in you) in both simultaneously. Our organs also support the formatting of the stops: “G” (as in get) and “K” (as in keep) and the many well-articulated consonants. Our organs are uniquely capable of producing a meaningful calibration and articulation of rapid speech as we know it.

The endowments of *Habilis*, *Erectus*, and *Neanderthal* are a single-tube breathing passageway that lacks this turn to the horizontal and the constriction into two tubes. There is a larynx high in the trachea that allows for simultaneous breathing and swallowing. There is a long palate with a shallow tongue that accommodates unrestricted breathing, but not a sophisticated calibration of phonemes.

If speech is not properly articulated in the efficient manner that we produce it, it fails to support thought of a complex nature. One cannot pronounce the Ten Commandments without well articulated vowels, stops and consonants.

In addition, if the formatting even of rudimentary speech is slow, only very short sentences can be intellectualized. The meaning of long sentence is lost if the beginning of a sentence falls out of the short term memory by the time the end of the sentence is finally spoken. Scientists tell us to test this by speaking a long sentence at one tenth the speed at which we ordinarily speak. Inevitably, the beginning of the sentence falls out of the short term memory before the end is reached. The meaning is then incoherent.

The marvels of human speech.

Our basic speech organs are in place at birth, and speech automatism develops easily during childhood. The nerve pathways from the phantazizing brain to the receiving musculature of throat, tongue and lips take on habitual automatism during the learning of the mother tongue and of secondary languages. We express thoughts by producing audible signals—formatted puffs of air—which are deciphered meaningfully by the hearer. When we engage in conversation our brains, speech organs, eyes, ears, faces, and our entire bodies get into the act. The billions of neurons of the brain—100 billion by recent estimate—become engaged and swing into action, or stand by for service if needed. Both the speaker and the listener keep track of the nuanced words and sentences in their short-term memories and anchor their thoughts of them, or deduce meaning from them.

The meaning of a sentence is usually not known until we hear the end of it. With the short-term memory to hold the entire sentence momentarily in view, we typically scramble the sequential verbiage into an emulsified whole, swirling together the subject, the predicate, the object, together with modifiers. Only with the entire sentence in memory do we grasp its meaning.

When we communicate pleasant thoughts we can amplify the meaning of the audible signals of calibrated air currents with an elegance of sparkling eyes, smiling face, and lilting voice. Or, when we express displeasure, we tend to make the voice grate and rasp, curl the lips, tweak the nose, arch the eyebrows, clench fists, bulge the neck, erect the hair, flush the face, and flash bolts of lightning from the

eyes (see the author's *Evolution and the Sin in Eden*, University Press of America, chapter 2; on Internet site *Catholicmind.com*).

The spiritual soul does the thinking, of course, but it plays on the neurons to fashion the non-material spiritual thought into electro-chemical nerve transmissions from the motor strip of the brain to the more than 100 muscles involved in speech. These twitch in proper timing and amplitude as commanded by the brain to format the sound that eventually emerges from our lips. The brain, in response to the thinking soul, transmits the stimuli to format the phonemes precisely, their onset, their tones, and their transit to the next phoneme.

The sending terminal at the motor strip of the brain initiates some of the signals in a reverse timing order of their arrival at the receiving muscle, because signals on thicker nerves may travel at the speed of 300 miles per hour, whereas signals over finer strands may move at the leisurely pace of 1.5 miles per hour (Eric H. Lennenberg, *Biological Foundations for Language*, p. 91). Phonemes are produced properly only when the right set of muscles twitch in proper sequence and amplitude. The ear monitors the process and sometimes interrupts to correct mistakes. The speed at which all this is done is almost incredible. If 100 muscles are engaged, and a speaker pronounces up to six syllables per second, and each syllable has 2.4 separate phonemes, the brain sends 1400 stimuli in proper sequence and amplitude per second to encode the speaker's thoughts on sound waves. A piano virtuoso can manipulate fingers at a great rate, but surely not at this speed.

Linguistic ability required for the events in Eden

Could Adam perhaps by-pass our way of thinking, our manner of using images to arrive at intellectual understanding, by a more direct route, by spiritual cogitation not anchored on sensible images? Did he perhaps receive infused knowledge from God, which could be understood without use of image props?

Of course, God could have made Adam like an angel to receive and send communications with need of speech. But we understand that when God chose Adam to be the founder of our race, He revealed

Himself in a manner intelligible to humans rather than to angels. God made the revelation to Adam in a manner that is humanly communicable. To belabor the question further: What great good for Adam and for the race would a revelation be that is infused knowledge, but cannot be translated into human terms for practical use? If the infused knowledge does not resonate in the senses and imagination, how can it be encodable in speech for personal rumination and for communication to others? If the revelation is like that described by Paul, who "was caught up into paradise and heard things which must not and cannot be put into human language" (*2 Cor. 12:2*) how can Adam himself know what the revelation means for life here on earth?

We do not doubt that God infused grace and the virtues of faith, hope, and charity into Adam and Eve, but we say that they could not communicate these spiritual realities directly to each other and to their children without encoding their beliefs into a language. Only God can enter the mind to make it see light in His light. We humans can speak to others about what we hold and believe, but we cannot switch on a spiritual light in the mind of another person. The best we can do is load our thoughts onto the transportation system of sound waves and visual images, and so send these on their way to the person with whom we are communicating. We cannot pour out spiritual knowledge into our neighbor's spiritual container or receptacle. So we try to do it with speech, hoping that the listener will decode the sound signals on which we have encoded our thought. "Although the intellect abstracts from the phantasms", writes Thomas, "it does not understand actually without turning to the phantasms" (*ST, I, 85, 5*).

We look for ancestors in Eden, therefore, who speak a human language adequately, whose mental and linguistic abilities are not rudimentary, and are not underdeveloped as in the case of children and minors. Our ancestors were assigned by God to be the founders of the human race. They must be able, therefore, to perceive events and understand them adequately. They must also be able to encode what they think into a commonly understood language—into phonetic and syntactic codes that the listeners can in turn decode in order to think the same thoughts.

Habilis, Erectus and Neanderthals **lacked facile speech.**

The non-*Homo Sapiens* people had a skull shape set upon the vertebrae with a configuration and angle that could not accommodate our type of speech organs. Were one to place our type of speech organs into a *Neanderthal, Erectus, or Habilis* type of body, the result would be monster, with the “Adam’s apple” or larynx in the chest (*Lieberman. P. 296*).

Scientists do not claim that the earlier hominids were totally unable to speak, but that they lacked the ability to speak rapidly and to calibrate the phonemes audibly and sharply as we do routinely, so that both listener and speaker can express complex thoughts in suitable subject and predicate and modifiers, and do so in one conscious intellectual overview. The speech production by *Habilis, Erectus, and Neanderthal* could only have been limited, labored, and slow in comparison with that of *Homo Sapiens*. So handicapped, they could not have compressed complex meanings into the short term memory. Their sentences were presumably short and simple. At a snail’s pace of production of speech elements, if the sentence is long, its beginning falls out of the short term memory before the end is reached. Speech limitations thus defined thought limitations and responsibilities of people other than *Homo Sapiens*. Shall we compare them to young children of today?

Our first ancestors were isolated genetically from all other humans.

A plausible concept of our origins is that when our Adam and Eve had achieved adulthood in speech ability and powers of reason, God called them and set them apart to receive his revelation. The first, and I think the only two whom God thus called, are our immediate ancestors. A Genesis states: “Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east,

and he placed there the man whom he had formed” (2:8). I envision that the first human pair separated from other *Homo Sapiens* people, if such there were, and are the sole beginning of the current global population. Either our “Adam and Eve” were the first carriers of the speech novelty, or they were members of a larger group of *Homo Sapiens* people. In the latter supposition, those “others” were reproductively isolated from our Adam and Eve couple, and ended in extinction, whereas our first parents alone are the ancestors of all people on earth today.

God called our *Homo Sapiens* parents aside, revealed Himself to them, and endowed them with the gift of Sanctifying Grace. They lost it through original sin, but God promised to send a Redeemer (*Genesis 3:15*), a promise whose fulfillment we celebrate on Christmas Day.

Our first ancestors, founders of human culture

The doctrine and commandments of the Eden revelation given to our first ancestors are the firm base of which humans could build not only their theology, but also their philosophy, their social and economic structures, and the monogamous family life. The truths they knew and believed about God helped them to know their individual and interpersonal rights and duties and were compelling motivation to live in accordance with those perceptions. The Bible pictures our first ancestors as people who know God, who live monogamously, who receive children born to them as a trust from God and not as disposable property. From this basis of the “Ten Commandments of Eden” humans everywhere have devised customs and laws that regulate universal rights and duties. The Adam and Eve of the Bible, therefore, are also the *Homo Sapiens* people of science. They founded our race and taught it the basics of religion and culture. ☩

Home-Along America: The Hidden Toll of Day Care, Behavioral Drugs, and Other Parental Substitutes, by Mary Eberstadt (New York: Sentinel, 2004), \$25.95, Hardcover.

Reviewed by: Joseph A. Varacalli, Ph.D.
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My Italian American grandmother, long ago gone to her eternal reward, was someone I constantly sought out in my youth for guidance and advice. Formally uneducated and of peasant background, she was a wise, clear-thinking, no-nonsense woman. Put another way, and in contradistinction to the majority of academics and professionals who have wrought so much harm on American civilization since the mid-sixties, the natural law was evident in the way grandma thought and acted. Pondering the contrast between many of the working class, ethnic friends of my youth and the modern day gnostics that I am presently surrounded by in academia, I recall to mind the acute observation of the then Pastor Richard Neuhaus who stated that the “natural law comes naturally to all except those who’ve been culturally denatured by having their minds bent to the denial of the obvious” (*National Catholic Register*, April 19, 1987, p.5). I’m pretty sure that if I had asked grandma a question about whether or not parental involvement and supervision were necessary to increase the chances of ushering forth sound, healthy, happy, productive, and moral children, she would have been puzzled and, perhaps, even a little irritated. She might have well blurted out in response something like “Are you crazy? Of course, parents are a must! You might as well ask if God exists!”

Mary Tedeschi Eberstadt’s lucidly written and profoundly important volume, *Home-Along America: The Hidden Toll of Day Care, Behavioral Drugs,*

and Other Parent Substitutes, provides a more sophisticated, but essentially consistent, response compared to that of my grandma’s. Mary Eberstadt makes a persuasive case that the increasing absence of parents (in both quality and degree) from family life as a result of such social trends as divorce, out-of-wedlock birth, and dual career and worker families—and a corresponding and increasingly heavier dependency on day care centers—has been a major (but not exclusively so) factor in producing a host of mental and behavioral dysfunctions for children. Her proto-typical sociological analysis represents an application of the consequences for both the individual and society of the spread of what the classical French sociologist Emile Durkheim termed “anomie” or normlessness, that is, in its extreme form, suicide and in its more varied and empirically likely forms, the self-destructive behavior he termed “partial suicides.” The volume contains brilliantly executed chapters on day care centers producing illness, aggression, and unhappiness among children; feral behavior including suicide and various forms of violence committed by children and teenagers; child obesity; the mental health catastrophe in terms of a significant increase in mental problems among the young but also a too common misdiagnosis of individual behavior on the part of the mental health establishment; the promiscuous and harmful prescribing of “wonder drugs” for children; contemporary teenage music as representing a “primal scream” against the abandonment of children by their parents’ generation; the catastrophic spread of teenage sex; and the recent utilization among affluent parents of specialty boarding schools as an example of “parental outsourcing.” This material is based on a careful distillation of various forms of empirical evidence and the application of logic that is presented in a writing style accessible

to the educated person, all facts that will increase the impact of the author’s volume.

Throughout the volume, the author is careful, nuanced, moderate, and reasonable. She does not make the claim, for instance, that exposure to day care centers will, in all cases and under all circumstances, produce problems for children. Nor does she say that the intact family always produces salutary results. Nor does she deny that some children with serious mental problems require drug therapy. She acknowledges, also, that not all are equally responsible for the exodus of parental involvement in the lives of children; for instance, some single parents without extended family support are, practically speaking, forced to use child care. Without stating it as such, she is defending the sociological claim that certain social forces tend to produce observable patterns, generalities, and trends that are both truthful and vitally important to identify if civilization is to right itself.

Even though this is not her specific focus, her analysis stands as an indictment against the ideological formulations and individual rationalizations over the past 40 years offered by academics, radical feminists, health care professionals, and upwardly socially mobile citizens “on the make” who will conveniently ignore the reality that the time-consuming and difficult endeavor of parenting is essential for both children and, derivatively, society. (I’m here reminded of the pre-1960s sarcastic comment, not devoid of truth, made by a critic of sociology to the effect that a sociologist was one who required thousands of dollars of research funds to discover the local house of ill repute. Eberstadt’s analysis now ups the ante; one can say that the social scientists of the last 40 years are typically those who required thousands of dollars of research funds to discover the local house of ill repute while simultaneously “re-symbolizing”

it as a recreational center).

The ideological grounding of what Eberstadt terms the “separationist movement” (i.e., the separating of parents from their duty in child-rearing) is basically two-fold. One, it defends the freedom, individualism, and economic interests of people who don’t want their lifestyles and professional careers interfered with and interrupted. Second, (and this is mostly implicit in her analysis) following the work of people like Allan Carlson and Bryce Christensen, it justifies the uncritical acceptance and continual expansion of the status and economic interests of those involved in the therapeutic professions, a key subset of what thinkers like Peter L. Berger and Richard Neuhaus term the “new knowledge class” (or perhaps better yet, “new gnostic class”). The basis for the psychological rationalizing activity of individuals, on the other hand as this reviewer sees it, is grounded in the very nature of the human being, a nature that includes a self-centered component that can be explained theologically through the reality of “original sin” or humanistically through a philosophical examination of the non-rational and irrational component of the human psyche. Crudely put, on this issue, the realism of a Saint Augustine and the cynicism of the Italian sociologist Vilfredo Pareto, converge.

This reviewer has one, relatively minor, suggestion for Eberstadt and one more potentially serious criticism of her analysis. The suggestion is that she could have more systematically analyzed changes in American culture that would have strengthened her analysis of why the deleterious exodus from parental responsibility has occurred. In this regard, she could have included the work of sociologists like David Riesman (the move to “autonomous individualism”) and Robert Bellah (the move from “Republican” and “Biblical” individualism

to “expressive” and “instrumental” individualism). Similarly, I was surprised that there was no mention of James D. Hunter’s profoundly important 1991 analysis, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, and his discussion of the societal wide change in the understanding of the locus of “obligation,” i.e., from the family to the self. Indeed, Eberstadt’s very significant work can be rightly seen as a specific application of Hunter’s more general analysis of present day American civilization and society.

The potentially serious criticism of Eberstadt’s analysis is that there is almost virtually no discussion, sans a passing reference to the Amish (p.77), of the role of traditional Christianity in her analysis of how we got to where we are at and what we might do about it. Only the recording angel can answer whether this omission is philosophical and intellectual in nature (as with contrasting neo-conservative vs. traditional conservative worldviews) or is a matter of prudential judgment on the part of the author as she might want to make “plausible” her analysis and suggestions to a largely now secularized upper-middle class, professional oriented American constituency. Neither does she incorporate any discussion of the role of “natural law” into her analysis; the closest she comes is to a passing reference about “what we know of human nature” (p. 180).

Regardless of *why* religion and the natural law as analytical considerations are not incorporated into her book, the simple fact is that such omissions weakens what is otherwise a very sharp, important, and witty analysis. Traditional Christianity stresses duty and, more specifically, duty to one’s children out of duty to God. The natural law directs us “to do good and avoid evil.” The secularization of traditional religious commitments on the part of significant numbers of Protestants and Catholics and the

denial of the reality of the natural law on the part of too many Americans is clearly crucial for a more complete understanding of the issues that Eberstadt investigates. Her proposals to reverse the present day neglect of children, much like that of another fine thinker, David Blankenhorn in *Fatherless America*, are (in this reviewer’s judgment) too incrementalist in nature and not radically challenging enough of the status quo. On the one hand, Eberstadt *does* state that “nothing is deterministically fixed” and “we Western men and women are not helpless victims of historical machinations beyond our control” (p. 180). On the other hand, however, her basic call for “a change of heart, a new public consensus” built around the proposition that “it would be better for both children and adults if more American parents were with their kids more of the time” (p. 172) is pretty thin gruel in attempting to replenish our present day sick American body. In fairness to the author, there are plenty of bright scholars, influenced for instance by the sociologist Max Weber, who understood secular modernity as a permanent revolution—the end of the road, so to speak, in which social policy changes can make an impact only at the margins. If a Weberian-like analysis *is* correct, then this reviewer owes an apology to Mary Eberstadt; she is trying to accomplish as much as one can, to make, in essence, a half-decent chicken salad sandwich out of chicken scraps.

If this reviewer believed that Weber was correct, he would be even more sympathetic than he is already to the other-worldly orientation of a thinker like Saint Augustine. There are scholars, however, like Pitirim Sorokin, who posit that civilizations can and do cyclically change, that our present day empirically based “sensate” culture is not necessarily here to stay, and, furthermore, a resurgence of traditional Christian religion and of natural law

thinking with their sense of duty and obligation is possible. It is to that end—that of a Christian religious revival and the restoration of the integrity of the Catholic Church in the United States with its corpus of Catholic social doctrine and natural law thinking—that I implore the readers of this review to invest their minds and energy. Only a radical change in the cultural/religious ethos can produce a fundamentally different civilization, a proposition that would unite thinkers like Max Scheler, Christopher Dawson, and Benedict XVI. Minus such a cultural revival, I fear, the lost generation of children—and of scholars and other elements of the cultural elite—will continue into the indefinite future at the cost of much harm to themselves and social life. In any event, Mary Eberstadt has written an important volume that will serve as a catalyst of sustained reflection, discussion, and debate for years to come. It is deserving of your strong support.

The Church and the World: Gaudium et Spes, Inter Mirifica,
by Father Norman Tanner

Reviewed by Glenn Statile, St. John's University

Signs of the Times

Fans of Charles Dickens would no doubt quibble over whether the Second Vatican Council (1962—1965) was convened in the best or worst of times. A quite well worn if not historically accurate phrase assures us that those who can remember the 1960's could not have been there. Despite the dangers of such a descent into deviant logic, Norman Tanner has commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the closing of Vatican II, which emerged out of a papal call to arms to institutionally address the signs of the times, with a new book which both revisits, and

recalls, two of its sixteen documents. *The Church and the World: Gaudium et Spes, Inter Mirifica*, which reviews and critiques the major issues pertaining to the promulgation and implementation of the famous pastoral constitution on the Church in its dialogue with the modern world, as well as the more modest decree on the ultra-modern topic of how best to utilize the creative potential of mass communication systems in fidelity with Church teaching, is part of an intended eight book series entitled *Rediscovering Vatican II*. When complete this series will comprise a comprehensive attempt to educate the faithful, as well as the not so faithful, on the massive pastoral and reformatory enterprise which Pope John XXIII hoped would usher in an *aggiornamento* or crash course for the Church in its head on collision with the modern world.

The book is brief, only 131 pages long, and is structurally well balanced. Section I concentrates on *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today)* while the focus of Section II is *Inter Mirifica (Decree on Means of Social Communication)*. Both sections are divided into the same four parts or sub-sections: which deal respectively with the growing pains of each document throughout the course of the Council; the major points made in each document; the implementation of each document in regard to their prophetic accuracy; and the current state of each document in anticipation of an uncertain future. As is to be expected section I is by far the more extensive of the two, but neither document is given short shrift. Stylistically, the book is very modest, even humble, there being no attempt by Father Tanner to flaunt his erudition or command of the language. This is not a flaw. To paraphrase Chesterton: never do we stand taller than when humility prompts us to fall to our knees.

Modernity and its Discontents—*Gaudium et Spes*

Most people know from personal experience that the exposition of truth is often more sanitary and less tempestuous than its formulation. This is as true in the history of science as it is in the case of the authoritative teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Those who read Newton's *Principia*, for example, or the seminal paper of Heisenberg in which a new quantum theory of the atom made its debut, get no inkling whatsoever of the conceptual problems and strategies encountered and employed by these scientific thinkers during the discovery process. A comparison between the theological testiness which transpired within the council chamber of St. Peter's Basilica during the autumns spanning the period from 1962-1965, and the polished though never ponderous constitutions, decrees, and declarations which issued forth from such feverish intellectual sparring, illustrates a similar gap. The pen may indeed be mightier than the sword, but it is often wielded only in the aftermath of battles of great pitch and moment.

Tanner successfully captures the unfolding drama that was *Gaudium et Spes*, starting with its birthing process during the preconiliar preparations for the Council, without neglecting to inform us of the weighty developments and often fascinating theological infighting that took place during the equally important intercessions. He does a very good job in fleshing out the extent to which the pastoral constitution represents an "interesting marriage of papal and conciliar teaching." (p. xii) Yet his constant references to the so-called conservative/theological and sociological/liberal agendas at work throughout the Council as "A" and "B" respectively do not, at least *ex post facto*, seem to me to significantly facilitate the reader's grasp of the nuances inher-

ent in these ideological camps, and are thus not really necessary. Perhaps I am wrong, but there does seem to be a bit of a typographical snafu in the designation of whether the progressives present at the Council were in the majority or minority, when a comparison is made between what is written on page 4 and the corresponding footnote (#3), which appears on page 119. All this however is very minor and does not substantially detract from Tanner's masterful delineation of which issues broke down almost entirely along ideological lines and which did not. Contrasting rhetoric, in which the Council is sometimes depicted as producing a *Magna Carta* for either paganism (conservatives) or progress (liberals), can easily conceal the ideological blurring which often manifested itself in the voting process. The Council discussion regarding the proper attitude of the Church in regard to culture provides a telling example of the latter.

Tanner casts *Gaudium et Spes* as the centerpiece of the Copernican revolution which marks an elevation in the theological estimation of the human condition. Jansenism, for example, with all of its pessimistic focus on the pervasiveness of sin, was much more of a prevalent theme in Catholic fiction in my view prior to the contagiously optimistic Second Vatican Council than afterwards. This is especially so since the pontificate of Pope John Paul II.

Among the many other issues of interest which Tanner takes up are the following:

1) The question of methodology — whereby the exposition of the pastoral constitution is presented “from below” rather than “from above.” This follows the strategy set forth by Pope John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra* in which the contingent characteristics of the human condition are not derived axiomatically from theological principles but mirror the inductive and

searching mode of inquiry that befits a process of discovery weighed down by Original sin. Nevertheless, the spirit of the conciliar documents are pervaded with an optimism that Protestant theological Karl Barth criticized as excessive. Quite innovative is the fact that *Gaudium et Spes*, despite the high level of magisterial authority attached to a document accorded constitutional status, hedges its bets and is “nuanced with possible exceptions.” (p. 62)

2) The fear that a conciliar accommodation to modernity would threaten the scholastic underpinnings of Catholic and Christian self-understanding and replace it with a hodgepodge of pragmatic, historicist, and existential approaches to the problem of how truth is discerned.

3) The rampancy of modern atheism and the curious omission of communism by name.

4) The emphasis given to the conjugal dimension of marriage and the self-conscious restriction on extensive analysis for problems such as birth control in anticipation of the treatment expected to be given to them by Pope Paul VI in the near future.

5) The rise of personalism as a means of justifying the claims of the individual in relation to society. This represented a kind of paradigm shift away from the more traditional Natural Law approach. The human person is not a solipsistic entity but is to be defined, and can only be properly understood, in an intersubjective fashion.

The ecclesiological image of the Church so eloquently developed in the pages of the pastoral constitution is that of the Church as Servant. In the final two parts of Section I of the book Tanner tackles the problem of the extent to which the Church has lived up to both the spirit and the letter of what it preaches in *Gaudium et Spes*. According to Robert McAfee Brown, given a deliberative body con-

sisting of approximately 2,300 people empowered with voting privileges it would be foolhardy for anyone to have expected them to produce a coherent prophetic blueprint for the future.

It is perhaps ironic that the heavily western European cast and concerns of *Gaudium et Spes*, to invoke one of the many accusations of discontent which have arisen in succeeding years since its promulgation, have resulted in a Europe in which the influence of the Church is diminishing at a rapid pace. Less than a century ago the thunderous pen of Belloc saw fit to proclaim that the Church and Europe were one and the same. Sadly this is no longer the case. The concerns of the Church have been all but cast out of the civilization whose cultural matrix once allowed it flourish and prosper.

Tanner makes the interesting point that by omitting direct reference to atheistic materialism in the form of communism, *Gaudium et Spes*, in light of the tearing down of the Iron Curtain, may be spared the fate which often befalls texts which are bound to a specific historical context. He claims that the most important, and insinuates overly permissive, implementation of the guiding hand of *Gaudium et Spes* has occurred in the area of moral theology, but then points out that both *Veritatis Splendor* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* can be interpreted as “attempts to redress somewhat the balance, to reassert the permanent principles of morality.” (p. 73) Also of significance, according to Tanner, in terms of the postconciliar development of Catholic thinking, is the banishment of the pervasive but unofficial medieval view that “marriage is a kind of second best...” (p. 74) Although it precipitated a maelstrom of dissent, both internal and external, *Humanae Vitae* (1968) should be viewed as a fulfillment of the de facto promissory note resulting from an incomplete treatment of the problems pertaining to sexuality and marriage in *Gaudium et Spes*.

Tanner bills liberation theology as a reinterpretation, and not an application, of *Gaudium et Spes* “in the light of Latin America’s own social, economic, political, and religious experience.” (p. 78) This had to do with a kind of cultural incommensurability whereby the European Church saw the need for a rapprochement with the modern world, whereas the Latin American Church, to paraphrase Wordsworth, saw the modern world as too much with us. Pope John Paul II, a well known critic of liberation theology, did nevertheless declare in his letter to the Brazilian Episcopal Conference in 1986 that liberation theology was both “admissible and even necessary, if properly understood.” (p. 79) One of the most important issues by which the success or failure of *Gaudium et Spes*, which reinforces and builds upon *Pacem in Terris* (1963), can subsequently be measured is in terms of its approach to the predicament of working for peace in an increasingly hostile world. Tanner claims that neither Catholics nor the Christian community have sufficiently complied with the pastoral promptings of *Gaudium et Spes*, both in terms of promoting peace and in avoiding war.

The Medium and its Message— *Inter Mirifica*

In Section II of the book Tanner considers a topic which has its immediate roots in the 1957 encyclical *Mirana Prorsus* by Pope Pius XII, which dealt with, among other things, the proper attitude of the Church in relation to such media as the cinema, television, and radio. Many people may not know that Saint Clare, the founder of the second order of St. Francis—also known as the poor Clare’s, is also known as the patron saint of television. No, she did not own one, but it is said that while convalescing in bed she was allowed to somehow miraculously witness a mass being said in

another place. A humorous but more recent story in regard to the Church and its relation to television is that Fulton Sheehan’s famous television show of the 1950’s at one point exceeded the ratings of another well known program which shared the same time slot, and which just happened to star the inimitable and extremely popular Milton Berle.

Inter Mirifica (*Decree on Means of Social Communication*), one of the shortest of the sixteen documents to receive the imprimatur of the Second Vatican Council, was also one of the first to receive the attention of the assembled Church Fathers and assorted *periti*. Indeed it represents the very first time that an ecumenical council of the church had pondered the problem of communication. This is not surprising in that Vatican II would have been the first such council in history in which the technology of communication would have changed so overwhelmingly from one council to the next. Radio waves, for instance, were not discovered by Heinrich Hertz for a full twenty years after the sudden dissolution of Vatican I. Some of the participants at the Second Vatican Council thought that a document dedicated to something as mundane as the media could call the entire authority of the Council into question. Tanner reveals that even some who supported the document did so for pragmatic purposes, voting to confirm it quickly so as to be able to move on to more pressing doctrinal and pastoral matters.

Tanner points out that the methodology of *Inter Mirifica* is thought to deviate from the inductive approach taken in *Gaudium et Spes*. Its approach, according to the common consensus, is top-down or “from above,” although Tanner does go to some pains to argue on behalf of its bottom-up credentials. In the document on communication it may appear that the Church was seeking not so much to understand the modern world but to remake it in

its own image. These two seemingly antithetical conciliar motives are not necessarily at odds. Strange bedfellow that he is, Karl Marx in his *Theses on Feuerbach* writes that “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.” In engaging the modern world the Church was not endorsing a policy of joining something that it could not beat. Learning from the world requires a reciprocity whereby the world must also be willing to accept instruction from the Church in order to develop its own creative potential in a positive direction.

Tanner brings out the extent to which critics of the document at the time saw it as giving too idealized a depiction of the relation between the Church and the press. Despite his own defense of the document he admits that “It fails, nevertheless, to recognize adequately the pluralism that existed in the media world, to acknowledge how much of the media lay right outside the church’s control or influence.” (p. 106) While it is probably unfair to label *Inter Mirifica* as a backward rather than a forward looking piece of conciliar legislation, hindsight has shown that it did not and could not appreciate the full extent of the transformation in mass communications that lay just beyond its horizon. With the advent of the Internet the Church is presented with a new set of challenges in its efforts to safeguard our moral values. It did not surrender its roles as moral custodian and censor when it abolished the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1966, and still perseveres in its ongoing divine mandate to renew the face of the earth. Slightly more than forty years have passed since the closing of the Second Vatican Council on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the late autumn of 1965. With this well balanced book, which forthrightly traces both the trajectory and the travails of two conciliar documents launched just over forty years

ago, Tanner provides us with a *prima facie* example of an unflinching fact of life first observed by the witty if not so wholesome Oscar Wilde. By forty we all get the face that we deserve.

Tibet: The Jesuit Century,

Philip Caraman, S.J., St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1997., Series IV, Studies on Jesuit Topics, vol. 20, Pp. 154. Paper edition. \$15.95., 1-880810-29-8

Reviewed by Reverend Brian Van Hove, S.J., White House Retreat, Saint Louis, MO

Philip Caraman of the British Province produced a jewel in a few carefully crafted pages. The text has ended and the Maps already begin on page 141.

Tibet is a neglected subject. It has drifted from our memory in the 20th century, despite the efforts of the Dalai Lama to keep alive interest in his country on the part of the outside world. But this was not true of the Middle Ages. Caraman in his background chapter indicates how Franciscan and Dominican envoys to Mongolia had information about it, and particularly rich for the Europeans were the reports of Marco Polo. He had visited a part of southern Tibet, but like the Chinese who were his sources, he never penetrated into central Tibet and never heard of Lhasa. Still, there was interest.

Seven Jesuit missionary-explorers are treated in this book. The first is Bento de Goes, a Portuguese Brother who died in 1607. He obtained new information, but still never visited Tibet. He did succeed, however, in clarifying that the mythical Cathay was identical to China. Not all believed him.

Another Portuguese, Antonio de Andrade, set out in 1624 in search of lost Christian communities which had become legendary. He was the

first European truly to gaze upon “the roof of the world” which was Tibet. In 1626 his account appeared in Lisbon as *Novo Descobrimento do gram Cathayo ou Reinos de Tibet, pello Padre Antonio de Andrade da Companhia de Jesu, no anno de 1626*. An Italian translation appeared in Rome the following year, 1627.

Andrade stirred up a great deal of curiosity about Tibet. In 1626, acting upon Andrade’s suggestions that a mission be established, two more Portuguese, Estavão Cacella and João Cabral, set out. They managed to discover Sikkim and Bhutan, but veered to the west of Tibet. They lived with the lamas, tried to learn the language of the area, and established a small mission at Paro. The King of Bhutan willingly allowed them to preach the Christian religion. Leaving Cabral behind, Cacella continued the journey and finally found Tibet. Cacella was the first European to enter central Tibet. He had reached Shigatse, the second city of the country, and the seat of the Panchen Lama who was the descendant of the Buddha of Light. From Shigatse, Cacella sent for Cabral who arrived in 1628. The local ruler allowed also them to preach there, but it was Cabral who determined that the Buddhism practiced there was not the relic of a forgotten, ancient Christianity. Thus, the second mission to be established was Shigatse. Cacella died there in April, 1630. Due to political circumstances, both these missions were declared to have failed by 1635. The only lasting monument was Cacella’s tomb in Shigatse. Father Cabral died in Goa in 1669.

Hardships endured by the Jesuits in founding these missions defy our imagination. Caraman says, “By the year 1684 it was reckoned that in the hundred years since Ricci arrived in China, only a hundred priests had reached Macao of the six hundred that had sailed for the mission.” (p. 81)

The next two missionaries treated

are Joannes Grueber, an Austrian, and Albert d’Orville, a French-speaking Belgian. Grueber was assigned by Father General Goswin Nickel to find a land route to Asia, and he arrived in China via Turkey and Persia. Then d’Orville and he in 1661 followed a stretch of the Silk Road. For unknown reasons they got off this famous route and headed toward Tibet, arriving in October, 1661. They were undoubtedly the first Europeans to see Lhasa where they spent two months. They did not establish a mission since their purpose was to find an overland route to Europe. D’Orville died at Agra in April, 1662, midway between China and Europe. Grueber arrived safely in Rome in March, 1664, and prepared a comparison for the Jesuit General between the merits of the overland route versus the sea route. He tried to return to Asia overland, but was prevented by political circumstances. Instead, he became an army chaplain in Austria and died in Hungary in 1680.

The seventh and last Jesuit dealt with in this study was Ippolito Desideri. He was an Italian born in Pistoia in 1684 and who arrived in Lhasa in 1716. There he lived for five years with the monks of a Buddhist monastery. The chief result of his visit was a lengthy descriptive book on the country made possible because of his profound knowledge of the Tibetan language. Caraman maintains that had later British colonial explorers known of this work, they would have been able to add relatively little to Tibetan studies. Desideri was ordered to leave Tibet when Propaganda Fide required that only Capuchin Fathers labor there. Acting out of obedience, Desideri reached Rome in January, 1728. He then completed his *Notizie Istoriche del Tibet* before dying in the Eternal City at the age of forty-nine in 1733.

Supplementing the writings of the Jesuits themselves are the journals and chronicles of nineteenth-century British travelers and military men.

These help to fill in some of the details, and Caraman searches them for any references to the missions of earlier centuries.

Philip Caraman concludes his book with a “Postscript” on this question of the jurisdiction and policies of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. While the Capuchins were kindly Fathers, their missionary methods were criticized by Desideri, and those who arrived did not learn the Tibetan language to the degree that he did. The implication is that the Tibetan mission thus became a lost opportunity.

*Italian version of this review first published in *La Civiltà Cattolica* (149/III/3553) [1998]: 97-98).

A Note on Philip Caraman:

Born in London in 1911, Philip George Caraman was the middle son of nine children—two boys and seven girls—of devoutly Catholic Armenian parents who immigrated to Britain after brutal civil war in their own country, and settled in Hampstead. Both boys became Jesuit priests and two of the girls became nuns.

Caraman’s great love was recusant history and especially the lives of the Catholic martyrs of England and Wales. He finally witnessed the glorious conclusion of his work for the Forty Holy Martyrs in Rome on 25th October, 1970. Philip played a major part in the ceremonies accompanying their canonization by Pope Paul VI in St. Peter’s.

Fr. Caraman during the next 20 years produced a series of Jesuit histories, one of which, *The Lost Paradise*, was a major source for the award-winning film *The Mission*. He did not write another book on recusant history until—in great old age—he became parish priest of Dulverton, in Somerset. In 1991, he published *A Study in Friendship: Saint Robert Southwell and Henry Garnet* and three years later he brought out *The Western Rising 1549*, the story of The Prayer Book Rebellion in the West country, which resulted in the martyrdom of many Catholics who

had taken part in it. Philip Caraman was writing until shortly before his death on 6th May, 1998, but consistently turned down invitations to publish a memoir of his friendship with the many prominent people he had known.

His biography, *A Gentle Jesuit: Philip Caraman SJ, 1911-1998* by June Rockett was published in 2004 by Gracewing in the U.K. ISBN 0852445938.

Evolution and Other Fairy Tales, by Larry Azar, Author House: Bloomington, IN (2005), 467 pp., \$14.95

Reviewed by Richard J. Rolwing, author of *Digging up Darwin in Ohio Without Holding Your Nose*

You were a philosophy professor at a tiny Catholic college. After undergraduate work in math and physics at Boston College, you got a doctorate in philosophy at Toronto’s Pontifical Institute. You studied under Gilson, Pegis, and Maurer. You even served as Maritain’s assistant at Princeton. You are now retired in your mid-eighties, and quite weak from several heart attacks. You published some articles and five books which were never best sellers.

Then you dove into evolutionary writings, swam all the way from sea to shining sea, and finally surfaced with this devastating and definitive tome. For 5 years you tried to find a publisher. One friend stirred Cardinal Ratzinger’s lively interest in the forthcoming work. If, without an agent, you threw the manuscript over a transom, the major publishers would take forever and then back off. No doubt they sought counsel from evolutionists! Who else? Catholic houses were afraid because, they said, the Pope had accepted Evolution. Protestant houses were afraid because the author was a Catholic. Finally, even though this is a blockbuster of scholarship, a new on-demand publisher offers it at a great price.

You produce a truly magisterial

deconstruction of Evolutionary theory, research, and scholarship, with over 2100 citations, mostly from modern scientists, and 42 pages of bibliography. You do what scholastic philosophers should have done long ago. You truly incarnated your philosophy. You did not teach just philosophy. You used it to evaluate the writings of modern scientists. You make us wonder which is worse, their acuity or their honesty. Regardless, we have been scammed. After Freud and Marx, now it’s Darwin, we find.

You offer no alternative to biological evolution. You simply use evolutionists to utterly destroy each other. Though a Catholic you barely ever mention any historical religion. The Protestant background of most moderns has no room for philosophy between science and religion/theology. Court quarrels and judicial decisions are between “naturalist” who think ID is faith in disguise and “supernaturalists” who call it science, as if philosophy does not exist. Unruled by philosophy, no wonder science became scientism. And unrestrained by philosophy, theology likewise overreaches. The western mind slipped sockets centuries ago.

You scarcely ever mention ID. You call on some philosophers at times, but mostly Aristotle. You diagnosed early modern science’s fractured skull. When it dismisses formal and final causality (structure and function) for the sake of technological utility, that was intellectual self-mutilation. Dizzy spells like Marxist “science” and Freudian “science” are no surprise. And evolutionary “science”? Missing Links resemble Extra-terrestrials. S-F is far better.

No scents, philosopher, or theologian dare, DARE, miss this treasure trove of wisdom. We have suffered 150 years of Big Foot in Big Mouth. Darwin is simply not fit to baptize. Catholic scientists, do not just bark back up at bishops. Come out of the closet for a full scale attack on *a*, if not *the*, major

source of Communism, Nazism, Eugenics, Genocide, Racism, Secularism, relativism, Sexual License, and Human Engineering. Truth can be born again.

Thomas Paine and the Promise of America by Kaye, H. J. (2005). NY: Hill and Wang, 19 Union Square West 10003. pp. 262. BP. 25.00

Reviewed by (Rev.) Michael P. Orsi, Ed.D., Research Fellow in Law and Religion, Ave Maria School of Law

Harvey Kaye's *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America* is a failed attempt to elevate the pamphleteer to the status of an American founder. There is no doubt that his jingoistic treatise "Common Sense" (1776) helped inflame the spirit of the revolution among the colonists. However, no serious historian would put his contribution on a par with that of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, or Madison. Kaye's book is a combination of biography and historical survey of Paine's influence on American culture and politics over the past 230 years. Kaye portrays Paine as the quintessential democrat. He attempts to show how his words have inspired countless reformers to work on behalf of the disenfranchised. Kaye's bias in favor of left-wing causes and their spokespersons often contaminates what could have been a more fruitful discussion of Paine's philosophical contribution to our American ethos. The fact of the matter is that Paine's most popular phrases "These are the times that try men's souls" and "We have the power to make the world over again" have so embedded themselves into the national lexicon that politicians of every stripe have freely used them to promote their cause. In Kaye's mind, however, on the lips of a right-winger these words are the equivalent of rape and a violation of Paine's spirit.

No doubt Paine's life (1737-1809),

his insinuation into both the American and French revolutions, and his contribution to representative government deserve serious study. But other than stating historical facts, Kaye offers little in terms of psychological or sociological insights that motivated Paine's egalitarianism. To his credit, Paine was in the forefront in calling for universal male suffrage and abolition of slavery. He also lobbied early for social security and the separation of church and state as it is promoted in the modern secularist sense. Kaye claims that the initial clash with Paine and his ideas began with the Federalist Party. The vituperous rantings of John Adams against him and the refusal of the U.S. Ambassador to France, Gouverneur Morris, to negotiate for Paine's release from prison there are testimony to the strong passions he elicited from them. His repatriation and the restoration of his citizenship was accomplished only through the good offices of Thomas Jefferson's presidency.

Paine's fall from grace in America occurred for the most part, according to Kaye, because of his penchant for non-religion. For this he earned the ire of some founders and from the religious establishment in both the north and the south. Kaye claims that Paine's deism and embrace of Enlightenment principles have caused him to be persona non grata for most of America's history. Yet, he fails to say why since Jefferson and prominent others among the founders held to basically the same beliefs but did not suffer a similar fate. Also, we never really learn from Kaye what made Paine so odious to the English and French as well.

Kaye's thesis is based largely on the mostly debunked theories of class conflict that persist in the imagination of the liberal intelligentsia still imbedded in the academy. His villain always seems to be the evil capitalists who keep down the proletariat masses. Yet any reading of American history from Alexis de Tocqueville onward will

show that in America, privilege and class were abolished with the revolution. There is no denying that certain groups were originally denied the right of participating in the American democratic process, for example, African-Americans and women, and that for these groups, Paine's words were inspirational in their drive for equality. But once access was gained, it was the market economy that gave them a place at the national table and a share in America's wealth. Kaye's prejudice becomes most apparent when conservatives such as Barry Goldwater or Ronald Reagan recycled Paine's words in their speeches. He seems to believe that their co-opting of a pithy phrase in some way does an injustice to the original source. If, as Kaye proposes, Paine belongs in mainstream of American thought, his alleged hostile attitude toward conservatives is certainly counter-productive to his attempt to rehabilitate him.

There is and always has been in America the fringe left wing comprised of free thinkers. Perhaps with the strong push for separation of church and state since the middle of the last century and the ensuing hostility toward religion in the public forum, Paine's thought in this area has become less offensive. However, in recent years, the forces of non-religion have found a counter-force among Evangelicals and Catholics who are demanding a voice in the marketplace of ideas. Indicative of Kaye's resentment of public religion is a gratuitous and self-revelatory swipe at Catholicism whereby he alludes to a dubious relationship with the Red Scare and McCarthyism of the 1940's and 50's. He labels think tanks such as American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation and *National Review* magazine as being reactionary. However, no negative connotation is given to such groups as the Socialist Party, Libertarians, Students for a Democratic Society, or the Peoples' Bicentennial Commission.

The study of Thomas Paine's influence on America is important. But to raise him to the status of founder is quite absurd. Many contributed to the founding of our republic but only a few deserve to be labeled as such. This honor belongs to those who pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor. Paine did none of these. Aside from giving Kaye a chance to ride his liberal hobby horse, the book does at least inform us of the power and longevity of Paine's words and unfortunately, how they can be lifted out of context to support any cause. The book ultimately fails to make its case.

The Second One Thousand Years: The People Who Defined a Millennium, Richard John Neuhaus, ed., William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. (2001), 126 pp. Paper.

Reviewed by Rev. Leonard A. Kennedy, C.S.B., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, The Academy of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, Barry's Bay, Ontario, Canada

This book contains ten chapters, each written by a well-known expert, on the life and teaching of a highly significant person. Each chapter is devoted to one such person from each century of the second millennium of the Christian faith. While only a few of the chapters comment on the whole century allotted to them, they all deal with important matters of universal historical interest. Each of them was first published in the journal *First Things*.

Father Neuhaus comments on the significance of the rather muted celebration of the beginning of the thrived millennium, largely a Catholic affair. But he points out that perhaps our best preparation for the third millennium is a knowledge of what happened in the second one.

Though all the chapters are very

interesting I will give only the names of the authors of them and the persons they deal with except for some extra details concerning the first and the last centuries of the second thousand years.

Robert Louis Wilken writes that, in the eleventh century, Pope Gregory VII, also known as Hildebrand, was responsible for freeing the Catholic Church from Lay Investiture, that is, interference of the secular world in matters which should have been controlled solely by the Church. Over the centuries Church and state had been intermingled in many matters of mutual concern without strict guidelines separating their respective jurisdictions. Emperors, kings, princes, and lesser civic leaders had become involved in the appointment of bishops and priests, for example, and Church leaders had been invested with secular authority. So intertwined had these matters become that they could be straightened out only by a clear-sighted determined pope willing to stand up without compromise to anyone opposed to the separation of powers. Hildebrand was able and willing to take an uncompromising stand on the freedom of the Church, and was successful to such an extent that what he achieved was able to make clear for the future that the Church must remain free of lay control at all costs.

Of course lay powers now saw that they must refrain from becoming embroiled in matters purely ecclesiastical, and thus realized that, "deprived of its spiritual authority, the state was forced to conceive of itself anew as a corporate body independent of the Church." Accordingly, "the origins of the modern (and secular) state are to be traced to Gregory VII and the Investiture Controversy."

The only other pope chosen as a person "defining the millennium" was Pope John Paul II, in the twentieth century. George Weigel argues

that Pope John Paul was quite fittingly chosen as the seminal figure of his century because he pointed out to the world that religious conviction is a necessity in addressing the crisis of contemporary humanism, as Russian and German atheism had shown in practice. And he has proven that culture, not politics or economics, is the main agent of social change. And he has faced the sexual revolution with the realization that self-giving, no self-assertion, is "the royal road to human flourishing." And that human sexual love within the bond of marital fidelity is a participation of human beings in the life of the Holy Trinity, an act of worship.

Pope John Paul also taught that freedom divorced from truth is freedom's worst enemy. It leads to a dialogue of power against power and then to anarchy and thus to a tyranny, which puts an end to freedom. And, in economics, "unprecedented material wealth and equally unprecedented license" lead to a failure of the "virtues necessary for the market to work" and are the "true enemy of the free economy."

The other "people who defined a millennium" and the ones who have written about them are:

- In the twelfth century, Moses Maimonides (David Novak)
- In the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas (Romanus Caesario)
- In the fourteenth century, Dante Alighieri (Robert Hollander)
- In the fifteenth century, Christopher Columbus (Robert Royal)
- In the sixteenth century, John Calvin (Alistair McGrath)
- In the seventeenth century, Blaise Pascal (Edward T. Oakes, S.J.)
- In the eighteenth century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Mary Ann Glendon)
- In the nineteenth century, Abraham Lincoln (Jean Bethke Elshtain).

New Wine, New Wineskins: A Next Generation Reflects on Key Issues in Catholic Moral Theology, William C. Mattison III, Editor, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group: Lanham, MD, (2005).

Reviewed by Dan McGuire, doctoral candidate in systematics at Marquette University

This collection of essays evolved from a series of meetings held at Notre Dame beginning in 2002. A group of relatively new professors of moral theology met to discuss a disconnect between what they learned in their doctoral programs and the challenges they faced in their classrooms. They found that the moral theology they learned was of little practical advantage as it didn't speak to the concerns or views of their students. A consensus began to emerge that this new generation of moral theologians, all but one receiving their degree in or after 2000, needed to move beyond the impasse that characterized the moral theology of their professors.

This endeavor is under girded by the fact that there are two "camps" within moral theology. On the one hand are those who would see *Veritatis Splendor* as the apex of contemporary moral teaching and those who view it as the nadir. It is important to note that the endeavor is not determined by the division, or on the problematical definition of the two camps. One of the points the authors and editor wish to make is that, at least for them, moral theology has moved past the arguments that had been so much a part of their formation.

Their professors had been shaped or at least influenced by Vatican II and *Humanae Vitae*. As moral theologians responded to the call for renewal issued by the council, a split began to emerge: in rough terms, those who dissented from *Humanae Vitae*

and other basic moral norms (or the concept of moral norms) v. those who supported traditional (small "t") Catholic moral teaching. The editor and the authors are keenly aware of all the weaknesses inherent in such characterizations. Each time one starts to lump ideas or people together, one introduces generalities that overlook sometimes crucial distinctions.

This is one of the main points of Darlene Fozard Weaver's essay. She uses *Veritatis Splendor* and articles written in response to it to illustrate her view of the impasse. She sees that both sides seem to be talking past each other—neither side actually engages the arguments of the other. Instead, both sides mischaracterize each other by stressing the extreme positions of their opponents and ignoring the nuance present among (and between) members on both sides.

David Cloutier presents the heart of the matter in his essay, "Moral Theology for Real People". He writes that his students don't fit in either camp. The arguments presented to him as crucial during his studies seem completely foreign to his students. He has responded by taking a new approach which is really what this movement (and this book) is all about. He approaches his students from their own moral baseline—usually one that recognizes a need for rules but rejects what they see as arbitrary rules reflected in magisterial teaching. They are not proportionalists, nor do they think moral norms are an impossibility. They see a need for moral rules, but are unable to express what those rules should be, how they should be determined or by whom. They are sure it is not simply up to the individual, but are skeptical of rules imposed by others. The underlying problem is that they have no capacity to conduct the reflective moral reasoning necessary to answer their own questions. His students recognize the lack of interior integrity in themselves and their contemporaries

but have no way to address the deficiency. Cloutier's answer is a "sapiential moral theology" that is largely based on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and the proper ordering of desires. He seeks to engage the students where they are and give them the language and the reflective tools that enable them to understand the concepts of the good, the beautiful and the necessity of reasoned choice among goods.

Christopher Steck, SJ calls for an approach to moral theology that includes an element of spirituality. Because moral theology necessarily involves engaging the will as well as the intellect it cannot be simply a cold objective academic exercise. He does not wish to present moral theology as some simple pietistic platitude, but he does see the need for classic spirituality to en flesh the academic presentation of the moral life. Importantly, he notes that the saints are our guide to what the moral life looks like when lived out. This "saintly voyeurism" as he calls it is essential for the professor before he or she can hope to be effective in the classroom. In his experience, the students have a good BS detector (my term) and will be suspicious of any teaching that is obviously at odds with the personality of the professor teaching it. The credibility of moral theology rests, in part, on the credibility of its teachers.

In the editor's own essay he also sees the need for engaging the students on the levels of both intellect and will. Mattison makes a strong case for the fact that a moral theology which does not address the will and seek to lead the student towards belief is an incomplete and therefore diminished program. He sees the use of rhetoric as naturally suited to moral theology and one that must be exercised, albeit with care. He does not call for proselytizing the student; individual beliefs must be respected—not coerced. At the same time, he does not shy away from approaching moral theology in terms

of belief and conversion. No doubt there are some students who will be uncomfortable with such an approach. This discomfort, in an ideal student, would be an impetus to the discovery of why there is a disconnect between what they accept rationally but cannot embrace volitionally. And that is the beginning of wisdom and self-reflection.

In his essay on the vocation of the lay theologian, Christopher Vogt also seeks to move beyond the realm of academia. He calls for an integration of the lay theologian in the Church at the parish level. He understands that the lay theologian has been given a charism that needs to be shared with the Church beyond the classroom. He calls for the theologian, in cooperation with the local ordinary, to assist in the preaching office during the Mass. While his desire to exercise the charism of teaching is laudable, it seems to me that the lay theologian would be better off assisting the parish Director of Religious Education (DRE) or other similar office, not the priest. There are any number of DREs who struggle to provide a quality faith formation program and end up begging for volunteer instructors even after the formation programs have begun. Those heroic women (and occasionally men) need all the support they can get from those qualified to do so. The pastor, on the other hand has been entrusted with the souls assigned to him and the preaching they hear from the pulpit ought to be the message he thinks would serve their pastoral needs. Certainly there are some (many?) poor homilists whose sermons fall short of what we'd like to hear, but they at least have had some training in the art of preaching. I am skeptical that the answer is to have an untrained homilist, however knowledgeable, try his or her hand. The priest, not the lay theologian, will be asked to account for the souls of his faithful and the homily is the only

chance he gets to influence his flock. The homily is a pastoral tool and only a handful of institutions (aside from seminaries) approach theology from a pastoral perspective (Ave Maria's Institute for Pastoral Theology comes to mind).

The other essays in this text, there are eight in all, are worthy of examination as well. In all, the authors and the editor have taken a bold step to move beyond the worn clichés and arguments that have dogged moral theology for the past two decades. If you are interested some bright and innovative thinking or simply tired of reading the same old arguments re-presented with a shade of nuance, this book is the place to start.

Exploring the Catholic Church: An Introduction to Catholic Teaching and Practice, Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D., by Servant Publications: Grand Rapids, MI

Reviewed by Daniel McGuire, Doctoral Student, Marquette University

Dr. D'Ambrosio has produced a perfect Confirmation present or high school theology textbook. In doing so he has avoided two pitfalls so common in the genre of apologetics aimed at younger readers. There are no straw man questions that the reader has to imagine himself or herself asking. Often those questions are not so much what the average Catholic teen might ask but rather the perfect set-up for the answer to follow. He also, thankfully, sees no need to engage in puns, wordplay or other witticisms. Instead, he provides a readable and personable book that one can imagine a teenager actually reading.

Each of the eight brief chapters contains personal anecdotes that are sincere and informative. These anecdotes allow the reader to "connect" on a personal level with the author

and give the teachings or doctrines presented an immediate connection with "real life". We learn how an aspiring rock musician from Rhode Island becomes a theologian and college professor. Though he tells his own story, it never is allowed to overwhelm the story of the Church. Showing a deft hand, D'Ambrosio illustrates his points with anecdotes but always as a backdrop, never the focus.

The content is orthodox and clearly presented—if you're not sure your child's or Godchild's confirmation class was either orthodox or clear, this book would be the perfect fix. D'Ambrosio has not sacrificed details for readability. He keeps the footnotes and references to a minimum but still gives the reader the information they need for further study.

The first chapter is on the place of the Church in the economy of salvation and sacraments of baptism and confirmation. He examines baptism from a biblical perspective, and then shows how the sacrament becomes efficacious in the life of the baptized. He calls this a "personal Pentecost" that fully unlocks the power of the Holy Spirit". In the chapter on Confirmation his focus is on what the life of the confirmed Christian ought to look like. He presents concrete proposals to help the reader serve his or her commission as Priest, Prophet and king. These proposals show how the gifts of the Holy Spirit are operative and supportive of the Christian life.

After the sacraments come three chapters on prayer; first personal, then liturgical. Types of personal prayer are covered, as are the difficulties one can find in beginning to pray. He focuses on developing an ongoing habit of regular, personal prayer. He closes the chapter with a section on the *lectio divina*. When he moves to the Mass in the next two chapters D'Ambrosio is arguable at his best.¹ He presents the Mass as the sacrifice of Christ and the personal sacrifice of the Christian. The

focus of this chapter is two-fold. He shows the many ways in which Christ is present in the Mass and how each specific presence effects the individual persons present. In the next chapter he examines the question, "If Christ really shows up at every Mass, why do so many walk out apparently no better off than when they walked in?" He shows the reader what practical steps they can take to ensure they "get more out of Mass." In the same chapter he also addresses Eucharistic Adoration and Spiritual communion.

The next chapter addresses the reality of the Devil and sin, and the remedy of sacramental Confession. Once again, the focus here is on how the individual must make a personal decision to face the evil and sin in their own life and commit to doing something about it. The final chapter is an uplifting look at Mary and the saints. D'Ambrosio challenges his readers to find a particular saint to take on as a personal role model. He wants them to develop a prayerful relationship with one saint and let Mary and that saint lead them to Christ.

In sum this book is an excellent gift for any young Catholic. It is orthodox, well written and does not pander or belittle the reader. While it is aimed at the *confirmandi*, it would be helpful to any teenager or the parents of teenagers who may be questioning their faith. This book would help parents treat the questions they may be getting with respect and help them give solid answers. Most often, when a young man or woman begins to question their faith, it is first a search for real meaning, and only secondarily an act of "rebellion". Even the act of rebellion is an attempt to understand. The teenager recognizes that he or she is becoming a more mature person. They want to know that their change from child to budding adult has been noticed and that they are going to no longer be treated as a youngster. At the same time they

want to know what the new limits are. They are not seeking a world with no boundaries, rather they seek new boundaries.

Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France, by Joseph F. Byrnes. University Park, PA. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005. pp. xxiii+ 278.

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

Joseph F. Byrnes grew up in a New England Irish community thinking that he was a Roman Catholic only to discover, as a result of subsequent study, that he was really a French Catholic, due to the lasting influence of the French missionaries in North America. His early education was replete with Catholic symbols, devotions, and feasts that owed their origin to France. Most parish priests had been trained by the Sulpicians who fostered devotion to, for example, John Marie Vianney (the *Curé d'Ars*), Theresa of Lisieux, and Our Lady of La Salette. Early on Byrnes was introduced to the spirituality of the Dominican, A.G. Sertillange and to the poetry of Charles Peguy, and these and other French authors became a part of his intellectual development. He took for granted devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a devotion promulgated by Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque, without recognizing its relatively recent French origin. Pilgrimages also played an important part in Catholic life in New England as they did in 19th century France.

But this is not an autobiography. It is a chronicle of the complex relationship between Church and state in France from Louis XV to Jacques Chirac, that is, from the Bourbons to the Gaullists. The story moves from Louis XV through the French Revolution, the Directory, the Empire, the

Bourbon Restoration, the Third Republic, and the Franco-Prussian War to end in the aftermath of the French experience of two world wars in a single lifetime. The narrative is peopled with revolutionary priests, government legislators, and intellectual fashion makers — religious and secular,—all part of Byrnes's fascinating story as the Catholic right and the Nationalist left vie for ascendancy, a perennial contest between separate religious and national identities that somehow fuse to give France a national identity.

As the *Ecclesia Gallicana* of the *ancien régime* gave way and the constitutional monarchy was abolished in the late 18th century, the Directory, in its effort to completely secularize France, abolished the old Catholic feasts, replacing them with revolutionary festivals, on the assumption that if the nation could appropriate the sacredness of the old religion, that old religion, like a useless anachronism, would wither and die. When Napoleon came to power, he first appeared as a defender of both the revolutionary government and of established religion. His eventual clash with Church authority was matched by his quarrels with what he called "the new ideologues," the intellectual successors of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Condorcet. "Napoleon," writes Byrnes, "did not succeed in balancing the ideological left and the Catholic right, but he effectively allowed enough leeway for each polarity of thought and sentiment to survive and eventually flourish."

Byrnes is particularly sensitive to the role of language in the establishment and maintenance of community and national identity. He finds that in Alsace, with its distinctive linguistic culture, there was far greater community of spiritual and material interests than in other regions of France, such as in Rousillon, where diversity predominated. It seems that citizens who spoke a language other than French were then as now a problem for the central

government. Commenting on the difficulty of achieving national unity and loyalty without a common language, Bertrand Barrere humorously characterized the situation this way: "Federalism and superstition speak Breton, emigration and hatred of the Republic speak German, the counter-revolutionary speaks Italian, and fanaticism speaks Basque." Even Charles DeGaulle once described France as "ungovernable."

In the aftermath of the second world war an uneasy relationship between Church and state resulted in a detente, albeit not a secure one but a detente perhaps better described as a stable compromise between factions rather than a definitive resolution of old antagonisms. Catholics may profess loyalty to France but not necessarily to a nation managed by a central government. On the one hand, Catholics did not object to the funeral Mass of the socialist agnostic, ex-president François Mitterrand. On the other, representatives of the old anti-Catholic Ligue Française de l'Enseignement could declare, "We have accepted religions as enduring cultural facts out of which France has been made." The word, "religions" signals trouble as France confronts a resurgent Islam, ever growing, ever increasing its demands on the state, and claiming equal status with Christianity. A compliant central government has yet to face the prospect that given demographic trends, one day France may become an Islamic republic as many predict. Byrnes does not discuss a rising Islamic presence in France or in Europe. One may hope that in a subsequent volume he will continue a narrative that effectively concludes in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Few contemporary authors command the time-transcendent wisdom that enables Byrnes to place in perspective the rich detail provided by years of historical research. Couple that learning with an elegant prose style and one has not only an informative piece of scholarship but a delightful book.

The Spanish Inquisition, by Rawlings, Helen. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. Pp. xv + 174

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

Helen Rawlings, a lecturer in Spanish at the University of Leicester, drawing on extensive scholarship produced since 1970, sets out to show that the Spanish Inquisition was not as bad as it is customarily made out to be. It was bad enough, and even if placed in a favorable historical context, remains a sad chapter in the history of Christendom. Established in 1478 in the Kingdom of Castile under Queen Isabella I, it was from its beginning responsible to the Crown, rather than to the Pope. It was to last 356 years before it was suppressed in 1834 under Queen Isabella II.

Few are unacquainted with the "Black Legend" as it has come to be known. As customarily presented, the Inquisition was a barbarous instrument of radical and religious intolerance, one that regularly employed torture and the death penalty in pursuit of heretics and other deviants. According to Rawlings, torture and the death penalty were rarely applied, in fact, almost exclusively during the first two decades of its existence. Given access to extensive archival material and drawing upon an enormous amount of secondary literature, historians, nevertheless, are sharply divided on what took place and how it is to be understood. Rawlings claims that the literature produced in recent decades tends to be less severe in its judgment, that, in fact, it has done much to dispel the Black Legend myth conjured up by Spain's foreign, mainly Protestant, enemies of the 16th century. Within a short time after its inception, the pursuit of heresy became marginal to the Inquisition's real function. It became instead a tool to

settle social and economic grievances and cultural prejudices.

As initially established, the Spanish Inquisition was a court of law that owed allegiance to the Crown, albeit with the authority to root out heresy and restore obedience to the Church. In fact, one should speak of inquisitions for that of Castile differed from that subject to the Crown at Aragon. At one time there were twenty-one regional tribunals. The Aragon Inquisition notoriously extended its jurisdiction over a variety of offenses not commonly pursued or encountered in Castile. Whether under the jurisdiction of Aragon or Castile, the Inquisition soon became a self-perpetuating body and one may add, a self-supporting body as a result of its power to levy fines and confiscate property. Rawlings provides an interesting chapter entitled, "The Inquisition as an Institution," which provides some lessons for the 21st century. Within a sort time after its founding the Inquisition became a bureaucratic institution with all the infighting, contradictory policies, and tangential activity typical of any bureaucracy. At the apex of its power, it comprised seven secretariats in Castile and Aragon.

On June 12, 2000, to mark the Catholic Church's Jubilee, John Paul II issued a document entitled, "Memory and Reconciliation," in which he sought forgiveness for the errors of the Church through the 2000 years of its existence, including the excesses of the Inquisition. And rightly so, it is almost unintelligible that anyone thought conversion to Catholicism could be forced, when in fact conversions are rare and only after extensive intellectual preparation. It may have been expedient for Jews and Muslims to profess Catholicism in the aftermath of the Crown's drive to solidify its victory over the Muslim elements in Spain who were often supported against the Crown by the Jews. It became a major endeavor of the Inquisition to seek out

and penalize the *converso* (as they were called) who reverted to their old ways. The Crown, not unlike the Rome of antiquity had reason to seek religious unity in the people as a condition of civic stability, but ecclesiastical authorities were complicit insofar as they condoned “forced conversion.”

Rawlings is generous in acknowledging her dependence on the work of her colleagues, particularly that of Gustav Henningsen and Jamie Contreras, who performed a quantitative study of almost 50,000 documents. From the records of twenty-one regional tribunals over the period 1540-1700 they produced a statistical data bank that alone is sufficient to puncture the myth of the Black Legend. Rawlings calls attention to the several book-length studies of Henry Kamen, notably his *Spanish Inquisition: An Historical Revision* (1997), and credits him with launching a movement to set straight the historical record.

The Spanish Inquisition, like many complex episodes in the history of the Church, requires uncommon scholarship to get near the truth where political and religious factions have distorted the record. Clearly, Rawlings does not exonerate the Church of complicity, but in telling the full story provides a basis for enlightened judgment. Weighing the balance of evidence presented in this highly informative volume, it is clear that some of the old debates regarding the excesses of the Spanish Inquisition need to be refined and some new ones considered.

Breastfeeding and Catholic Motherhood: God's Plan for You and Your Baby, by Sheila Kippley, © 2005

Reviewed by Angela Elrod-Sadler, Doctoral student in philosophy at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Instructor at Indiana University Northwest, Department of History and Philosophy

The choice to breastfeed is one which seems strangely controversial in our society today given the pluralism our postmodern age so covets. Surrounded by a variety of options, breastfeeding can be seen as simply *one* choice available to parents among others. This choice often sparks controversy, however, regarding public practice, length of practice, and interpersonal dynamics, among other issues. Yet in reading Sheila Kippley's *Breastfeeding and Catholic Motherhood*, the potential conflicts latent to a woman's choosing to breastfeed are, refreshingly, not the focus. Nor is this work one which focuses on the options facing parents when choosing how to nurture their child. Kippley's book instead clearly advocates for the practice of breastfeeding in a manner far from polemical and seeks, “to show the spiritual dimensions of breastfeeding; how breastfeeding is a natural, healthy part of being a Christian woman, mother, and wife” (p. xii).

Kippley organizes her attempt around three main points partly evidenced in her subtitle: 1) that breastfeeding is a part of God's plan; 2) that Church teaching supports breastfeeding as the best option for nurturing a child; and 3) that breastfeeding shares important aspects of spirituality with the sacrament of marriage. Her attention to these three points, as opposed to the more contentious aspects of breastfeeding, allows Kippley to progress gradually from a discussion of breastfeeding as natural and healthful for the human bodies involved to a discussion of breastfeeding as natural and healthful for the souls involved. Additionally, these points and their examination intersect and reinforce one another in and through the object which is their end, namely, a woman's spiritual growth and relation to God.

In claiming that breastfeeding is a part of God's plan, Kippley establishes her position as one in agreement with traditional understandings of natural

law (i.e., normative order of nature as God created it). For in breastfeeding a child a woman conforms to natural law as a creature of God. She thereby submits herself to divine authority, accepts her responsibility as a mother, and acknowledges both her own dignity and her child's as human persons. This is not to say that the woman who cannot or does not breastfeed her child is less of a person. Kippley carefully notes that her work does not explicitly treat either parenting or personal value as its theme. Nonetheless, Kippley clearly states that she believes breastfeeding provides the best ethos for mother and child; “. . . using formula or milk is only the fourth best option . . . the exception, [a woman's inability to produce milk], shouldn't replace the norm” (p.14).

Related to her position that breastfeeding is part of God's plan, Kippley then devotes the first two chapters of her book to its physical and psychological benefits. These consequences are numerous, and the implication is that they result from the good acknowledged by accepting one's place within God's creation. Furthermore, by presenting the reader with scientific support for the benefits of this practice, Kippley simultaneously anticipates and responds to her audience's unfamiliarity with, or resistance to, breastfeeding and its effects. Her explanation of these effects also leads quite naturally for her to an advocacy of extended breastfeeding (i.e., breastfeeding for a period longer than one year) and most especially for the practice she has termed “ecological breastfeeding” (p.60).

Ecological breastfeeding yields not only the physical and psychological benefits of extended breastfeeding, but using more particular standards also aids in a family's ability to space the births of children without using contraceptives. (Kippley's interest in birth-spacing is a longstanding one and extends from its relation to her initial experiences of breastfeeding as well

as her work as co-author of *The Art of Natural Family Planning* with her husband.) Although her discussion of ecological breastfeeding does not appear until the last third of her book, its placement enhances Kippley's first two main points for developing the spirituality of breastfeeding in a three-fold way. First, Kippley's consideration of birth-spacing enables her to enter cultural and sociological debates because the practice of ecological breastfeeding as such is not confinable to one culture or economic class. For women in underdeveloped or undeveloped nations this form of breastfeeding is common, if not prevalent. Kippley then rightly points out that in developed nations the practice of ecological breastfeeding, and breastfeeding in general, has become non-normative. Her discussion of the practice of breastfeeding, therefore, impacts a variety of issues ranging from population concerns in developing countries to the disintegration of the family in industrialized societies. Second, by focusing on birth-spacing Kippley again underscores the health benefits of breastfeeding introduced in the first two chapters since a healthier mother and healthier children translate, at least initially, to a healthier population. Taken together, the inclusion within cultural and sociological debates and the benefits of breastfeeding further illuminate concrete means by which Kippley can claim breastfeeding to be a part of God's plan. Third, it allows her to establish a strong connection between the practice of breastfeeding and what Pope John Paul II has called a "culture of life" by providing women with accepted research supporting alternatives to contraception that also accord with valuing life as the Church teaches. For a child-bearing woman this means being open to the potential for life within the sacrament of marriage and also respecting the vulnerability and dependancy of life in its earliest years. Both topics are ad-

ressed by Kippley from a laywoman's perspective and align her work with Magisterial teachings.

This leads the reader to more deeply reflect on the chapters supporting Kippley's second point: that Church teaching affirms breastfeeding to be the best choice for nurturing a child. Kippley examines a number of documents from various Church leaders. Among those whose writings Kippley references are Popes Pius XII and John Paul II. Pope Pius XII provides perhaps the clearest statement of a mother's commitment when breastfeeding since he very directly links the development of children's souls to the influence of their mothers during nursing (p.32). Kippley then implies that the Pope's exhortations of breastfeeding as "more desirable" (*Ibid.*) have been strengthened to level of obligation by relying on the work of Father William Virtue, whose study of nursing and its theological bases describes breastfeeding as "a real duty that cannot be ignored for trivial reasons" (p.31). This means that when no other factors impinge upon a woman's ability to breastfeed so as to eliminate it as the source of a child's nourishment and nurturing, breastfeeding is the optimal choice for providing the child with these goods.

While Father Virtue's study indeed gives Kippley a strong foundation for her claim, her reliance on Pope John Paul II's work best emphasizes nursing as an obligation, especially as it relates to a contemporary understanding of motherhood and a woman's involvement in society. In his work as Cardinal Wojtyla and as Pope, John Paul II dedicated himself to many projects restoring a valuing of life and family predicated upon a respect for God and the dignity of the human person; Kippley has drawn from this great body of work those examples directly appealing to reflection upon the practice of breastfeeding. One such quote will serve here to illustrate how well

she has emphasized the connection between herself and the efforts of the Pope. He says:

"In normal circumstances [the advantages of breastfeeding] include two major benefits to the child: protection against disease and proper nourishment. Moreover, in addition to these [benefits], this natural way of feeding can create a bond of love and security between mother and child, and enable the child to assert its presence as a person through interaction with the mother.

All of this is a matter of immediate concern . . . From various perspectives, therefore, the theme is of interest to the Church, called as she is to concern herself with the sanctity of life and the family. . . ." and "In practical terms what we are saying is that mothers need *time, information, and support*. . . . So much is expected of women in many societies that time to devote to breastfeeding and early care is not always available . . . [yet] no one can substitute for the mother in this natural activity . . ." (pp.35, 36, from an address to the Pontificiae Academiae Scientiarum and the Royal Society, 1995)

In addition, the Pope's "theology of the body" helps to inform Kippley's last point for opening up the spiritual dimensions of breastfeeding: its comparison to the sacrament of marriage. There are eleven points of comparison offered by Kippley. These points are only briefly analyzed, however, as Kippley prefers to leave the greater theological discussions to the theologians (p.47). Despite their brevity, these glimpses of what breastfeeding and the sacrament of marriage share all include those elements which most strongly reflect a connection to God through their economy: voluntariness, sacrifice, and love.

To put it succinctly, in breastfeeding her child a woman enters into communion with another person and with God. Her communion

is one which she undertakes freely through her love for her child. This same communion between persons (i.e., the spouses) grounds the sacrament of marriage. For it is through a voluntary gift of self to the other that each spouse mutually celebrates and administers God's grace in their lives together by continually affirming their consent to their married state. Each act, that of breastfeeding and that of marriage, thus also involve sacrifice and love because it is through love that a woman gives herself physically, emotionally and spiritually to both her spouse and her child. Such a giving requires sacrifices – of time, of desires, of material goods, etc. – by its very structure and entails a reordering of those goods sacrificed since the desires and needs of the persons involved effect and impinge upon each other. In its proper state, therefore, the communion of persons taking place in breastfeeding a child should not be merely a relationship of utility; it must be ordered by love. As Kippley explains, “In God's plan [the relationships of breastfeeding and marriage] both have a natural and personal order that depend upon each other; the objects of each order [respectively] . . . are reproduction and love” (p.53). Consequently, Kippley views breastfeeding as an extension of the reproductive cycle for a woman within the family, and also as an integral part of the marriage covenant. With respect to its spiritual dimensions this means that just as a woman develops her relationship to God through the communion deepened in marriage, so also does she enrich her communion with God through breastfeeding. This is no small claim on Kippley's part. In making it she reorients an understanding of the relation between the marital covenant and breastfeeding from a view of the practice of nursing as, at most, an addendum, or as unrelated (the more prevalent contemporary understanding) to the marital rela-

tionship to one which views breastfeeding as an integral part of satisfying the requirements invoked through the sacramental nature of marriage, viz., the “procreation and education of [the spouses'] offspring through which [marriage] . . . finds its crowning glory” (*Catechism*, Ligouri Publications, Ligouri, MO., 1994, p.412).

Additionally, this view benefits both spouses, though Kippley's book speaks primarily to women, because of its inclusiveness. Both spouses are required to make a family, and both spouses are responsible for satisfying the requirements of the marriage, according to Church teaching. So many contemporary understandings of breastfeeding emphasize the man's role as non-existent or minimal. The husband comes to believe himself unable to participate or believe that his participation is unimportant. Kippley's understanding of breastfeeding's relation to the sacrament of marriage turns these conclusions on their heads by emphasizing breastfeeding's proper place within the sacrament and the complementarity of its celebrants. Kippley's view thus provides men with a space (intellectually and spiritually) within the practice of breastfeeding for concrete action.

Indeed, after reading this book both men and women will find that Kippley has done more than simply encourage her readers to think of breastfeeding in a new way. Most especially she has given her readers new avenues for understanding concrete ways to live the vocation of motherhood. In our society, faced as we are with a sometimes overwhelming variety of choices, Kippley has made hers. Perhaps reading this book will help others identify whether or not there is a choice before them, and make theirs as well. I join Kippley in her hope that her work will encourage others to more fully live their vocations.

Meditation Without Myth; What I Wish They'd Taught Me in Church About Prayer, Meditation, and the Quest for Peace, by Daniel Helminiak. Crossroad Publishing Co.: New York, (2005)

Reviewed by John Love, STD, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Daniel Helminiak's *Meditation Without Myth; What I Wish They'd Taught Me in Church about Prayer, Meditation, and the Quest for Peace* is worse than it sounds. After reading it, one will develop a long list of what *they* wish Helminiak would have been taught in Church (or anywhere) about prayer, meditation, and the quest for peace. Dr. Helminiak completed his formal theological education at Andover Newton Theological School (a bastion of liberal Protestantism and early 20th century social gospelism) and at Boston College under Bernard Lonergan; and you can tell. Like a crafty coach stealing signals from the opposite sideline, a reader with cursory knowledge of Helminiak's background can almost predict the author's methods, arguments, prejudices, over-dramatized concerns, and even his phrases at times. Helminiak offers a “humanistic spirituality” in the hope that his proposal will become “the human core of [a] spirituality,” which will unite the global community (121).

Meditation Without Myth enunciates a mentality shared by a recognizable type of disaffected former-Catholic liberals. (For those who are not familiar with the author's personal history, Helminiak explains in his first pages that he is a laicized priest who went on to earn a doctorate in psychology and publish several controversial works, such as, *What The Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*.) Helminiak unveils in his first chapter several underlying suppositions that inform his theory of meditation and spiritual

growth. The author expresses his frustration with the spiritual formation offered to him at seminary, and caricatures Catholic (and generally all Western) spirituality in too many ways to number. Dr. Helminiak consistently demonstrates a bewildering ignorance, given his doctorate in theology, of fundamental Christian beliefs and concepts, which results in nauseating “Straw-man” criticisms of a tradition he has evidently rejected. Helminiak found “salvation” for his stalled spirituality in Buddhist-style meditation, specifically because, “Buddhist meditative practice has nothing to do with theology” (6). On these grounds, Helminiak proceeds to outline the “humanistic spirituality” which comprises the primary subject of his book.

Dr. Helminiak claims, “God, grace, the Holy Spirit, or other supposed spiritual entities do not belong in a scientific explanation of spiritual growth” (9). Helminiak’s “humanistic spirituality” entails “spirituality as a natural aspect of the human mind... indeed, something required by our human constitution and the human condition itself” (9). Probably acting on mixed motives, Helminiak is not willing to exclude the billions of religious adherents worldwide (who incidentally make up a large percentage of the book-buying public) from his plan for a “global spirituality,” and so the author states, “Understandably, for many people discussion of God is essential, so discussion of God will be of supreme importance for this book” (9). Helminiak immediately follows this claim with these words, “But in the meantime, on the basis of psychological analyses and apart from theology or religion, I proceed to explain spirituality as a purely human phenomenon” (9). No words of censure are necessary, it seems, when the author sees fit to contradict himself so blatantly.

Helminiak proceeds to explain his tripartite division of the human person into: body, psyche, and spirit (the latter two comprising together the human soul). Body is simple enough. Dr. Helminiak describes, “psyche” as “a sum total of habitual patterns of responding,” including emotions, sense of humor, and what is commonly known as “personality” (14-15). According to the author, psyche “finds contentment in the status quo,” while, for Helminiak, “The spirit is a dimension of our own minds that... opens us to a transcendent realm of experience” (13). The author admits, “The human spirit seems to open onto the divine, onto what is all-pervasive, lasting, true, and good” (13). Helminiak claims throughout *Meditation Without Myth*, however, that the human experience of transcendence “is a part of our own selves,” and that in prayer and meditation we do not actually encounter a transcendent, perfect Other but instead our own “growing openness to all reality in awe” (13). In another part of the book, while describing the pinnacle of the spirituality he preaches, Helminiak defines ultimate reality as “open-ended becoming,” which one may embrace once they are fully integrated according to their self-transcending and yet self-focused “spirit” (105).

Fundamentally, Helminiak proposes mantra-driven meditation as an effective technique with which to integrate our humanity through what he calls the human “spirit.” The author spends several chapters rehearsing the same doctrine of mental denial and the same promises of “profound personal integration” leading to happiness and peace found in any explication of Buddhist “contentless meditation.” Helminiak’s “humanistic spirituality” suffers from the individualistic tendencies of Buddhist meditation, and more severely

so. In general, Buddhist spirituality proclaims the “transcendence” of personal annihilation (a doctrine which the author directly opposes), but Helminiak promises nothing more than a deeper awareness of self as “openness to reality.” The author reemphasizes the humanistic (i.e., anthropocentric) nature of the spirituality he proposes in the third and final part of his book.

Under the subtitle, “God, Religion, and Spirituality,” Dr. Helminiak writes as follows about the place of God in spirituality, “We can explain almost everything about spirituality without bringing God into the picture” (119). Helminiak reasons that because people have widely differing beliefs about God, belief in God cannot be a requirement of the “global spirituality that will bring unity and world peace,” which is the ultimate aim of *Meditation Without Myth*. The author acknowledges “God” as, “the Unknown from which we come and to which we go” (140-141), but maintains that “not God or our belief in God, but our own spiritual nature is the key to our spiritual growth” (153).

Simplifying somewhat, Helminiak claims that the positive content of religion is “morality,” by which he intends an extremely limited, typically post-modern notion of “being a good person,” “living in harmony with the universe,” and what amounts to “getting in touch with the child within” (i.e., your “spirit”) (167-169). In this threadbare melodrama witnessed too many times in recent memory, “religion,” “metaphysics,” and “dogma” play the stereotypical villains that combat the “world unity” that Helminiak seeks to serve. Helminiak writes that religious conviction, despite its faults, may be admissible in his new world-order, so long as the humanistic spirituality he proposes “will actually be

in contro—it will be the essential” (125). In Helminiak’s mind, however, belief in God or atheism make no difference whatsoever (128), because, according to the author, “In practice, a humble theism comes down in the same place as a humble agnosticism” (150).

This review cannot conclude without some mention of the author’s chapter on sex. Helminiak offers several mundane platitudes about the human value of sexual intercourse and romance, but also reveals some disturbing attitudes towards sex itself. In the most egregious case, Helminiak professes, “A casual sexual encounter can sometimes be a beneficial experience [for example,] the legendary weekend tryst that leaves both parties grateful for one another and restored to faith in life” (110). The implications are mind-boggling, and it does not seem possible that a doctor of psychology could be unaware of the emotional, relational, social, moral, and psychological hazards of “the legendary weekend tryst.” On the other hand, Helminiak presents St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas as the representative figures for what the author considers the repressive Christian and Catholic understandings of sex, respectively. Of all people to be stuck in the 13th century, one would not generally choose Daniel Helminiak as a likely candidate. The author’s caricature of the Christian view of sexuality, however, leaves little room for any other conclusion. As for *Meditation Without Myth*, the book may be useful to those who want an example of the author’s circle. In general, *Meditation Without Myth* is not worth the price—any price—and you will certainly find kindling cheaper in other forms.

There Are No Accidents: In All Things Trust in God, Fr. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R., with John Bishop, Our Sunday Visitor: Huntington, IN, (2004), no index

Reviewed by *Reverend Brian Van Hove, S.J., White House Retreat, Saint Louis, MO*

Academics, intellectuals, and scholars are hard to reach spiritually. Devotional material tends not to impress them. But here is a little book that anyone who “lives in his head” should read.

The first half of the book is a lively interview with Father Groeschel by John Bishop, an Englishman who takes note that the friars are opening a mission in Canning Town located in London’s East End. They discuss the current crisis in the Church, the post-conciliar trauma, the need for reform in Religious Life, the hunger of today’s youth for religious orthodoxy, terrorism, abortion, liberalism, EWTN, and the apostolic efforts of Groeschel’s Community of the Franciscans of the Renewal. At every corner the theme of suffering and death is raised.

Then, perhaps two years after this interview, Father Groeschel suffered a serious accident in Orlando, Florida, on January 11, 2004. He nearly died after a car hit him while he was crossing the street near the international airport. The second half of the book is a series of short meditations and reflections on some of the same themes, except this time from someone more intensely living out the mystery of suffering and the Cross he had been discussing while he enjoyed relatively good health at the age of 70.

Any academic, intellectual, or scholar could in an instant be similarly reduced to helplessness in a hospital, and so the sober realism of Father Groeschel comes as a style of

faith quite attractive to those hard to attract. Sober, fierce spirituality is difficult to find, especially since American liberal religion became infected with “pop psychology” and the therapeutic culture. Groeschel more than once describes liberalism as “faith without content”. In this little book we see the objective content of the Faith keeping him going under the direst of circumstances.

Catholics are generally unfamiliar with the Christian East. But Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of London wrote in a way that is similar to Benedict Groeschel. Bloom was a medical doctor and a monk (+2003), and Groeschel is a psychologist trained to help disturbed adolescents. Bloom’s “Death and Bereavement” (Oxford: St. Stephen’s Press, 2002) is the type of tough and pure spirituality that we need, but unfortunately it is far less accessible than Groeschel’s writing published by Our Sunday Visitor.

On page 117 we have the heading “Death is Never Far Away”. Groeschel says, “My experience during the two months I was on a respirator and unable to speak, eat, or drink gave me a new view of purgatory. I used to joke about this reality—I will no longer joke about it, however, because in some ways I was there.”

There Are No Accidents is a book about experience, especially the experience of a Franciscan priest who had an accident, was expected to die, did not die, and wrote for us through his suffering. The pages of this book radiate hope for every reader. Suffering and death come to us all, even to academics, intellectuals, and scholars. Groeschel recommends that our suffering and our death be in union with Christ.

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

If there are books you know of that should be reviewed, let Brian Benestad know at benestadj1@scranton.edu

Sonnets, ed. by William Baer, University of Evansville Press: Evansville, IN. (2005) Cloth. 176pp.

Christianity and Extraterrestrials? A Catholic Perspective, Marie I. George, iUniverse Inc., New York, (2005), Paper, 221 pp.

Christ: The Life of the Soul, Blessed Columba Marmion. Trans. Alan Bancroft, Zaccheus Press: Bethesda, MD, (2005), Paper. 532pp.

The Women in Dante's Divine Comedy and Spenser's Faerie Queene, Anne Paolucci, Griffon House Publications: Dover, DE, (2005), Paper. 196 pp.

The Synoptics: Matthew Mark, Luke, Come and See Catholic Bible Study, Majernik, Ponessa, Manhardt, Emmaus Road Publishing: Steubenville, OH, 8½ x 11 Paper, 203pp.

Coming Soon: Unlocking the Book of Revelation, Michael Barber, Emmaus Publications: Steubenville, OH, Paper, 326 pp.

Flannery O'Connor and Edward Lewis Wallant: Two of a Kind, John V. McDermott, University Press of America: Lanham, MD (2005) Paper. 91 pp.

Sexing the Church: Gender, Power, and Ethics in Contemporary Catholicism, Aline H. Kalbian, Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN (2005), Paper, 169pp.

Sonnets, ed. by William Baer, University of Evansville Press: Evansville, IN (1004) Cloth. 176pp.

In the Name of the Boss Upstairs: the Father Ray Brennan Story, Jerry Hopkins, Thomas J. Vincent Foundation: Honolulu, Hawaii, Cloth. 301 pp.

Real Prayer is Answered: The Proven Correct Way to Ask and Believe, John N. Heil, Theological Book Service, (2005), Paper. 346 pp.

Theology in India: Essays on Christ, Church and Eucharist, Sebastian Athappilly, CMI, Dharmaram Publications: Bangalore (2005), Paper. 280 pp.

La Constitución de los Estados Unidos y su Dinámica Actual, Presentación y edición de Domingo García Belaunde, Robert S. Barker, Asociación Peruana de Derecho Constitucional: Lima (2005), Paper. 221 pp.

Habits of Compassion: Irish Catholic Nuns and the Origins of New York's Welfare System, 1830-1920, Maureen Fitzgerald, University of Illinois Press: Champaign, IL, (2006), Paper. 304 pp.

OF INTEREST

IPS Receives Accreditation

On December 6th, 2005, the Commission on Colleges (COC) of the Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) granted initial accreditation to the Institute for the Psychological Sciences. This decision is retroactive to January 1, 2005.

The Institute for the Psychological Sciences is a graduate institution of higher education located in Arlington, Virginia offering masters and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology. It was founded and chartered by the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia in 1998. *The mission of the Institute is dedicated to the renewal of the Christian intellectual tradition and the development of a psychology consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and in constructive dialogue with the modern world, thereby creating a psychology informed by faith and reason.*

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is one of six regional higher education accrediting organizations recognized by the United States Department of Education and is the recognized regional accrediting body in the eleven U.S. Southern states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia) and in Latin America for those institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degrees. The Commission on Colleges is the representative body of the College Delegate Assembly and is charged with carrying out the accreditation process. According to the Commission on Colleges, accreditation signifies that an institution has a purpose appropriate to higher education and has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that purpose. Accreditation indicates that an institution maintains clearly specified educational

objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that it is achieving its stated objectives.

This is tremendous news for all involved with the Institute. Despite being in the middle of final exams, students, staff and faculty took the time to celebrate this important milestone in the young history of the Institute. Michael Horne, a doctoral student, responded to the news saying, "It's good to see the school recognized for all that it has accomplished in such a short period of time. This is reassurance that we [the students] are on the right path, and in the right place. Now it's up to us to become the best clinicians we can." Congratulations are in order to all who worked on this momentous achievement. It is the intent of the Institute to next pursue accreditation from the American Psychological Association (APA) which is the last step before full recognition of the high academic and professional caliber of the program.

Submitted by Thomas A. Cavanaugh,
Professor and Chair, Philosophy,
University of San Francisco

A Test of Faith

by Daniel Golden
Wall Street Journal

Wheaton College was delighted to have assistant professor Joshua Hochschild teach students about medieval philosopher Thomas Aquinas, one of Roman Catholicism's foremost thinkers.

But when the popular teacher converted to Catholicism, the prestigious evangelical college reacted differently. It fired him. Wheaton, like many evangelical colleges, requires full-time faculty members to be Protestants and sign a statement of belief in "biblical doctrine that is consonant with evangelical Christianity." In a letter notifying Mr. Hochschild of the college's decision, Wheaton's president said his "personal desire" to retain "a gifted brother in Christ" was outweighed by his duty to employ "faculty who embody the institution's evangelical Protestant convictions."

Mr. Hochschild, 33 years old, who was considered by his department a shoo-in for tenure, says he's still willing to sign the Wheaton faith statement. He left last spring, taking a 10% pay cut and roiling his family life, to move to a less-renowned Catholic college.

The following appeared in SOJO mail (the e-journal of Sojourners, the evangelical publication) 1/19/06 issue :

Are Catholics and Evangelicals cut from the same cloth?

by David Batstone

Wheaton College pulled a shocker last spring by terminating the teaching contract of a professor following his conversion to Catholicism. Though popular among students and highly respected by his peers, *The Wall Street Journal* reported, assistant professor Joshua Hochschild became controversial once he shifted theological camps.

I do not question the right of Wheaton College to establish its own standard for hiring and firing professors. Christian colleges conceive of their mission quite differently than a secular higher learning institution. They give spiritual and ethical

formation equal priority to intellectual pursuit. Therefore a critical piece of the puzzle is following the mission in hiring.

But it does trouble me that in the case of Hochschild, the Wheaton administration showed so little theological imagination. Ironically, the college hired Hochschild, 33, to teach its students medieval philosophy, with a special emphasis on the work of Thomas Aquinas, a giant in the world of Roman Catholic theology. One might say that Hochschild got too close to his work, for the depth of the Catholic tradition began to tug at him. In 2003, he made a choice of conviction to leave his Episcopalian church home and join a Catholic community. Though the distance from Episcopalian to Catholic may seem a small leap to some, it crossed a line in the sand at Wheaton.

In the church of my childhood—a staunch evangelical church in central Illinois, just a few hours drive from Wheaton—Catholics were not considered to be Christians. I was taught in Sunday School that Catholics did not read the Bible and elevated Mary the mother of Jesus into a fourth place in the Trinity. Worse yet, we learned that Catholics did not believe Jesus died once and for all for our sins; he had to repeat the act every time the Catholics took Holy Communion.

My understanding of Catholics changed when I began working in ministry in poor communities first in the United States, and then Latin America. I met Catholics who loved to read the Bible and faithfully explore its message for their lives. On many occasions, I was humbled by their sacrificial quest to follow the path of Jesus. Of course, over the years I discovered that there are all kinds of Catholics, just as there are all kinds of Protestants. Some Catholics are happy to go through the motions and find shelter in the security of orthodoxy. Other Catholics desire a living, breathing faith that fills them with wonder and purpose.

It was never a part of my plan, but I ended up as a professor at a Catholic institution, the University of San Francisco. Maybe my heart goes out to Joshua Hochschild because I was not required to convert to Catholicism in order to teach theology and ethics at USF. That does not imply that my Jesuit university does not hire in accordance with its mission "to

educate hearts and minds to change the world." But the university eschews a litmus test of orthodox religious beliefs, and concerns itself with whether its faculty can inspire students to engage its mission.

I do not want to misrepresent Wheaton College or its administration as anti-Catholic. In the front page story in *The Wall Street Journal* covering the Hochschild firing, Wheaton President Duane Litfin showed a refreshing attitude. In weighing the decision, Litfin reportedly said he wanted to keep Hochschild, "a gifted brother in Christ," on staff, but felt that he had to uphold a "faculty who embody the institution's evangelical Protestant convictions." Unlike in my childhood church, at Wheaton Catholics can be embraced as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Wheaton, however, chooses to define its institutional identity in a narrow orthodoxy. The Wheaton faculty are required to sign a faith statement anew each year. The credo points to the "supreme and final authority" of scripture. While the statement does not prohibit the acceptance of Catholic doctrine, it unashamedly aligns Wheaton with "evangelical Christianity." Hochschild told the *Journal* that he would have no trouble signing Wheaton's statement of faith after his conversion, and informed Wheaton's President Litfin as such. Litfin said—according to documents acquired by the *Journal*—that a Catholic "cannot faithfully affirm" the Wheaton faith statement because Catholics regard the Bible and the pope as equally authoritative.

It is a shame that Wheaton students will study within such a shallow theological bandwidth. It is almost as if a wall separates Catholics and Protestants, and it cannot be breached in the pursuit of Christian understanding. Oddly enough, despite their historic breach, an Episcopalian and a Plymouth Brethren will find themselves on the same side of the wall at Wheaton.

I humbly suggest that the administrative team at Wheaton College pass some time in prayer with Catholic contemplatives, or work in the slums of Calcutta with Catholic missionaries, or reflect on transformative education with Jesuits. Bringing these historic Christian practices, rooted in the Catholic tradition, into a young student's education would serve to enhance a church guided by the evangel.

SHUT UP, HE EXPLAINED

It is a nice question whether Orwell's *1984* or Huxley's *Brave New World* was the most prescient depiction of what modern society has become. Better living through chemistry or Big Brother is watching you? The current invocation of "academic freedom" to plead for the staging of homosexual propaganda on Catholic campuses suggests that Orwell was nearer to the truth, particularly on the twisting of language. Politically incorrect speakers are regularly howled down on the nation's campuses yet "academic freedom" is piously invoked to corrupt the young.

Some years ago, my university summoned the courage to deny homosexuals the right to form a student club. Immediately thereafter a university committee was formed to study the matter. The result, a year or so later, was a document on homophobia. The

problem had now become calling sexual perversity by its proper name. Or of disapproving of it in any way whatsoever. It had become a Christian obligation to accept and celebrate sodomy.

The Maritain Center put on a series of lectures by psychiatrists, theologians, recovered homosexuals, *et al.*, in an effort to contribute to the discussion that was thought to be so urgently needed. Campus Ministry took out a full page ad in the student paper telling students to boycott the lectures. The greatest offense seemed to be regarding sodomy as a sin of which one might repent rather than some genetic given beyond one's choice or control. Ah well, reason has always been in short supply in what is laughingly called higher education. Man was born sinful and only truth can set him free. ✠

Ralph McInerney

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