

DOMINICANA

Vol. LVI

Winter 2013

No. 2

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ISSN: 2165-7335

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Dominicana is a semi-annual journal of theology, philosophy, and culture published by the Dominican Studium of the Province of St. Joseph. Founded in 1916 at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC, the journal originally ran until 1968, and was refounded in 2011.

Dominicana is published twice a year, in the Winter and Summer. Subscription rates for one year: libraries and other institutions, \$50.00 (\$55.00 outside U.S.), religious houses, \$20.00 (\$30.00 outside U.S.), individuals, \$16.00 (\$28.00 outside U.S.). To subscribe, send a check payable to “Dominican Studentate” to *Dominicana* Editor, 487 Michigan Ave NE, Washington, DC, 20017, or visit www.dominicanajournal.com.

ARGUMENT

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. — Eccl 3:1

Pope Francis, in his first encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*, tells us that the Year of Faith is about a promise to be remembered, a promise made to Abraham, our father in faith, a promise to make his descendants “as numerous as the stars.” This remembrance, however, “is not fixed on past events but, as the memory of a promise, it becomes capable of opening up the future, shedding light on the path to be taken. We see how faith, as remembrance of the future, *memoria futurae*, is thus closely bound up with hope” (9). Remembrance and hope; or in the mottos of the Second Vatican Council, *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*.

Dominicana 56 promised an exploration of these two themes. The first volume dealt with *ressourcement*, and therein the brothers reflected on the wisdom of the ages, bringing forth treasures new and old from the past. This issue fulfills the promise of a complementary volume dedicated to *aggiornamento*, or “updating.”

Updating? What has the Dominican Order to do with updating? And, as Karl Barth asked Pope Paul VI: “Updating to what?” Is not this updating the ploy of secularists and modernists, who prowl about seeking the ruin of Catholic souls? Would it not be safer and more salvific to return to some cloistered Catholic mentality? Has not total darkness descended about the modern world such that even a candle would be swallowed up by its melancholic gloom?

Yet, we bear more than a candle and what it uncovers is no mere dross. Blessed John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council with these words: “Illuminated by the light of this Council, the Church—we confidently trust—will become greater in spiritual riches and,

gaining the strength of new energies therefrom, she will look to the future without fear.” In the light of faith, *aggiornamento* is not a project of updating the Church to the world, but rather updating the world around us to the hidden power of the Church. As Hans Urs von Balthasar explains: “The Catholic Church, if she is to impart her highest values to the modern world, must not meet it as a stranger or as an adversary but rather encounter it from within, assimilating whatever may be valid within its new systems.” This assimilation is not an external grafting on of new ideas, but is done “in such a way that whatever is new would recall older treasures, treasures which have always been present, but were forgotten or which have not yet even been discovered.”

Dominicans in every age have sought to bring the Gospel to bear on the world. The early friars of the thirteenth century made available the riches of piety and contemplation to the inhabitants of burgeoning cities. St. Thomas Aquinas (1224/25-1274) sifted the insights of Aristotle and recast the pagan vision in the more magnificent edifice of Christian revelation. St. Antoninus of Florence (1389–1459) engaged with an evolving economic praxis and solidified the grasp of moral theology with respect to newly discovered monetary tools. Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1802–61) revealed the merits of political democracy and sought, in the age following the French Revolution, to guide its development by Christian principles. This is *aggiornamento*, and this is what Dominicana 56.2 offers.

In these pages you will meet Br. Gabriel as he reflects on one of America’s most notable modern novelists, David Foster Wallace, as the latter searches for faith. Br. Aquinas will demonstrate the usefulness of sociological game theory to explicate the modern dating scene. Br. Patrick Mary updates social media in his reflection on *Inter Mirifica*, complimenting an enlightening interview with a master of modern communication, Fr. Robert Barron. Brs. Gregory and Henry square off on modern economic theory and practice, and Br. Innocent reflects on e-publications

and an ancient abbey. Urban poetry and Hegel, airport baggage mysteries and entrepreneurial ecclesiology, all things new find a place within the pages of this volume.

A very special act of *aggiornamento* is also included: the first English translated piece of one of our own, a Dominican theologian by the name of Fr. Tomáš Týn, O.P. Fr. Týn's story, found in the introduction to his stimulating piece on tolerance, is inspiring. And it is with great pleasure that we commend his cause to your prayers as his process for beatification progresses in Rome.

Each in his own way, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have been laborers in the fields of *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*. In this Year of Faith—called for by Pope Benedict and fulfilled by Pope Francis—we can reflect upon God's providence in these recent times, namely, the gift of two popes uniquely embodying the two themes of the Second Vatican Council! May this issue bring you the confidence that Blessed John XXIII spoke of half a century ago, and may we never be afraid in this modern world to banish the darkness with the pure light of faith.

Bonaventure Chapman, O.P.

Editor, *Dominicana*

Gregory Maria Pine, O.P.

Associate Editor, *Dominicana*

ESSAYS

FAITH AS A SORT OF PRESENT

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE'S RELIGIOUS DESIRE

Gabriel Torretta, O.P.

The Samaritan woman Jesus met at the well could never find what she wanted: in love she moved from man to man; in society she was forced farther and farther into the margins; and in religion she found discord and disorder where she looked for worship. Hers was a life of frustrated longing, unable to find the truly good among the lesser goods that were making her miserable. She herself tells us her deepest, most hidden desire: the Messiah, the one who “will show us all things” (Jn 4:25). It was out of longing for him that she went searching, and it was for want of him that she went astray.

This terrible and beautiful tension characterizes the life and writings of David Foster Wallace, the iconic late-twentieth-century American author whose works sprawl over just about every kind of human drama under the sun, insistently revealing the real human dignity of drug addicts, street thugs, transvestites, sociopaths, bureaucrats, suburbanites, and everyone else we love to reduce to dehumanized stereotypes. Experimental in both form and content, his works are easy to write off as more post-modern posturing or hip posing (goodreads.com made a whimsical “hipster lit flowchart,” the first question of which is “Have you read *Infinite Jest*?”), but doing so ignores the two critical engines that give his writing its motive power: longing for transcendence, and confusion about where it is to be found. Like the Samaritan woman before Christ made himself known to her, Wallace was tormented by a

desire for more than what he saw; he was, in Flannery O'Connor's remarkable phrase, "Christ-haunted." Wallace's works struggle to reveal the face of the unknown God to a people who has forgotten the God of its fathers, and as such, they provide a compelling case study of the problem of faith in the contemporary world.

The question of faith is almost always hiding in the background of Wallace's works, and almost never in the foreground, causing many people, including his biographer D.T. Max, to conclude that God "was not as high on his list of concerns as, say, ethics and trying to do right in the world." Yet this conclusion misses one of the major dynamics in Wallace's writing project, which is to rediscover a way of speaking seriously about the deepest realities to a culture that has forgotten how. He observed to David Lipsky in an interview that "it's very hard to talk about people's relationship with any kind of God, in any book later than like Dostoyevsky," in large part because the literary scene of the late twentieth century had come to feed on a solid diet of irony and ridicule that conflated sincerity with banal naiveté.

The problem, of course, is that for many of our contemporaries, religion has become something banal. Pope Francis's encyclical *Lumen fidei* recognizes this point, recounting in summary fashion how the knowledge of faith and eventually the knowledge of reason as well has fallen thrall to subjectivism and relativism, with the result that "it is impossible to tell good from evil, or the road to our destination from other roads which take us in endless circles, going nowhere" (§3). Moreover, the ubiquitous and hypertrophied marketing culture has made people cynical about public discourse, seeing every form of speech as a trick to push a product. In such a context, making a universal truth claim about a God who cannot be seen, especially as a member of a church that accepts tithes, becomes indistinguishable from throwing a Tupperware party or selling your forehead for ad space: all of these seem like just bizarrely personal and invasive ways to make a buck or manipulate other people.

The difficulty confronting the fiction writer who wants both to explore the most serious issues affecting humanity and to create realistic voices for his characters, then, is how to speak seriously when no one else does. Speaking about the problem of trying to write directly about God and America's entertainment addiction—for him, two very related concepts—Wallace tells Lipsky, “I mean the culture, it's all wrong for it now. You know? No, no. Plausibly realistic characters don't sit around talking about this stuff.” Nor did Wallace figure out a solution right away; his first novel, *The Broom of the System*, while engagingly and hilariously written, generally fails to go deeper than conceptual play, and infrequently strikes a sincere note.

By the time he published *Infinite Jest*, he had discovered a way out of the bind. In the realm of theory, he had developed an elaborate defense of the “banal,” which would culminate in the celebrated commencement address to Kenyon College in 2005, where he insists that, “in the day-to-day trenches of adult existence, banal platitudes can have a life or death importance.” In the realm of literary practice, his solution was that of a true artist: to express reality by plunging as completely as possible into the human mystery, allowing the truths that hide in the depths of man's heart to rise to the surface along the way just as they do in real life—fleetingly, mysteriously, but constantly, ever-available to the attentive viewer.

An illustration. The only truly innocent figure in *Infinite Jest*, Mario Incandenza, at one point wanders over to the Ennet House rehab facility where a host of hardened addicts are trying to live something remotely resembling a life sober. He is drawn to the place, despite its manifest aura of suffering and brokenness:

It's crowded and noisy and none of the furniture has protective plastic wrap, but nobody notices anybody else or comments on a disability and the Headmistress is kind to the people and the people cry in front of each other. The inside of it smells like an ashtray, but Mario's felt good

both times in Ennet's House because it's very real; people are crying and making noise and getting less unhappy, and once he heard somebody say God with a straight face and nobody looked at them or looked down or smiled in any sort of way where you could tell they were worried inside.

Simple vignettes like this allow Wallace to address "banal" issues of religion and human meaning by circumlocution, implicitly criticizing social and literary norms that will not let him tackle the questions head-on. Mario's naïve perspective enables him to praise the Ennet House people for being able to speak seriously about the one thing everyone else calls banal (God), and to link that openness to healing and human maturation. In this indirect way he implies a provocative connection between God—however the term is understood—and the deepest reality of man. Perhaps, he suggests, our general unwillingness to take God seriously is a sign of a sickness in ourselves, a brokenness that needs to be healed. We may be just as much in need of recovery as the people in the Recovery House.

This brings us to a theme running under much of Wallace's writing: faith in God, or indeed any kind of faith, requires a change on the believer's part, a recognition of the insufficiency of his life in favor of a new kind of vision. As Joseph Ratzinger puts it in *Introduction to Christianity*, faith is the basic stance that "does not regard seeing, hearing, and touching as the totality of what concerns him," a stance that "seeks a second mode of access to reality, a mode he calls in fact belief." But this new seeing entails "what the language of the Bible calls 'turning back, 'con-version'"; the person who chooses to believe must turn away from his natural inclination, which is toward an egocentric absorption in the comfortable patterns of the visible world, toward something new, a source of meaning outside the self and its desire to control what it sees. As he puts it, belief simply "is the conversion in which man discovers that he is following an illusion if he devotes himself only to the tangible."



ABBOT HANDERSON THAYER — A VIRGIN

Implicit and explicit discussions of faith abound in Wallace's writings precisely because he was obsessed with the mysterious "about-turns" that mark the process of human maturation. Much of the drama of *Infinite Jest* centers on these about-turns, exploring the

different ways in which people come to recognize the insufficiency of their lives and the wounds they bear, and the painfully diverse human responses to those realizations. The drug addict and house burglar Don Gately, whose story arc comprises about one-third of the novel, becomes more heroic as he makes each successive about-turn, embracing more and more of reality at great personal cost; the rake of a football player Orin Incandenza dwindles into nothingness as he refuses to turn away from his casually cruel life; and the central figure of the young tennis champion Hal Incandenza exists in a torturous halfway zone, able to see the need to turn away from his self-destructiveness, but unable or perhaps unsure of how to do so.

But perhaps the most striking study of faith in Wallace's work can be found in the stream-of-consciousness autobiography of IRS examiner Chris Fogle, a single chapter that forms almost one-fifth of the unfinished novel *The Pale King*. Fogle narrates his time as a college "wastoid," roaming without purpose from one random project to another, sunk in drugs, TV, and selfishness. One day his Christian roommate's girlfriend tells him the evangelical story of her own conversion from college wastoid to committed Christian through a profound but random encounter in a wayside church. Fogle at first mocks her naiveté and her obvious implication that he is also looking for the same meaning she found in conversion; but eventually he discovers precisely the emptiness of which she spoke: "But the point was that I realized, on some level, that whatever a potentially 'lost soul' was, I was one—and it wasn't cool or funny."

Much of the story's remainder consists in his narrating an event in which he accidentally ends up in a high-level accounting class final review; and in the person of the coldly majestic professor (whom Fogle falsely believes to be a Jesuit in mufti) encounters reality for the first time. The professor is more than passionate about his subject; he believes himself to be participating in a grand and noble project, having committed his life to a difficult good simply because it is good: in this case, accounting. The experience

transforms Fogle's life, driving him with astonishing speed to abandon his wastrel ways and become a successful IRS examiner.

Fogle's conversion narrative mirrors the Christian girlfriend's story on almost every point: the long, wasted life, the sense of hopelessness, the desperate desire for something unknown, the striking encounter with a reality beyond the self, and the sudden change in course. The only difference is nonetheless critical: the girlfriend makes an about-turn to a faith in the supernatural God, where Fogle makes an about-turn to a faith in something vague, an awareness of the need to live beyond the narrow borders of selfishness that is situated somewhere on the shadow-line between recognizably natural and supernatural visions of human fulfillment.

The tension between the natural and supernatural forms of conversion, between acts of faith achievable by human means alone and those achievable only by grace from God, remains unresolved in the novel. As tempting as it is to write off Fogle's conversion as purely natural (since accounting is unlikely to be treated in St. Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*), the depth of his desires and the very ambiguity of his response prevent us from making too-facile a judgment. The natural-supernatural divide is symbolized in the mysterious professor, who both is and is not a priest, and both is and is not an accountant; he is a priest only in Fogle's confused imagination, but the effect the man has on him is nonetheless genuinely priestly, bringing about a total change in life, an awakening beyond the self through the labor of sacrifice.

Fogle's confusion is more than accidental; the priest/accountant exists astride the infinite gap between the natural and the supernatural, not as if to close the distance between the two, but to emphasize it. The eye cannot tell the natural from the supernatural, as they are lived in men; this is why Ratzinger insists that faith involves a turning away from the merely visible. Is an accountant in civilian clothes a priest? Not to physical sight. Is a priest in a Roman collar an accountant? Not to physical sight. The inner meaning,

the deep reality of the figure, from which his compelling power springs, is totally hidden, and we are left uncertain as to whether Fogle's account is a description of the supernatural decaying into the natural, or the supernatural breaking into the natural. We know only that he has been changed by a longing for more than he has ever seen, and that this longing continues to drive him, to transform him, to make him more human. We see him *reborn*; but the image cuts out before we discover *reborn into what*.

In his dialogue *On Heaven and Earth*, Jorge Bergoglio stated: "In the experience of God there is always an unanswered question, an opportunity to be submerged in faith." This unanswered question is the crux of Wallace's dramas, both in his fiction and in his own life. The great difficulty of faith is that it always remains, in language Wallace once used in a very different context, "a sort of present." Some have faith; some do not. Some who have faith do not want it; some who do not have it want it. Wallace seems to have fit the latter category.

His biographer says that "faith was something he could admire in others but never quite countenance for himself," but that description does not quite fit the facts. Details are hard to come by, in large part because commentators on his life seem to find Wallace's churchgoing incomprehensible and largely ignore it, but we can glean some important items. Wallace sought faith with a kind of desperation, twice looking into becoming Catholic, dabbling in Buddhist meditation, and going to church constantly (he wrote an eight-item list of things he needed to do to have a balanced life in 1997, which included "church"), but never seemed to find what he was looking for. He remained, to all outward appearances, on the outside looking in, knocking at the door of faith and never seeing it open.

Yet Wallace's life and his works are imbued with an irreducible ambiguity about the natural and the supernatural, preventing us from drawing any certain conclusions about the action of grace within. Faith and the hiddenness of grace are constant themes

in his work; if we cannot state with certainty whether characters like Don Gately or Chris Fogle have been moved to natural faith in man or supernatural faith in God, how much less should we arrogate to ourselves the right to judge the inner workings of grace in Wallace's heart. Grace is invisible; we can speak of faith manifesting itself in works (Jas 2:14–26), but at the same time we know that faith and its graces resist human limitation, even to the point that, “in ways known to himself God can lead those who, through no fault of their own, are ignorant of the Gospel, to that faith without which it is impossible to please him” (*Ad Gentes* 7). This terrible and beautiful tension echoes through Wallace's writings, and makes them an indispensable witness to the problem of faith in a post-Christian world.

Wallace's life and works are like the story of the Samaritan woman, if the manuscript cut off right before she abandons her water jar and runs into town to speak of Jesus. Has the woman's long-held yearning recognized the One who can fulfill that desire? Has she been changed by her encounter with the God-man? Wallace's life breaks off at this point, leaving us with only questions. The one thing we know for certain is that faith is and has always been a sort of present; Wallace shows both Christians and atheists alike what it means to long for that present. We do not know how Wallace's story ended, nor need we until the end of time. But he would not be the first man to die of longing for faith.

Gabriel Torretta entered the Order of Preachers in 2008.

THE NEW AGORA

SOCIAL MEDIA, THE CHURCH, AND EVANGELIZATION

Patrick Mary Briscoe, O.P.

Hesitancies and concerns notwithstanding, the Church—like it or not—has taken up widespread efforts to integrate herself into our digital age. We have only to look at World Youth Day 2013 for an example of the importance of social media in the life of the Church. The Office of the Apostolic Penitentiary decreed indulgences could be granted, provided the normal requisite conditions were met, for participation in World Youth Day 2013 through “the new means of social communication,” a.k.a. social media. This decision, worthy of a theological reflection of its own, implicitly acknowledges the growing role of social media as a crossroads of communication. Social media—a place for the exchange of ideas—provides an opportunity for encountering not only Christian perspectives, which contribute in an essential way to the development of cultures and societies, but also Christ Himself. This essay, which examines principally the conciliar decree *Inter Mirifica*, seeks to draw out of the document perennial principles which will inspire further theological reflection on the use of social media as we now know it, particularly within a three-fold schematic, namely, formation, participation and evangelization.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

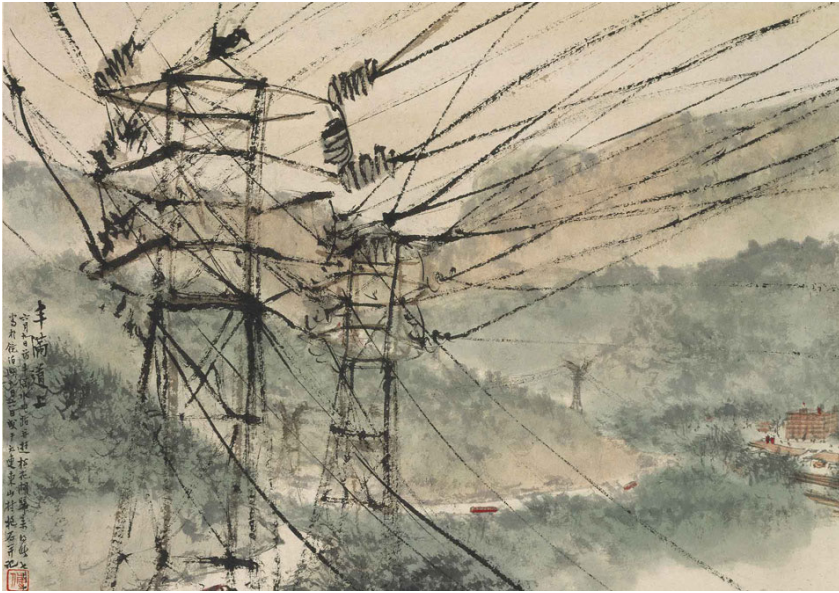
Responsible consideration of the developments in social communication must adequately investigate the legitimate concerns posed by many, and indeed—to an extent—anticipated by the Council Fathers themselves. Firstly, some might be concerned

about the very idea of members of the Church's hierarchy teaching how to best actualize media. Wary of a fiasco on par with Senator Stevens's 2006 speech about the internet (wherein he famously likened the internet to "a series of tubes," thereby allowing detractors to effortlessly decry his position as "obsolete" and "out of touch"), some claim our bishops and cardinals should leave well enough alone and allow other experts to address current issues pertaining to internet-based social media platforms. This position is often quoted in tandem with the accusation that the Catholic Church is out of touch with the times.

Pope Paul VI promulgated *Inter Mirifica* on 4 December 1963 making the document one of the very first two texts propagated by the Council. Opposition had been raised amongst the fathers themselves by a voiced apprehension that the document might fail to meet the expectations of media experts. If critics found the document wanting, the whole authority of the Council might have been called into question. On November 25th the proposed draft had received a resounding 503 "no" votes, the most of the Council for a final draft. During the conciliar editorial process, much of the document had been heavily redacted, making its final form only twenty-four paragraphs long. Ultimately its authority was reduced from its inception as a constitution to its promulgated form: a decree.

Many voice a second major concern about social media in general, namely, that it diminishes a healthy sense of reality. Experts continue to debate the effects social communications have on culture, but suffice it to say that it seems a generally held consensus that social media contributes to a growing sense of anonymity. Under such a guise, people perceive a greater liberty to express themselves without civility, engage more freely in immoral behavior, and engage in more transient or superficial relationships. Many psychological theories of new communications media challenge the social or interpersonal aspect of these media.

Thirdly, since the time of *Inter Mirifica*, the realm of social communications has changed radically. Once a highly professionalized field limited to those with specialized skills requiring an advanced training, now significant means of communication are available to anyone with some basic computer training at the touch of a mouse. The democratization of communication allows many to use social platforms like Twitter,



FU BAOSHI - ELECTRIC POWER LINES

share a status update on Facebook, or run a blog. Whereas once social communication required high investment, considerable instruction and, oftentimes, the support of an institution, now social communications can be employed from an iPad at the neighborhood coffee shop. Tracing religious authorities and the official weight of theological pronouncements can be more difficult, and peddling Christianity among other worldviews in this new web-based marketplace risks undermining the uniqueness of Christianity and reducing its claims to truth.

PERRENIAL PRINCIPLES

The details of twenty-first-century cyber communication were not imagined by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, who—surprisingly enough—employed the term social communications in conciliar decrees and constitutions. During the Council (1962–1965), social communications referred to the mass-media available in those days, i.e., newspapers, radio, television and cinema. But many may be surprised to learn that the Second Vatican Council was remarkable in the way it addressed these new developments in communication which would come to define the social revolution leading up to our own day. In addition to listing newspapers, radio, television, and cinema, the Council Fathers also included the phrase “and others of a like nature.” By drawing on the term “nature,” widely utilized by the Christian philosophical and theological tradition, the Council broadened the horizon of the document and directed further conversation by means of philosophical and theological application.

What then is the nature of the means of social communications? One principle culled from a close reading of *Inter Mirifica* underlines that the Church philosophically treats media as instruments. In fact, the word *instrumentum* is used for the word media in the Latin text of the document. Since an instrument is a means for an end, it is beneficial to recall that an instrument does not of itself have a moral quality. Instruments require movers to direct them, and thus they can be used for good or for ill depending on the circumstances in which they are used or the goal to which they are directed. Accordingly *Inter Mirifica* allows that although the means of social communications may be misused, they also provide the chance to bring about much good.

Inter Mirifica advocates for a world of social communications filled by good and respectable amusements as well as the honest and objective communication of news. A Church which actively engages social media does not mean all social media outlets necessarily become virtual monasteries. Social media will still be

used for advertisements, communications of a familial or personal nature or simply for entertainment. Instead, what *Inter Mirifica* insists upon is that pastors of souls instruct and lead the faithful in the ways of employing these media for the “salvation and perfection of all mankind.” The laity then are tasked with animating social media with both the “Christian” and truly “human” spirit. Not only then may social media be used for the betterment of society broadly speaking, but Christians themselves have a duty to engage in the building up of the best of Christian culture in the new media.

The Fathers of the Council uphold that the civil authorities likewise have a duty to “ensure that public morality and social progress are not gravely endangered through the use of these media” and that public officials should “foster religious, cultural and artistic values.” Furthermore, “the news itself that is communicated should always be true and complete [...] In addition, the manner in which the news is communicated should be proper and decent.” These three principles for society at large do not limit the freedom of persons or groups since such vigilance safeguards or even encourages freedom for excellence. Rather than suffocating natural inclinations, these principles establish a framework for true freedom. This freedom for excellence springs forth from its natural root in men through the perceptions of truth, goodness, knowledge, and happiness. Under such terms and conditions, the full actualization and even perfection of man occur.

THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Since Paul VI the roman pontiffs have spoken often about social communication, and indeed, directly on the subject of internet-hosted social media. An annual communiqué (delivered on World Communication Day, itself instituted as a practical recommendation of *Inter Mirifica*) promulgated by the Holy Father forms the backbone of this continued attention. Additionally the Pontifical Council for Social Communication—

whose roots antedate the Council—has contributed at length to the discussion surrounding “ethics for the internet.” What could greatly contribute to the present state of the discussion is a more comprehensive, primarily theological, schematization drawing from the wellspring of *Inter Mirifica*. The following attempts the beginning of what such an outline might include.

FORMATION

Mindful of the lasting effects of original sin, *Inter Mirifica* accentuates the need for true moral formation. In order for users of both traditional and the new social media to not neglect the moral life, they must be well-informed regarding both the quality of the content they imbibe, but they also must be up-to-date regarding current moral issues. Therefore, all who utilize means of social communication must have consciences particularly attuned to the challenges to the Christian moral life which these media will repeatedly put before them. Users must also be able to rely on virtues like prudence (to induce right reason to action) or temperance, which includes humility (particularly valuable in discourse) and chastity. True moral formation will allow the perilous waters of the media (especially the new social media) to be negotiated with facility. Echoing *Inter Mirifica*, it must be repeated that parents have the particular task to protect their children from morally harmful media as well as to educate their children to use these media responsibly.

PARTICIPATION

Bl. Pope John Paul II writes in *Redemptoris Missio*, “Since the very evangelization of modern culture depends to a great extent on the influence of the media, it is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church’s authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the ‘new culture’ created by modern communications.” The new languages,

techniques and psychologies of the web demand a unique form of integration, rather than the establishment of parallel ecclesial systems and structures. Here, under the aspect of participation, one might address the need for internet fluency, artistic integrity, and technical merit. Efforts made by the Church or on her behalf that fail in these respects seem more likely to hinder rather than bolster Christian culture. Moreover, many of those who are less familiar with social media platforms on the web often succumb to the illusion that by simply launching an initiative they have managed to “speak to the masses.” Like traditional media, web-based projects must be promoted if they are to succeed.

There is much room for growth here! For example, a 2012 CARA survey reveals that of the sixty-eight percent of adult Catholics who report using YouTube (among millennials, born 1982 or later, eighty-four percent) only six percent report having watched religious content. Perhaps even more startling is the statistic reporting that only five percent of American Catholics (i.e., only 2.9 million persons) have read a blog about “the Catholic Church, faith or spirituality.” Among those who do not visit Catholic websites, forty-three percent describe their reason for not using them as “not interested,” while only six percent report “disagreement with Church teaching.” Investing both money and energy in endeavors of high artistic caliber and technical excellence remains the most important piece of participation in the culture of the internet age.

Appreciation of social media cannot be reserved to the youth of a rising generation or those persons with technical expertise. The new media must reflect the entire Church community: the experiences of men and women in their daily lives in certain places and circumstances. These media must, in a particular way, be put to use to disseminate the truths of Church teaching. Those charged with teaching offices in the Church, then, ought to respond by drawing on their authority as teachers to shape media content so as to accurately reflect Church teaching. By their participation, they impose a much needed digital *imprimatur*, based on the content

they share. Additionally, the recent acquisition by the Pontifical Council of Social Communications of the .catholic domain name—reserved for the exclusive use of entities with formal canonical recognition, e.g. dioceses, parishes, religious orders and Catholic institutions—will promote a more organized, cohesive and official internet presence of the Church. The pastors of the Church, entrusted with the sacred duty of endeavoring to permeate all of society with the Gospel message, can have a significant impact by the institution of appropriate projects and the dedication of resources to further participation.

EVANGELIZATION

In our age, when many believe that the time of certainties is forever lost to former days, the Gospel remains desperately needed by society. Simultaneously, however, undertaking efforts of evangelization may appear thwarted by virtually insurmountable obstacles. Many of the advances in recent technology may be used to great benefit for intra-ecclesial communication and organization. However, social media by its design lends itself to facile adaptation for the work of evangelization. The framework of building relationships (acquiring friends and followers) and the ability to easily share information by passing on links to webpages, quotes or video provide a simple way for laypersons and clerics alike to offer an invitation to encounter Christ to an acquaintance or coworker.

That being said, many Catholic efforts could extend their reach by being more wholly directed to this work of evangelization. Broadly speaking, websites and social media outlets need to be oriented toward evangelization both in terms of content and design so as to be amenable to those outside of the Church. For example, many dioceses or affiliated Catholic institutions have websites more reflective of corporate or functional structures instead of favoring engaging artwork, sleek design, or accessible audio and video which are more evangelically engaging.

CONCLUSION

The Church, as asserted by *Inter Mirifica*, has a birthright to employ communication media for the benefit of souls. The great commission, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19), impels Christians to go forth to win souls for Christ. Changes in technological media pose no irresolvable ideological or theological problems for Catholics, and, as such, it will not do for Christians to ignore the “signs of the times.” To maximize Catholic Christian use of the media, we must further efforts pertaining to formation, participation and evangelization. Under formation (in terms of Christian morality) we will simultaneously protect our children and plant the seed for efforts to further the work of the Kingdom in the future. By investing in participation (in terms of preservation and dissemination of Christ’s teaching entrusted to the Church), the Church will remain a prophet in, but not of, the world. Finally, through constantly assessing our evangelical orientation, the Church will continue along the path of saving souls, which is of course the only path that matters.

Patrick Mary Briscoe entered the Order of Preachers in 2010.

FRAMED FOR FAILURE

UNDERSTANDING THE COLLAPSE OF VIRGINITY PLEDGES

Aquinas Beale, O.P.

In the face of growing pressures from government and society to adopt sex-education programs, a number of schools in more conservative, Christian locales have opted for an abstinence-only approach. As an alternative to the prevalent contraceptive-based approach, these programs usually entail a pledge to be made by individual students to remain chaste *until marriage*.

However, as a means to counteract the temptation of premarital sex, these pledges frame the problem in such a way that creates cause for concern. First of all, the virginity pledge focuses primarily on the decision of the individual apart from the rest of society. While the pledge may be presented in a group setting, the content of the pledge primarily focuses on the individual's own resolve to remain chaste. Also, these pledges explicitly identify marriage as the end that chastity serves. In doing so, the pledges frame the situation such that the individual would likely perceive a lifetime of unmarried virginity as failure. Game theory, a tool of economic and sociological analysis, can provide reasons why such pledges fail, as well as point to new solutions.

THE METHOD

Game theory, as a relatively new and somewhat controversial method, purports to be a powerful tool in helping to explain a wide range of social and political phenomena. One of its more salient characteristics is its focus on individual decisions. Many game theoretic models are founded upon the choices of an

individual or of a small group of individuals. Due to this focus, game theory can expose dynamics of a decision-making process that quite often are masked in a group.

In order to control for a variety of factors and to simplify complex interactions, game theorists must make a variety of assumptions regarding values, choices, and outcomes. Therefore, it is important that game theorists note that the applicability of the results of their models is constrained by the assumptions that were made when setting up the game. In the end, while the method is meant to model reality, it inherently will be a simplified version of reality, and therefore the conclusions drawn from the model must be interpreted in light of the assumptions being made.

Nevertheless, of the many dynamics of the decision-making process, game theory is useful in modeling incentives. Certain incentives can be either present or absent, they can be linked to others, or their effects may be nullified in the presence of other factors. Unsurprisingly, in comparison, game theory shows that purely verbal accounts of incentives can easily become unwieldy. Hence, by controlling certain aspects of choice and focusing on other features through the use of mathematical concepts, game theory is a useful tool for supplementing the examination of people's decisions. The model presented in the following section is meant to examine individuals' incentives, but, as noted above, since it makes some fairly restrictive assumptions, the conclusions will have to be limited to the factors underlying the motivations for premarital sex.

There are plenty of other contentious details about game theory, such as the assumption of rationality, but they are not immediately relevant to the problem at hand. It is important to note that these assumptions will be treated as simplifications of reality and will be accounted for in drawing conclusions from the model.

THE MODEL

One model developed by Tim Harford in his book *The Logic of Life* (2008) explores the interactions of men and women who are seeking potential matches in the “marriage market.” The marriage market is a controlled, theoretical environment in which an equal number of men and women are each paid 100 dollars if they pair-up before exiting the market.

The simplest way to begin is to consider the interaction between two individuals, a man and a woman. If they decide to pair-up and exit the market together (i.e., get married) then they both receive 100 dollars. This simple interaction is formalized in the four-by-four game matrix labeled **Figure 1**.

		Woman	
		Yes	No
Man	Yes	100, 100	0,0
	No	0,0	0,0

FIGURE 1

According to this matrix, there are four possible states that can result from the decisions of the two individuals. One state is noticeably more enticing than the rest, as payment is rendered only in the event that they both agree to get married. Thus, all else being equal, both the man and the woman will opt to get married whenever they are given the choice.

Now, in the real world, marriage is not this simple! Rather, lots of men meet lots of women, and some get married and some do

not. For the sake of simplicity, this decision can be applied to 100 couples. Now assuming that there is nothing differentiating the men from each other and the same for the women, every individual will pair-up with a member of the opposite sex, since they are all equally attractive and the cost of remaining single is essentially 100 dollars.

It is important to note that there is no uncertainty regarding the future for these individuals. If they find spouses they each get paid 100 dollars; if they do not, they receive nothing. But the prospect and decision of getting married is not always certain. So, in order to introduce uncertainty, one of the women is taken “off the market,” and now there are 100 men and 99 women. In the end, there will be ninety-nine couples who get paid and one bachelor who leaves empty-handed.

Considering the case of the bachelor, he is faced with the prospect of remaining single while those around him are getting married. However, he may soon realize that he does not necessarily have to accept defeat. In order to woo a spouse away from one of the other men, he may approach her with the offer of splitting his payoff, say fifty-fifty. The woman, then, all else being equal between the two men, will leave her first “fiancé” and accept the better offer of the second. This more complex dynamic between these two individuals is illustrated by the game tree, labeled **Figure 2**.

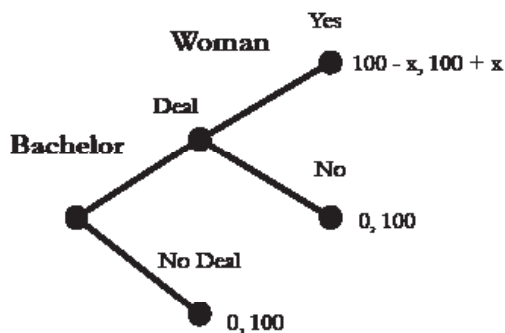


FIGURE 2

Now the initial bachelor has gotten himself a partner, but in doing so he has left another man facing bachelorhood. Nevertheless, this new bachelor will most likely realize the tactic of the first and will follow his example. And so there will be a process of offers and counter-offers in which all of the men will make deals to split their payoff with their potential spouses until the men get down to their lowest possible payoff, which in this controlled environment would be a penny. Furthermore, if that uncertainty were known and felt by each of the men at the very start of the game, the outcome of compromising their payoffs would be immediate. Thus, the uncertainty introduced by removing just one potential mate has profound effects on the actions of the entire group.

THE DISCUSSION

While it does not make much sense to think of marriage in terms of a simple pairing with a net two hundred dollar payoff, the above model may still provide some helpful insights into the dynamics involved in trying to find a spouse. Two aspects are particularly noteworthy: the interdependence of the decision-making process and the reaction to uncertainty. While the uncertainty triggers a stark reaction in the individual, the interdependence of action assures that this effect will be compounded and will influence the entire group.

How does this relate to premarital sex? First of all, the interrelated nature of the decision to compromise one's outcome can be related to the decision to engage in premarital sex. It seems reasonable to conclude that, like the bachelor in the model, a young person facing the uncertainty of the future will be tempted to compromise his moral values in a misdirected effort to make a more enticing offer for immediate companionship, assuming that the sexual act has been objectified and is perceived as a potentially desirable good in the near-term. If the commitment to virginity is based on mere self-resolve, then doubt can work away at it, leaving the individual more vulnerable to being overcome by his passions in a time of



ROBERT HENRI - UNA CHULA

trial. However, if the commitment focuses more on the communal element, then the individual does not have to face these pressures alone. In fact, by communicating with those of his peers who have made similar pledges, he has the opportunity to indicate his own commitment to chastity and, likewise, can receive the assurances and support of his peers.

Considering the classical view of ethics, it is not exactly groundbreaking to note that our individual decisions can affect and are affected by the decisions made by those around us. As Aristotle asserts in the first book of the *Politics* and St. Thomas Aquinas affirms (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 72, a. 4), man is a social animal. Moreover, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle maintains that friendship is necessary for the growth and preservation of virtue, thereby indicating the necessity of cultivating virtue within the context of society and not as an individual apart from society. Thus, any effort to preserve the virtue of chastity should be supplemented by an effort to motivate young people to develop friendships that foster virtue.

While interpersonal ties do play a significant role in this model in shaping the decision to compromise one's moral values for the sake of surer companionship, the most important factor to consider is the uncertainty regarding the outcome of one's decision. A tempting solution may be to reduce the allure of a compromise by putting in place a punishment for doing so. However, the punishment would simply become another non-interpersonal factor in the decision of the individual, failing to radically change the situation.

Rather, a more effective approach is to reframe the issue. In the status quo, the end toward which the players are directed is marriage; leaving the game single would be considered a failure, and so the individuals do their best to avoid this failure through compromise. If an individual makes a virginity pledge for the sake of marriage but sees all those around him compromising on this pledge and, yet, succeeding to get married, he may begin to

doubt the wisdom of maintaining his chastity. Thus, in order to counteract the temptation to compromise, the individuals in the “marriage market” need to be directed towards a goal beyond marriage which would provide a real and effective consolation, such that leaving the market as a bachelor does not become associated with failure.

In terms of virginity pledges, this aspect of the model points to what may be the key to preventing premarital sex. In these pledges, young people promise to remain virgins *until marriage*. While love for God is identified as a reason for this commitment, the overarching assumption is that the goal is to eventually be married. Ultimately, these pledges have little to offer to the individual who does not find a spouse. This is a serious problem! What is the point in remaining chaste if it only leads to failing to achieve the goal of marriage? The individual who asks this question needs to be shown that his end entails something greater than marriage, namely holiness for the sake of salvation.

As mentioned above, man is a social animal, and friendship is integral for maintaining a virtuous life. And yet, while our earthly friendships may provide some assistance, they do not completely solve the problem. A commitment to virginity cannot be sustained if it is directed only to preserving the dignity of marriage. Rather than pledging virginity with the earthly end of marriage in sight, someone committing himself to chastity must be prepared to accept that it may become a lifelong commitment, directing his actions to that which is beyond this life. One such alternative is supplied by the Angelic Warfare Confraternity (www.angelicwarfareconfraternity.org), which is a group committed to the promotion of life-long chastity as a means of serving God. As the prayers of this group implore, Lord grant *that I may advance with a pure heart in Your love and service, offering myself on the most pure altar of Your divinity all the days of my life. Amen.*

Aquinas Beale entered the Order of Preachers in 2011.

DISPUTED QUESTIONS

ON THE ECONOMY

In the Middle Ages, the disputed question was one of the major forms of academic investigation. A master of theology would pose a question on which great authorities seemed to disagree, then entertain objections from fellow masters and students. After others attempted to reconcile the various authorities, the master would give a determination that resolved the question.

In our form of the disputed question, two student brothers approach a difficult issue from different angles in order to reveal its complexity. These essays are meant to be complementary, not contradictory. Each of the brothers is then given the opportunity to reflect upon the contribution of the other. The section closes with a final summary provided by the editor, who does not pretend to play the role of master.

THE QUESTION

Dante may have been correct that “love moves the sun and the other stars,” but, in the terrestrial sphere of the sublunary, it often appears that money makes the world go round. And since the collapse of communism, in the West at least, it is some form of capitalism that governs this monetary movement. Yet accusations of exploitation and injustice are no strangers to this free market world. Is capitalism more or less the only game in town? Or is there a more just and moral version of the market? To paraphrase a prophet: is capitalism the economic system that is to come, or shall we look for another?

IN DEFENSE OF CAPITALISM

Henry Stephan, O.P.

WHO ARE YOU CALLING A CAPITALIST?

Whenever the Church proposes to speak to the marketplace, the conversation is sure to be somewhat awkward. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, after all, is concerned first and foremost with a supernatural reality—the means by which we realize our final end of eternal union with God—while markets are concerned with more earthly matters. When the Church does address questions of material welfare, she speaks primarily about care for the poor and justice for the oppressed—choosing prophets over profits, one might say.

Since the growth of modern economic liberalism in the nineteenth century, many Catholics have decried such a system that seems so philosophically unmoored from the concerns of the Church's social teaching. If one aspires to store up treasure in heaven rather than earth, after all, the free market can appear to be a cesspool of vice: greed, materialism, inequality, and many others, all in the pursuit of filthy lucre.

The temptation to wash our hands of the whole system is surely a strong one. And I will be the first to agree that the modern economy is filled with immorality and injustice. Yet the manifest fallen-ness of the capitalist system flows from our fallen human nature. This side of paradise, all the affairs of men—economic, political, and social—will be tainted by the corrupting effects of sin. Utopianism is evangelical malpractice for a Christian, since it deprives the world of the real force of the message of transformation in Christ.

This is not to say that we should throw up our hands and declare the commercial world to be a moral free-for-all. We have a duty

to promote laws and policies that will lead people to the good life, though reasonable people of good will may disagree about them. This is not an apologia for unfettered libertarianism, or even variations on a theme from the Republican Party platform. Instead, I argue that the principles and outcomes of free market capitalism are defensible, even though imperfect. Considering the alternatives, the Church should support the spread of the Gospel within the free market economy, rather than opposing a program of free trade (both within and between countries) as a means of improving material welfare.

THE PRINCIPLES THAT UNDERGIRD FREE MARKET CAPITALISM

The Merriam-Webster definition of capitalism is “an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market.” The essential proposition of capitalism is that free trade or exchange, within a country and between countries, increases prosperity. Barriers to such trade create distortions and hamper collective welfare. Before weighing the outcomes of this proposition, let us first consider several of the assumptions and principles on which it rests.

-The Scarcity of Resources: We live in a world of limited resources, even as human needs and desires (on a material level) are never perfectly satisfied. Economic activity is necessarily a matter of trade-offs, pursuing one good at the expense of another. Private property is essential in dealing with the problem of scarcity, for self-interest allows some measurement of the relative worth of work and resources over time.

-Limited Human Knowledge: No one man (or government, for that matter) enjoys a truly God’s-eye view of the economy. There are countless variables in our economic behavior, and even the best mind is incapable of knowing all of them when it comes to

the complexities of exchange. An open market is the only way we can make sense of all these variables, because our actions can be coordinated in response to competitive pricing, which in turn is informed by supply and demand.

-The Rule of Law: A functioning free market economy rests on the rule of law as a guarantee for trust. A fair, independent legal system prevents unfair competition that distorts the market and protects the rights of private property. Without predictable outcomes from an impartial judge, the risks—and costs—of exchange increase considerably. Responsible, limited government provides clear general rules, preserves public safety, maintains public infrastructure, and protects the general welfare—all of which are important elements of prosperity in a capitalist system.

-The Virtues of Competition: By allowing private individuals to compete fairly, a free market system creates incentives for merit. One might call this “freedom for economic excellence.” Free markets reward entrepreneurial spirit, but punish irresponsible behavior. Closed markets suffer from poor quality, unresponsiveness, and limited innovation.

Many of these assertions are broad, and certain principles admit of exceptions and qualifications. There are countless examples of a capitalist economy rewarding evil amply, just as there are so many instances of good people suffering unjustly. These principles necessarily simplify an immensely complex reality. However, they do reveal a foundation of realism about the fallen human condition. Resources are scarce. Human knowledge is fallible. Trust is wanting in human affairs. Reward is usually necessary to motivate excellence. A capitalist system seeks to overcome these obstacles to human cooperation by creating a forum for coordinated action—the free market.

WHAT HAVE FREE MARKETS DONE FOR ME LATELY?

Sound premises are all well and good, but what of outcomes? Surely the proof is in the pudding, and capitalism has earned



CAMILLE PISSARRO - THE FAIR IN DIEPPE, SUNNY MORNING

a dreadful reputation. From Dickensian workhouses to Southeast Asian sweatshops, the march of global capital is usually seen as the enrichment of the wealthy and powerful at the expense of the poor and vulnerable. In too many cases, this has the ring of truth. There have been, are, and will be greedy, heedless people who think only of their own welfare, often acting without mercy or justice to others. In a capitalist system, these people can be, and too often are, rewarded for their behavior, so long as it improves the bottom line.

Two points mitigate this rather bleak portrait. First, insofar as human beings suffer from the effects of original sin, some of these unsavory qualities will be features of any economic system. Even communism could not solve for concupiscence. Second,

although it is certainly imperfect, a free market system does achieve a remarkable degree of success in raising our collective material welfare. Let us consider but three examples, in which the free market system helps fight global poverty, spread peace, and save lives.

-Decrease in Global Poverty: The World Bank reports that in the past two decades, the number of those living in extreme poverty (that is, living on under \$1.25 per day) has declined by nearly 1 billion, from 43.1% to 20.6% of those in developing countries. What accounts for this remarkable achievement? Not, for the most part, foreign aid or charitable giving, but economic development. In countries that began adopting free market policies and encouraging trade, the transformation has been remarkable. Many of those who have moved out of extreme poverty still live in difficult conditions, but the improvements across the board—living standards, health and mortality, education, disposable income—are tremendous. Greater social provision and services have made a difference as well, but such largesse is made possible by encouraging investment, decreasing tariffs, and removing monopolistic institutions that squelch creativity.

-Peace between Trading Nations: Free trade knits nations together and advances the cause of peace. This is hardly a new line of argument—Montesquieu argued for increased trade as a means of decreasing conflict in 1750. When there are lasting bonds of commerce between two countries, it stands to reason that they would have a disincentive to fight a destructive war against one another. More recent studies support this logic. In a paper entitled “Trade, Peace and Democracy: An Analysis of Dyadic Dispute,” Professors Solomon Polachek of SUNY and Carlos Seiglie of Rutgers examined the link between trade and armed conflict (IZA, 2006). After analyzing the data and providing a lengthy review of the recent scholarly literature, they report a clear connection: belligerence declines markedly with increases in trade and capital flows between nations, and cooperation increases by nearly every measure. Free trade can be a potent tool in refocusing the wealth

and energy of countries away from war and towards more irenic purposes.

-*Technological Advancement*: Since free market capitalism both respects private property and values innovation, the system creates an ideal environment for technological advancement. Since we live amidst these new technologies every day, it is easy to forget the circumstances that incentivized their creation and spread. The human genius is inspired to invent and improve tools with every generation, but the hallmark of the capitalist era is that these inventions and tools are very quickly available to the general public. The rapid pace of these innovations can be credited in some part to the virtuous cycle of competition—the constant drive to make products better, faster, and more affordable. In the field of medical technology alone, the confluence of ideas, investment, and widespread distribution have created countless products that extend and improve lives every day. Without a system that offers big returns for realizing new technologies, would we have the pacemaker, the MRI scanner, or the gamma knife?

CATHOLICS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE: ECONOMIC AGGIORNAMENTO

Where does all this leave us? We have seen that free market capitalism draws from some sound principles, grounded in the realities of our fallen condition. The system also delivers impressive results, including the three we considered that directly address great humanitarian problems of our time: poverty, war, and sickness. All these arguments notwithstanding, the capitalist system still rankles many thoughtful Catholics who see it as profoundly dislocating and destructive of tradition. What does it merit us to gain GDP if we lose our souls?

Some of these critics hearken back to an economic system that more powerfully bound people to the land and their communities. This vision has strong emotional and philosophical resonance, for it appeals to a genuine good, and promotes the ideal of a

humane lifestyle closely tied to virtue. I entirely agree that the goods of rootedness and strong community are important to human happiness. I would also agree that leisure ordered toward contemplation is more important than work, insofar as the latter should serve the former, rather than the other way round. Capitalism cannot be an end unto itself. The system only has merit insofar as it can be put to use in furthering human flourishing, which includes elements like family and tradition.

However, these critics usually stumble when they move from theory to practice. “Economic philosophy,” if we may call it that, suffers from many of the same shortcomings as its cousin, political philosophy. We never start from an economic *tabula rasa*—there is a present system, with its own assumptions and outcomes, its successes and its failures. The Catholic response to the marketplace must be grounded in its lived reality, not an ahistorical and abstract standard. Nor should Catholics idealize some period of the distant past, particularly when the argument involves more nostalgia than serious historical comparison.

Capitalism has its failures. But for all those shortcomings, it is a system that respects individual freedom, accounts for the shortcomings in human knowledge, and encourages coordinated activity that can be put to good ends. For good and ill, it is responsive to the values and desires of those who participate in the system. When disordered human desires go unrestrained by an informed conscience, social norms and conventions, or public laws, they encounter in the free market ample opportunities to be fulfilled. Therefore, the indispensable task of the Church is to inform consciences, affirm virtuous social norms, and advocate laws and policies that will support genuine flourishing.

The difficulty of this task is in some ways similar to the challenge the Church faced regarding the new political order that developed after the French Revolution. Deeply invested in the philosophy and social order supporting *anciens régimes* across Europe, many Catholics struggled to find their voice in the changed public

square. Popes and bishops accused the new political order—including democracy—of being fruit from the poisoned tree of philosophical liberalism, and so issued repeated bromides against it. Catholics were often encouraged to abstain from political life altogether, or to join reactionary movements, with the result that the Church was pushed even further to the fringes. Animated by romantic and philosophical commitments to a vanished past, some of the best Catholic minds were left on the sidelines, even as a high-stakes game for the future was afoot. It took decades before many remembered that the Church is not the handmaid of any political (or economic) system, but must re-propose the Gospel with every age. Catholics belatedly realized how many aspects of liberal democracy—like human rights and limited government—could be understood in terms of the faith and used to further the good.

Catholics should not make the same mistake today in the economic debate. Just because an institution or system has mixed philosophical provenance does not mean that it is beyond redemption. The Church should be at the very center of the marketplace, spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only true path to complete human flourishing. The Church should speak to and for workers and the poor, defending their rights and encouraging them in virtue. She should seek to reach the businessman as well, informing his understanding of ethics and inculcating in him true magnanimity. Catholics should not reflexively oppose free market capitalism to achieve our desired ends. Rather, we should seek to understand the best of economics and business experience, and read them in the light of the Gospel. From this dialogue will flow the most effective Catholic response to the good and the bad of free market capitalism.

Henry Stephan entered the Order of Preachers in 2011.

AN ALTERNATE PROPOSAL

THE DISTRIBUTIST CRITIQUE

Gregory Maria Pine, O.P.

ON FIRST PRINCIPLES

When evaluating the respective merits of economic policies, one must attend first to principles. The whole discourse must be governed by the end, namely union with God, which constitutes our happiness. G. K. Chesterton hammers this home: “Happiness is the only test; the only test that is in the least practical [...] There is no obligation on us to be richer, or busier, or more efficient, or more productive, or more progressive, or in any way worldlier or wealthier, if it does not make us happier.” God draws man unto Himself and accomplishes this happiness in us by what St. Thomas Aquinas observes to be a threefold order. First, man must abide by the divine law. Also, he must live in accord with the natural law. Finally, since man is a “social and political animal,” he must also be well disposed towards his neighbors (*ST Ia-IIae*, q. 72, a. 4 c.); this we’ll call the human law.

Human law is not a mere obligation stemming from the fact that there are other people on earth; rather, it is a matter of perfection. Man and woman are unable to realize all of the goods of nature in the context of the family; the city is the smallest unit wherein all of man’s faculties may hope to realize their perfection. This perfection in political life is realized by justice, whereby man renders to each what is due. Justice moderates one’s actions with respect to other persons in the city so as to promote the common

good. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle treats justice in terms of a proportion – the distributive realization of equity.

In light of this, it stands to reason that capitalism, adopted in its principles *tout court*, does not promote the flourishing of justice but actually does it violence. As a corrective, I propose the moderating influence of what authors at the turn of the 20th century referred to as “Distributism,” a political philosophy which promotes a just order in which property is owned by a wider segment of society through co-operative efforts. Historically, this has often occurred under the auspices of Catholic Social Teaching and has assumed both agricultural and industrial forms.

STRUCTURAL FLAWS OF CAPITALISM

The structural flaws in capitalism, and in particular its core principles, are not immune from criticism. As a prominent advocate of distributism, Hilaire Belloc described capitalism thus: “A society in which private property in land and capital [...] is confined to some number of free citizens not large enough to determine the social mass of the State, while the rest have not such property and are therefore proletarian.” With this basic definition and the foregoing discussion in mind, one might enunciate any number of criticisms of capitalism. What follows is limited to three. Following these critiques, an illustration of how the principles of Distributism allow man to flourish more fully in a just order will be supplied in parallel fashion.

First, capitalism tends towards *dispossession and consequent exploitation*. Following the Industrial Revolution, the shift from small to large scale production placed an increasingly significant economic barrier to ownership of productive capital. With this shift, a greater importance was afforded to capital with a consequent rise of wage labor and the attendant potential for exploitation. A system based on wages rather than ownership leaves the worker exposed to managerial caprice. As such, capitalism tends to undermine security on the large scale, as nearly all surplus is

diverted to the owner and away from the wage earner, leaving him or her peculiarly vulnerable. Certain moderating influences (e.g., collective bargaining, minimum wage legislation, etc.) have interceded on the worker's behalf, but average wages tend unto servitude of a sort. Further, this dispossession undermines private property as normatively widespread. The consolidation of private property resulting from the centralization of production and the consequent rush to the city leaves men and women with very little buffer from the potentially invasive claims of a ruling body.

Second, capitalism promotes a *disordered understanding of wealth*, both qualitatively and quantitatively. With respect to the former, as man is taken off the land, the focus shifts from things of primary importance (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, and fuel) to those of secondary importance (everything else). Furthermore, the connection between labor and necessities becomes more tenuous. While the farmer knows that potatoes grow in the ground and Cheerios are made at a General Mills factory miles away, one can see how for city folk, it is more like the difference between aisle one and aisle seven.

With respect to the quantitative wealth, capitalism also permits for easier accumulation. To facilitate trade, capitalism conducts commerce through conventional means. As such, the accumulation of wealth can be reduced to the tracking of an Etrade.com account or an online banking portal. Man becomes focused more proximately on the accumulation or management of token, that is, artificial wealth, assigning to it a value no longer proportionate to its signification (Have you tried eating currency, heating your home with it, or clothing yourself with it?). Man thus becomes more estranged from his real need and actual sustenance, awash as the age is in a tumult of advertising, marketing, and designer cupcake shops. Aristotle and St. Thomas are agreed that the undue desire for artificial wealth tends unto a certain infinity. Whereas the desire for wealth of the body is checked by nature (as much as we would like to eat eighty cupcakes in one sitting, it

simply is not possible), the desire for artificial wealth does not have the same physiological upper limit.

Third and finally, *capitalism is wasteful*. This is evident structurally in the multiplication of middlemen. Interposed between the producer and the consumer, there are the intervening markets, transport agencies, and financiers. As Vincent McNabb, O.P. comments:

As soon as a land-worker produces much more of a commodity than he can consume and much fewer commodities than he must consume he must obtain money by selling his produce in a market; and the more he produces the further must he send his produce. This at once robs him of his liberty of action by delivering him to the mercy of the market, the transport agency that takes his produce to the market, and the financier who gives financial credit to buy and stock and work the land until the produce is harvested and sold and paid for ("Industrialization of Land").

Simply put, capitalism necessitates an increasingly sprawling economy that generates considerable waste.

A DISTRIBUTIST RESPONDS

Laid out thus, the economic landscape seems somewhat arid and tolerably cruel, but it need not be so. The distributist argues that the tide can be turned by co-operatives that effectively widen the base of property ownership. Before proceeding, it is necessary to first clarify the nature of the somewhat ambiguous policy at stake. Hilaire Belloc defines distributism as the following:

To put Distributism very simply: It is an alternative to Socialism and to Capitalism. It is a system committed to private property for as large a proportion of the citizenry



T. C. STEELE - VILLAGE SCENE

as possible [...] that they may enjoy virtual independence and share in the completeness of a life close to nature. (*The Servile State*)

While it may appear a period piece, distributism is no mere nostalgic abstraction. The principles of distributism remain a viable possibility. Turning now to the particular criticisms of capitalism, one can see how the principles of distributism promise greater happiness.

With respect to dispossession, distributism seeks to safeguard and promote the dignity of the worker and his or her stewardship of the land. Flowing from the divine command of dominion (Gn 1:28), they argue, man is possessed of the right to provide for his family and future, as well as to impress his image

(that of reason and will) upon creation. He thus ennobles and perfects the very soil with which he toils to bring forth fruit.

Distributists further encourage city dwellers to move beyond a wage system and into the realm of genuine ownership. As part of this push, distributism attempts to make private property more universal. Since capitalism is wage-based, it practically necessitates the majority of wage-earners over and above owners. It remains the case that property is one of the only institutions that permits the family to affirm its equal right with the state in the pursuit of things needful to its preservation and its just liberty (See *Rerum novarum*, 13).

Second, a Distributive critique corrects a misrepresentation of the nature of wealth. Distributists argue that wealth must be proportioned to need. St. John's account of the feeding of the five thousand notes that the meal ended "when they were filled" (Jn 6:12a). From this phrase, Fr. Vincent McNabb takes a rather imaginative point of departure. For him, St. John's word choice communicates the natural correspondence between desire and things. The average person may be trusted to limit desire by need. But in an economic system where artificial wealth is emphasized, that trust is destabilized. As McNabb says, "If the Eternal Wisdom instead of miraculously providing bread and fishes, had provided money, St. John would have been unable to say that as much as each one wanted Jesus gave." This avaricious tendency, which impinges more dangerously on artificial wealth, undermines the common good by promoting a widespread preference for private interests, and peace is lost. Things of intrinsic value tend more to sate the appetite and shape the reason of man than do things of merely artificial value, and, as a result, are less prone to give rise to disordered desires of such magnitude.

Finally, distributism is less wasteful than is capitalism. Take the example of farming. Distributism operates on a much smaller scale, seeking to ensure that the area of cultivation is as near to

coterminous as possible with the area of consumption. McNabb is also adamant that *intense* cultivation (practiced by the small land holder) yields at a much higher rate than does *mass* cultivation. McNabb roots this primarily in the phenomenon of motivation. A farmer utilizing the former cultivation must work to live whereas a farmer utilizing the latter can produce yields at a much lower rate per acre and still turn a profit. Although McNabb is writing well before many of the technological developments that have made industrial farming considerably more efficient, nevertheless his points still hold. In the case of farming, the greater the area of cultivation, the wider the area of distribution, the higher the transportation costs, the greater the need for preservatives, the worse the food typically tastes, and the more deleterious the long term health effects. These same principles apply for industry more generically.

GOING FORWARD

Distributists argue that a widening of ownership provides the only stable and perduring basis for society whereby man is buffered from the increasingly absolutist claims of a capitalist state heading towards socialism and servility. They propose the co-operative business model (e.g., Mondragon in Spain, Eastern Wholesale Society in Nova Scotia), rather than the shareholder-owned firm to promote this move and attain a more just and subsidiary society governed by principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

With the theory thus laid out, the connection to praxis may not yet be entirely clear. Given the practical goal of implementation, here are a few recommendations of ways by which distributism can alter and perfect the shape of everyday life:

- 1) *Set aside some place in your home that is truly simple.* This may mean clearing the entirety of a horizontal surface of trinkets and leaving nothing there except a crucifix. Christ came into the

world poor and left it poor. This will teach us to better appreciate poverty.

2) *Keep a garden.* You have not tasted a tomato until you do. To work the land, even on a small plot, will afford the great delight of having brought forth something of real, abiding, and satisfying worth.

3) *Promote local business.* You can probably depend more upon local business to take a perduring interest in your town and region. Thus, when the going gets tough or demographics shift, you can help ensure the continued presence of a neighbor and friend from the encroachments of corporations which may be more motivated by concerns dictated by market price and short term dividends.

4) *Study modern Catholic Social Teaching.* Distributism takes as its starting point the principles enunciated in the social magisterium beginning, in the modern context, with *Rerum Novarum*. It may be profitable to foster discussion groups and/or lectures series at the parish level to undertake this as a communal enterprise, thus performatively incarnating the principles at stake.

5) *Pray for our country.* *Rerum novarum* taught that ownership, by wedding man to the soil, promotes the flourishing of patriotism. Our country will not be transformed but by love, and what better way to practice this than by committing it to the care of Love Incarnate.

Gregory Maria Pine entered the Order of Preachers in 2010.

REPLIES

A REPLY TO AN ALTERNATE PROPOSAL

Distributism carries powerful appeal to any Catholic looking at the state of the public square today, and rightfully so. Distributists like Br. Gregory start from many sound philosophical premises. They highlight serious social and economic failures of our time, and point towards root causes like runaway materialism and individualism. Distributists speak a language of human flourishing, virtue, and rootedness in family and community. As an admirer of Edmund Burke and a student of St. Thomas—and even simply as a Christian—I find much to admire and respect in the distributist disposition. Democratic capitalism, if it is to avoid collapsing into avarice and injustice, needs the benefit of a distributist-style critique to cast a light on disordered desires and stunted views of happiness.

That said, distributism cannot be a genuine rival system to capitalism. What makes distributism so appealing—its rhetorical flourishes, its bracing rejection of the conventional wisdom, its visceral attachment to the best of the past—also constrain it from being a comprehensive account or program. Distributism is more literary than scientific, more historical romance than legislative agenda. This explains some recurring difficulties in the distributist literature: questionable or polemical definitions, unfair generalizations, and a paucity of concrete proposals.

Distributist accounts too often take a given good and exaggerate or absolutize it. Living in closer union with the land surely has its merits, but this vision of the pastoral idyll ignores the fact that pre-industrial agricultural life for most people was (and still is) nasty, brutish, and short. Locally grown foods are certainly praiseworthy,

but they would quickly weary many palates accustomed to the great variety and quality that larger markets provide. Subsidiarity and localism are important antidotes to modern dissociation, but there are correlated dangers of inward-looking parochialism. Thinking more about genuine needs than just growing one's bank account is worthwhile, but do distributists truly believe that a barter system would be preferable to currency? Would they propose to free the masses from wage slavery by chaining them to the family farm?

Distributists like Chesterton, Belloc, and McNabb all reacted to the Dickensian squalor of British cities, as well as to the moral and intellectual upheavals of modernity. And with good reason—there is much that ails the modern mind and the body politic alike, and we know all too well that mere “progress” will not lead to genuine human happiness. But this does not mean that some return to the countryside *en masse* is the answer. Agriculture is indeed vital, but it is one part of man's economic life, prone to vagaries and hardships like any other. An atavistic rejection of modernity forswears the hard work of dealing with the messy, morally ambiguous realities of any economy.

Too many distributists ignore the virtues of the city, on both a philosophical and practical level. To say that man is a social and political animal admits that he is in some way part of the *polis*. Cities are extended networks of social and political communion between men, centers of thought and activity. Culture and commerce both flow from the city, which makes possible the exchange of goods and ideas. The wealth of the city funds scientific research and works of art, great public buildings and private properties alike. There are indeed instances of evil, of injustice, of inhumanity in cities—but this proves their need for redemption, rather than sealing the case for their abandonment.

If distributism is understood as a corrective impulse within capitalism—a reaction to some of its vices—then it can serve a useful role in evangelization. Indeed, Br. Gregory's list of concrete

distributist proposals—prayer nooks, home gardens, co-op memberships, and reading lists—is quite helpful in this context, as the fruit of philosophical reflection on human happiness and economic activity. All of these are healthy correctives to disordered desires that easily develop in a capitalist society.

Distributism is dangerous, though, when it purports to be a “third way” alternative to capitalism. This kind of secessionist attitude to the modern economy runs contrary to the Church’s mission to spread the Gospel in the public square—which includes both culture and commerce. We must cultivate a spirit of *aggiornamento* in engaging with the world of business and exchange. This is not because the free market economy is free from sin and injustice. Rather, it is precisely because there is sin and injustice that the Church must be proactive in forming consciences and reordering desires. Democratic capitalism is not intrinsically evil, but it can cause grave harm when materialism goes unchallenged. The Church cannot perform this saving work unless it gives due respect to genuine economic science, even as she proposes a fuller vision of human flourishing than any economic system could ever satisfy.

— Henry Stephan, O.P.

A REPLY TO A DEFENSE OF CAPITALISM

Br. Henry’s article displays a skillful command and principled application of economic theory in an excellently constructed apology for free market capitalism. He persuasively defends capitalism as not merely salvageable, but even as preferable to competing systems. I greatly appreciate the article’s postlapsarian preamble and prudential consideration, framing the contingent matters that factor into an evaluation of competing claims for economic ascendancy.

While I may appear to be seizing upon a point of only tangential importance, I think that the key divergence arises from principles.

Br. Henry begins with the assertion that “the Gospel of Jesus Christ, after all, is concerned first and foremost with a supernatural reality—the means by which we realize our final end of eternal union with God—while markets are concerned with more earthly matters.” While it is somewhat unclear what he intends by means in this context, I think he applies a metric with too limited a horizon in evaluating the efficacy of economic policy.

Though market analysis is a thoroughly practical science, relying upon right reason in the applied realm, this in no way necessitates that we limit our considerations to merely prudential principles available to the social sciences. My argument, properly more philosophical in form, is that economics, must submit its principles to the judgment and orientation of a higher science. This “revelation” includes the claim that the end of every man and woman consists in the highest exercise of his or her highest power, namely, the intellect. This entails the discovery of an infinite object proportioned to the infinite need of the human soul. In the realm of the science that is properly theological, we speak of this as the beatific vision, though a properly Christian revelation is not necessary to advance the argument, nor would its introduction conduce to the application of these principles in the secular sphere.

With the end mapped out thus, it stands to reason that this aforementioned perfection is begun on earth by contemplation. Thus, all of the arguments in favor of a distributist reorientation of economic policy formally qualify as conducing to this end of contemplation. That man and woman be rooted in the soil, possessed of their own property, constituted as good stewards of the creation with which they are entrusted ... these all work unto the attainment of the final end.

The complementary claim is that free market economics tends along the contrary trajectory. The free market, I argue, appears formally in many respects as a near occasion of man’s denigration (I replace the term sin, in order that the argument remain properly

philosophical). While I concede the reality of the benefits to which Br. Henry adverts (reduction of global poverty, spread of peace, and the saving of lives), it remains the case that these goods necessitate a further orientation that takes into account the full breadth of man's capacity—a breadth which free market economics is ill suited to provide. I do not believe that it asks too much of an economic policy to organize the civil polity in such a way as to promote the flourishing of virtue. Not only, I argue, does this not obtain when the principles of free market capitalism are applied, but it seems to introduce as principles the occasion for contrary motion. For instance, one can discern in the inner logic of competition, on which free market economics is based, a movement that tends contrary to benevolence among its citizens. Competition, while indeed incentivizing merit, also incentivizes any means by which to hamstring the efficacy of a competitor's production. It thus presupposes the presence of a certain virtue in the businessman, while not necessarily incentivizing the continuation and growth thereof.

So, while it may seem easier to concede the capitalist system we have inherited and make the best of it, I do not think the practice is sustainable in the long run, especially given the seemingly inevitable slump into socialism and whatsoever lies beyond.

— *Gregory Maria Pine, O.P.*

RECAPITULATION

After reflecting on these pieces the words of the psalmist come to mind: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" Unity? More like disunity, you may say. But I think not, although my reasons will have to wait until after a summary. Remember the question: how should one dwell economically in the modern world?

Br. Gregory ably defends the Distributist position through the writings of Chesterton, Belloc, and Fr. McNabb, OP. He argues with first principles in mind: What economy is best fitted to human nature? Capitalism, with its placement of wealth in the hands of the few, tends towards dispossession, disorder, and wastefulness. Distributism is championed as a truly free market, with property and capital distributed among the widest proportion of people possible. This “third way” emphasizes real ownership, the dignity of work, and proper stewardship of God’s good gifts. Aware of creeping abstract nostalgia, Br. Gregory offers simple practical solutions to start living the distributist way in one’s own life, including promoting local businesses and engendering a spirit of simplicity. These steps, though small, plant seeds for a just economy.

Br. Henry takes up the mantle of capitalism in his well-articulated defense of the free market. Abjuring a “moral free-for-all,” he claims that the guiding principles of capitalism take into account a realistic view of human nature, a scarcity of available resources, and the virtues of competition for human flourishing. Not content with mere principles, he delineates the benefits capitalism has provided us in the modern world: peace, economic prosperity, and technological advance. Life is better because of capitalism! But this does not mean all is well on Wall Street, and the way forward in economic renewal should focus on a re-animation of capitalism with Catholic truths and Gospel values. Reform, not revolution, is the call for all Catholics today.

Distributism and capitalism? What could they possibly have to do with one another? More than one initially thinks, I propose. Both systems, if systems they be, are interested in the right and just use of private property and capital. Both abhor Statist solutions and ridiculous regulations in daily affairs. And while Br. Henry criticizes distributism for being too idealistic, it is Catholic ideas and principles upon which he calls in the rejuvenation of capitalism. Likewise, Br. Gregory critiques capitalism for its focus



JEAN LEON GEROME FERRIS - LET US HAVE PEACE

on practice without proper principles, yet his solutions are perfectly pragmatic; to be a distributist is to start being a distributist. Perhaps the difference between the two is more a matter of emphasis than fundamental disagreement. For both would agree with Pope Francis when he offered remarks at a soup kitchen in Rome: “a savage capitalism has taught the logic of profit at any cost, of giving in order to get, of exploitation without thinking of people.” And even raising the question is a good start towards thinking not just about the economy, but more importantly, the people it is meant to serve.

— *The Editor*

THE LOCUTORIUM

A THOMISTIC WAYFARER

An interview with Fr. Robert Barron

by Dominic Mary Verner, O.P.

BIOGRAPHY

Father Robert Barron is an author, speaker and theologian. He is also the founder of the global media ministry Word on Fire (www.WordOnFire.org), which reaches millions of people by utilizing the tools of new media to draw people into or back to the Catholic Faith. Father Barron currently serves as the Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary University of St. Mary of the Lake. Ordained in 1986, he is a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Father Barron received a Master's Degree in Philosophy from the Catholic University of America in 1982 and a doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Institut Catholique de Paris in 1992.

Father Barron has published numerous books, essays, and DVD programs, including *The Strangest Way: Walking the Christian Path*, *Creation as Discipleship*, *A Study of the De Potentia of Thomas Aquinas in Light of the Dogmatik of Paul Tillich*, *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, *And Now I See: A Theology of Transformation*, *Heaven in Stone and Glass*, *Bridging the Great Divide*, *Word on Fire: Proclaiming the Power of Christ*, *The Priority of Christ: Toward a Post-Liberal Catholicism* and *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*. He is also the creator and host of CATHOLICISM, a groundbreaking, award winning documentary series about the Catholic Faith.

INTERVIEW

What does aggiornamento mean? Accommodation to what? These were the bold questions Karl Barth addressed to Rome in 1966, one short year after the close of the Council. Almost fifty years later, these questions are still being asked and answered in different ways. In your many writings, you show that you have given a lot of thought to the matter yourself. How would you respond to Barth? What does aggiornamento mean? Accommodation to what?

I deeply sympathize with Karl Barth's line of questioning. His other teasing question, which you didn't mention, has even more sting in its tail: "When will you know when the Church is sufficiently updated?" If *aggiornamento* means using the modern world as the measure of the church, then we have a serious problem.

Unfortunately, my generation was told that *aggiornamento* meant just that, causing something of a pastoral and theological disaster. The modern world should never be the measure of the Church, because no culture can measure the Church: Christ is the unmeasurable measure. In him all things hold together. He is "the beginning and the end," as St. Paul writes to the Colossians.

How then can we understand aggiornamento? Can the Church be modernized in such a way as to avoid pastoral and theological dangers?

We need to keep in mind two things. First, the Church always has the mission to reach out to whatever world it finds itself in—that for us happens to be the so-called modern world. We must engage with it. Second, the Church must become a more apt vehicle for evangelization in light of that mission. Here I follow Hans Urs von Balthasar, who wrote *Schleifung der Bastionen* [*Razing the Bastions*] in the 1950s leading up to the Council—we must knock

down the bastions. If the Church is stuck behind its medieval walls in a posture of defense, it won't fulfill its mission. It has to knock down those walls to let out the life that has been preserved over the centuries. We need to modernize the church to the degree that it makes the Church a more apt vehicle for this work.

Let us go behind those medieval walls for just a moment. In many of your writings you express an appreciation for the great medieval theologians, especially St. Thomas Aquinas. How did you come to appreciate St. Thomas?

My interest in St. Thomas goes back to when I was fourteen and a freshman at Fenwick High School, run by the Dominicans. I still remember the day vividly:

It was a hot spring afternoon. We had just come in from our lunch break to religion class, and a young friar, Father Paulsen, began to teach us the *quinque viae* of Aquinas, the famous five proofs for the existence of God. He laid out the arguments, and I found them so fascinating and compelling—especially the motion and causality arguments—that it changed my whole life.

That would have been about 1974, a time when religion was mostly banners and balloons. My poor parents sent us to Catholic schools, and I went to Mass every Sunday, but I had never taken the faith seriously. Then, at the *nadir* of the post-Conciliar period, I was exposed to Aquinas. It was like a bell going off. It lit a fire in me, and I've never left that path really. My whole life was determined by that afternoon, it is not an exaggeration to say.

I started going to the library with my little fourteen-year-old mind, and I checked out books of Thomas Aquinas. I've spent most of the rest of my life studying St. Thomas, and I've spent most of my major academic work on him. He has figured prominently in every book I've ever written, and remains of great importance to me.

What was St. Thomas's great appeal?

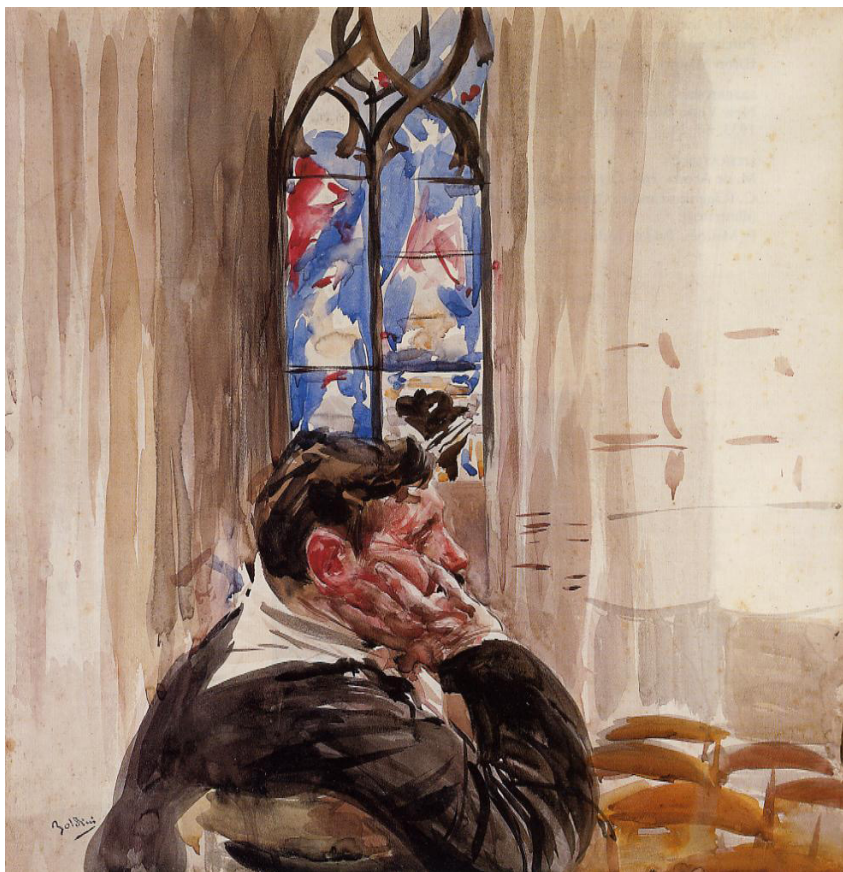
St. Thomas taught me that religion could be a matter of serious intellectual exploration. This had never occurred to me before then. I thought it was fascinating that you could make a case for the reality of God. Though I reverence and love the Bible in every way, it wasn't the Bible that got me interested in religion; it was these arguments of Aquinas. And I think his intellectual rigor and scientific approach are something of enormous usefulness in our era of the New Atheism, in which people repudiate religion in the public square as a bunch of pre-scientific nonsense. It is for us to recover the power of our great tradition, by which we can make public arguments for God. This recovery is enormously important today.

You mentioned Hans Urs von Balthasar earlier in our conversation in the context of breaking down medieval walls. What do you find most appealing about Balthasar's method and theology and what do you view to be his most important contribution for the Church's aggiornamento?

Even though I subscribe to the power of Aquinas for public arguments, nevertheless, in the postmodern context, there is often an antipathy to truth claims. "Who are you to tell me what is true?" and "Who are you to tell me how to live?" are typical objections we face because of postmodern relativism.

Balthasar begins with beauty, which for evangelical purposes is really important. I've always found something winsome and unthreatening about the beautiful. You can say, "Look at that! Look at how beautiful that is—that painting, that sculpture, that building!" In Jesus, and the saints who cluster around him, you see the beauty of a life, the beauty of a commitment. And this beauty can often be a less threatening way in. Once you are through the door of the beautiful, you can share the good and the true.

This is actually the method employed by Evelyn Waugh in *Brideshead Revisited*. Charles Ryder, who is like a contemporary



GIOVANNI BOLDINI - PORTRAIT OF A MAN IN CHURCH

atheist or agnostic non-believer, is first drawn in by the beauty of *Brideshead*, which is symbolic of the Church. Ryder eventually gets to the good and the true, but it takes much more time. The beautiful is his way through the door. You look at Tolkien and Lewis and you find the same intuition: you draw people in with the beauty of a story—the symbolism, the imagery, the character and narrative—and lead them to the good and the true. I think that is still a good evangelical method.

In telling the story of Christ to those who have little knowledge of the faith, it is not uncommon to encounter a forgetfulness of history and a lack of appreciation for the relevance of the past. The rejection of past narratives, which once helped man to appropriate his identity, seems especially characteristic of our postmodern culture. How do we communicate the historical particularity of Christ and the historical event of the Resurrection in a way that can break through this lack of historical consciousness?

Boldness in telling the story. Good evangelization is based upon the story of Israel, with Jesus as its great climax and culmination. When we forget that story, then Jesus becomes merely a guru or a spiritual teacher, rather than the fulfillment of Israel. We must become adept at telling the great story of Israel. Your instinct is right: we are a historical religion that is rooted in certain events in which we claim God has acted in the world—most notably in the Resurrection. Don't apologize for it, but tell that great story. And then show the lives that have been changed by it.

I was just struck by the historicity of our faith recently when I was over in Rome doing commentary for the papal conclave. I tried to say it whenever I could on the air: "Here we are because of a Galilean fisherman who ended up crucified upside-down right down there. His body was thrown on an old grave over which they eventually built that giant building right in front of us, and now the whole world is staring at this smoke stack that will announce the election of his successor." It's an uncanny thing really. And it's grounded in this weird historical fact—that this Galilean fisherman ended up here on this hill in Rome. The dense historicity of Christianity is still efficacious today and remains evangelically rich.

Aside from a lack of historical consciousness, what are some of the main obstacles to faith that you've encountered in your ministry?

I've learned a tremendous amount from my work on the internet, especially through my ministry of video commentaries. I hear from a great number of people who have some obstacle blocking their hearing of the Word.

The first big obstacle I come across is a misunderstanding of who God is. People see God as a threat to their humanity and a threat to their freedom. It's the old Feuerbachian problem, which comes right up through Marx, then Freud, then Sartre, and into Christopher Hitchens: God is seen as a threat to my freedom. So, a "No" to God becomes a "Yes" to man. I see that all the time. The answer, of course, is that our God is *ipsum esse subsistens* [subsistent being itself], the God who sustains freedom itself, and that, as St. Irenaeus teaches, his glory is the human being fully alive. People have these very faulty views of God because the biblical idea of God is not out there.

The second obstacle is a perceived incompatibility of religion and science. Religion is seen by many people as the enemy of science: science is great, it's forward looking, it's successful, it's predictive, and religion is everything but that. Religion is obscurantist; it's obstructing progress; it's irrational.

The third obstacle is the Bible and violence. The Bible presents big problems for some people because it's viewed as pre-scientific nonsense, Bronze Age mythology, old worn-out ideas by primitive people, and excessively violent.

Then there is the ethical teaching of the Church—especially concerning sex. People see the Church as retrograde, puritanical, anti-humanistic, and opposed to freedom.

These are the big obstacles that I've encountered: God, science, the Bible, violence, and sex.

How do we respond?

For you Dominicans, you young Dominicans, we need a new apologetics. And we need it to be clear, confident, bold, and smart. I've told the professors here at Mundelein Seminary in the

various departments: “I’ll tell you exactly what, in your various departments, is bugging people. Teach the men to respond to that.”

I go to the department of fundamental theology and tell them that no one understands what we mean by faith. Faith in the popular imagination means credulity, pre-scientific naïveté; it means accepting any old crazy wives’ tale. Then I go to my Bible department, and I’d say everything I said above: The Bible is perceived as a violent and primitive mythology. Then to the systematics department: God is misconstrued as opposed to human freedom. Then to the ethics department: People aren’t seeing the beauty of the Church’s teaching on sex, marriage, and family.

It is very important that we know the obstacles and know how we must respond.

So, would it be fair to say that you are in favor of a more dialectical or apologetic pedagogy in the training of priests and preachers?

When I was coming of age, we had dropped all apologetics. It was seen as anti-ecumenical, negative, disputatious, and all that. But what happened was we dropped all of our weapons. And then the culture—not entirely, but sections of it certainly—turned on us pretty energetically. Read Dawkins, Hitchens, or Sam Harris, or watch Bill Maher, and you’ll find vitriolic opposition to religion. If the culture likes us and is open to dialogue, great, but if the culture has turned on us, then we better have some weapons. We didn’t train the last two generations of priests to have any weapons, to be equipped for apologetics. I would say that you Dominicans should be in the forefront of that recovery.

Dominic Mary Verner entered the Order of Preachers in 2010.

THOUGHTS FROM THE RHINELAND

THE DIVINE AGGIORNAMENTO

Louis Bertrand Lemoine O.P.

*A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you;
and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a
heart of flesh — Ez 36:26*

With these words of the prophet Ezekiel, glorious yet mysterious, the Lord gives a remarkable promise to the children of Israel. In the past, he had worked powerful deeds among them, miraculously saving them from oppression in Egypt, feeding and sustaining them in the desert, and finally bringing them into the Promised Land. Now, however, the Lord gives a promise of a different sort, the fulfillment of which will look a bit different than manna from heaven or the land flowing with milk and honey. The sign of this fulfillment will not be a new food or a new land, but *a new heart*, a fleshy heart. Just as God fashioned Adam from the earth, so it seems he will fashion him again. Perhaps what is here most striking, however, is God's pledge to remain with his people, to continue to be their God even in the face of their repeated infidelities.

"What is man that you are mindful of him, and a son of man that you care for him?" (Ps 8:5). A good question, that. Indeed, what is this "man," this creature so unfaithful yet so beloved? Further, what does it say about the God who neither obliterates weak and sinful man nor robs him of his freedom? It is with a similar wonder that the medievals wrote *Gratia non tollit, sed perficit naturam*; grace does not replace nature, but rather works with it and makes it better. In this last age, the age of Ezekiel, God has become man

to redeem him, forging a new covenant in his own blood, with which he has begun the era of the new law of grace.

OUR LADY OF GRACE

For a masterpiece of this perfecting yet preserving grace, we can look to Mary. We should meditate on Our Lady, at once most blessed yet most humble. The angel greets her, and she humbles herself, exercising virtues she knew all too well from her loving obedience shown to Joachim and Anne. At her word of trustful surrender, the unimaginable transpires: God takes on flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, thus commencing the mystery of Our Lady of the Expectation. You can picture her, can you not? She walks through the streets of Nazareth, performs the most ordinary of tasks and chores like any other woman; however, at one and the same time, she is unlike any other woman, for this woman *carries God*.

If we marvel at this great mystery, we should also marvel at all who carry the Lord by grace—all the sons and daughters of God. Do we not have it on the very word of Jesus that God will live in his children, even though—unlike Our Lady—they carry about the effects of original sin? “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (Jn 14:23). Like Mary silently adoring the Christ child in her womb, the man or woman in grace can marvel at the Divine Friend living in his or her soul. The burning bush is a common Old Testament type for Mary; the bush was burning yet unconsumed, just as Mary was a mother yet with virginity preserved. Likewise, every child of God is a burning bush, consumed by the divine presence, yet sustained in his or her own quirky and eccentric existence. The Christian in grace is a walking miracle—a miracle of divine love.

THE FISHERS OF MEN

Some burning bushes need a little divine pruning. Christ called disciples to follow him, disciples who were still works in progress. In his divine wisdom, Jesus calls his friends to follow him in a manner personally suited to each one of them. In the



PIET MONDRIAN - GOING FISHING

Gospel of Matthew, Jesus walks by the sea and spots Simon Peter and Andrew fishing, for they were fishermen by trade. Christ calls them: “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” This God-man entered their lives without destroying them; instead, the Lord took what they had and opened to them a new, unforeseen horizon. In their encounter with the Lord, Simon Peter and Andrew did not give up their trade of fishing. They would continue to exercise this office, although something would be altogether different, like a familiar melody accompanied by a Baroque fugue. Their encounter with grace would make their old, familiar work radically new. They would continue fishing—though they would catch the whole world in their nets!

When someone welcomes the Lord into their life, it is not really the ways in which they are changed that is most interesting, but rather the way in which they are shockingly, scandalously the same. Business students continue to be business students after a conversion, and cashiers continue to be cashiers, and baristas baristas, and truck drivers truck drivers. Life seems the same—yet so different. What a luminous horizon has opened on their worlds of mocha frappuccinos and truck driving! Friendship with the Lord is a cool drink, and “whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14). In the muck of the mundane, the friends of Jesus are refreshing fountains, washing the feet of their neighbors, and flowing springs blessing the Lord.

A PORTRAIT OF ST. PAUL

St. Paul is a striking example of what Jesus does for his friends. He provides a brief autobiography in the first chapter of his Letter to the Galatians, where he shares in bold fashion how he persecuted Christians before his conversion with a view to destroying the Church, growing in Jewish observance with an unmatched zeal. However, God called him to embrace the holy preaching of the Gospel, a preaching which Paul eagerly embraced; at the remarkable spectacle of his conversion, believers exclaimed, “the one who once was persecuting us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy” (Gal 1:23). Thus, Paul is made to realize that he was not beating down a dangerous religious sect, but rather he who was to be his most beloved: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (Acts 9:4). Following his conversion, Paul set out to preach the Gospel with a superhuman zeal, and now his zeal was in the service of the Body of Christ.

In the Second Letter to the Corinthians, we see a complementary yet different side of Paul. After reporting the details of a certain mystical experience, he explains that “a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being

too elated.” Paul asked the Lord to take away this thorn; rather than removing it, the Lord replied, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” In response, Paul boldly proclaimed, “I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong” (see 2 Cor 12:7–10). Was this mysterious thorn some temptation of the flesh, or some malady, or an enemy of his preaching? Whatever it may have been, Paul learned a critical lesson in the mysterious words of the Lord for him. The obvious answer Paul desired was the healing of this pain, the removal of this injury, the silencing of the horror of temptation. The Lord, in his mercy, answers: “My grace is sufficient for you.”

The portrait of a man who both converted nations and yet was a bit disconcerted at his own weakness and brokenness seems contradictory only for the pagan. How is it that Paul was both weak and strong? Paul was a man who did not rely on his own strength or resources, but rather stretched out to the Lord for aid. He is like the woman with a hemorrhage in Matthew’s Gospel, who saw Jesus and rightly thought, “If only I can touch his cloak, I shall be cured” (Mt 9:21). The Lord mercifully permitted Paul to keep his weakness; otherwise, he might have been tempted to trust in himself, as one who, as it were, has this converting-the-nations thing under control. Real strength is not in smug self-confidence or—thank God—having it all together; true strength is looking beyond oneself and reaching out to touch the Divine Physician. Paul needed a Savior, and he knew it.

HOPE

Paul has a message of crucial importance for each of us today. There is no doubt that he spoke from experience when he wrote in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, “we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us” (2 Cor 4:7). As Paul learned, the disciple carries about, at one and the same time, the surpassing power of

God and a humanity as fragile as a clay vessel. When the faithful are baptized and adopted as sons of God and heirs to that glorious inheritance, the Trinity takes up residence within them (see Jn 14:23), and they become friends of God. We know this by faith—but this is not the end of the story. Faith enables us to believe this truth in a general way; hope gives us the confidence to boldly ask for such a grace for me. Hope led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Hope impelled the prodigal son to go back to the Father. The woman with a hemorrhage was a woman of hope. Mary awaited the Messiah in hope. Peter and Andrew hoped to be successful fishermen. Paul's zeal was his hope in God's promises. Like all theological virtues, hope allows us to touch Jesus and thus receive the new heart promised to the People of God so long ago. "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Is 40:31). Without Christ, we can do nothing; with Christ, we become tabernacles of the Most High. And we can hope for a new heart, too. If we hope, we shall be saved.

Louis Bertrand Lemoine entered the Order of Preachers in 2010.

GESTA DOCTRINAMQUE

Let the brothers reflect on and make known the teaching and achievements (gesta doctrinamque) of those in the family of St. Dominic who have gone before them, while not forgetting to pray for them (Cf. LCO 16).

INTRODUCTION TO TOMÁŠ TÝN

Fr. Giovanni Cavalcoli, O.P.

Father Tomáš Týn, in many ways the perfect example of a saintly theologian with a solid Thomistic foundation after the Second Vatican Council, was born in Brno, Czech Republic, on May 3, 1950. Having expressed an early desire for priestly and religious life following his studies in France and Germany, Tomáš Týn joined the Order of Preachers in Bologna, beginning his development of a post-conciliar *aggiornamento* faithful to Church tradition.

At his priestly ordination in Rome by Pope Paul VI on June 29, 1975 (ordained alongside Raymond Cardinal Burke), Father Týn offered his priestly life for freedom in Czechoslovakia. This offering was fulfilled fifteen years later, when Father Týn died at 39 of lung cancer, on January 1, 1990, the year his motherland was freed from the yoke of a Communist regime.

Father Týn's years at Bologna were spent in studying, teaching, and preaching with the zeal of a true follower of St. Dominic. The theological virtues, the relationship between grace and free will, Mariology, and the Eucharist were among his favorite topics. His *magnum opus* remains his volume on metaphysics, the analogy of being, and the concept of participation, published posthumously in 1991. More than of merely speculative interest, Father Týn

developed a robust notion of the person in this work, defending the dignity of the weak, disabled, and dying against more relativistic positions.

Shortly after his death, many in Italy (where he lived) and the Czech Republic (where he is regarded as a national hero) promoted the cause of his beatification, which was solemnly opened in 2006 and is currently under way. The dedicated web site is at www.studiodomenicano.com.



Fr. Tomáš Týn, O.P.

The lecture translated here addresses a complex topic. Nevertheless, the Servant of God shows his firm command of moral theology, a discipline he taught at the Dominican studium in Bologna during the 1980s.

In this lecture, one detects a characteristic trait of Father Týn: his ability to apply universal and eternal moral principles to the particular situation of our time, taking into account the views expressed by contemporary authors. Father Týn links the duty of tolerance to the moral principle that requires us to bear the conduct of those persons who are not capable of fully exercising virtue, or are even prone to vice. In this way, by bearing their conduct which we do not approve, we may contribute to their moral correction, in a manner that is respectful of their freedom.

At the same time, the Servant of God does not hesitate to identify a duty, to be carried out in an appropriate way, to be intolerant against today's attitude of laxity toward sin and of moral relativism. Father Týn knew too well that a relativistic approach, deprived as

it is of a solid objective criterion to distinguish good from evil, ends up suppressing freedom and authentic cultural diversity.

An important theme of Father Týn's reasoning reflected here is his attribution of tolerance to the subjective dimension of ethics, and of intolerance to its objective dimension. Tolerance has to be modulated according to the particular conditions of the person, always requesting the exercise of that degree of virtue of which the person is capable, while tolerating the moral deficiency that a person, even with his best will, is unable to overcome at that time.

Intolerance, on the other hand, is justified by the imperative to defend those moral values that are necessary to the life of each individual person and society. In this respect, intolerance must prevail over tolerance, so that every moral agent may find the rule of his conduct in those objective, universal, and unchangeable values of ethics which are the end of the virtues. Hence, while tolerance may well make allowance for a person's weaknesses, it cannot go beyond the limit where the very good of the person and society would be compromised.

Father Týn ends up criticizing two radical positions which, while apparently inconsistent with one another, in reality reach the same effect of compromising the right balance between tolerance and intolerance. On the one hand, there is the wrong tendency in relativist liberalism of turning tolerance into an absolute value, against the need to obey laws based on objective and universal values. On the other hand, there is that inhuman intolerance which, in the name of a common good interpreted in totalitarian and collectivistic terms, suppresses and coerces individual freedom.

Finally, Father Týn stresses how beneficial Christianity has been and continues to be for the good of the individual and society. This is why the soon-to-be canonized John Paul II called on governments to take into account, in the care of the common good, the law of Christ, not in the manner of a certain Islamic

coercive integralism, but as that heritage which is at the basis of Western civilization and all civilized societies alike.

Translated by Maurizio Ragazzi, student of Fr. Týn.

THE DIFFICULT ETHICAL WAYS OF TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE

Tomáš Týn, O.P. (1950–1990)

A FUNDAMENTALLY ETHICAL QUESTION

Evidently the presentation of the topic of this conference, “Intolerance: Similarities and Divergences within History,” has considered tolerance primarily as it comes to be fully known in light of its opposite, intolerance. It is astonishing to note that, while the ethical allusions as a matter of principle are certainly not entirely missing, they hardly receive the primacy that is rightfully theirs amidst the preponderance of debates regarding “application.” All this will be likely credited to that pragmatic spirit—evident from Galileo onwards—which does not like to “grab hold of essences.” Nevertheless, the debates surrounding tolerance provide an exquisitely ethical, and better yet metaphysical, problematic inasmuch as they concern themselves with human action and motivation. Therefore, we are permitted to compensate a little for this lack by initially daring to raise the question of (Socrates help us!) “what is it,” so as to arrive at the others: “how to use it” and “where is it applied.”

It is not simply scholastic style to bother with the etymologies of Isidorian memory, accused mainly of pedantry by our

contemporaries, but because of the conviction that the names of things are generally chosen for good reasons. It is useful to recall that in Latin the verb *tolerare*—while subject to many nuances, as often happens in this admirable and unfortunately rather forgotten language—can be translated comprehensively as “to bear or endure.” Nowadays it seems that each of us has undoubtedly many occasions to bear or endure certain circumstances in life, generally credited to other people with whom we live and whom we meet. To have patience belongs to the demands of everyday life, and if that is not enough to be convinced of its good sense, the authority of divine Scripture is rather abundant in this regard. Think of St. Paul’s exclamation: “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2). Furthermore, patience is that virtue which consists in bearing or enduring *par excellence*, and it is specified as a spontaneous effect of charity (see 1 Cor 13:4)—of the communion of man with God Himself.

That said, it is customary to immediately raise the claim dictated by superficiality: “Behold the purity of the Gospel, which the institutional Church has disavowed by adopting intolerant attitudes in the course of its history.” It arises from environments that pride themselves on secularism. They are further enriched by self-harm, coming from those who continue to identify themselves as Christians, and by the beating of chests—though not their own, but rather that of the Holy Church of God. These simpletons forget that the same Apostle who sings the hymn to charity—that it is patient—bursts into decisively “inquisitorial” condemnations when confronted with the dangers of heresy or immorality in the Christian community (see 1 Cor 5:5). Given that, despite a decidedly energetic nature, irrationality does not characterize St. Paul, perhaps it would be appropriate to refrain from hasty accusations and to pause a moment for reflection.

How is it that tolerance can tolerate intolerance alongside of it? Apart from the authority of Scripture, the answer might be



located in the nature of tolerance itself. Given that human action receives its determination from the object (the end), it is necessary to inquire what is the subject matter wherein one employs the above-mentioned forbearance. While the answer is so easy that it seems almost banal, it is of decisive importance. One does not tolerate that which is a good, and of genuine value, but rather an evil—something burdensome and unbearable in itself.

To raise tolerance to the heights and to likewise authoritatively condemn intolerance (one might want to say intolerantly) presume the obliteration of the object. This is explainable, certainly, in the

current climate of subjectivism but unforgivable to anyone who wants to address the issue with an authentically critical spirit (and able to discern without anger or partiality). Norberto Bobbio offers an extraordinary intervention on the part of the laity (who may have much to teach certain men of the Church who might not remember or perhaps are ashamed of their own history and tradition) when he boldly states that “the reasons for tolerance do not exclude the fact that intolerance also has its reasons.”

Let us first examine the attitude, the *forma mentis* (mindset), of the tolerant man on the level of the individual. As we have seen, it is a matter of patience, and patience is “the virtue of the strong,” because it pertains to the cardinal virtue of fortitude. Being strong, morally speaking, does not mean abandoning the moral good (*bonum honestum*) because of a fear related to losing something in the context of the useful good (*bonum utile*). Among other things, it also preserves peace of mind before all types of regrets. A certain spiritual magnitude (magnanimity) is required, which does not mind the small matters of life that are more or less congenial. Man overcomes it only by waiting generously for some great and noble goal that he undertakes to fulfill in his life.

Not surprising then is the Pauline connection of patience and charity, if you agree that this end unites the soul to God—the supernatural final end of human life. Similarly, it is easy to get a glimpse of patience or “tolerance” in the soul as a certain indifference from more immediate wishes and likes—a certain “liberal” disposition of the soul (obviously in the moral sense of the word) that confers upon the man who possesses it an intangible but spiritually recognizable magnanimity and inner sublimity.

The tolerant man is not only free in himself, but also manages to surround himself with an atmosphere of freedom with his neighbor. He is ordered to benevolence because he possesses the meaning of the others’ freedom. Without it there is no respect, which is the condition and fulfillment of every good friendship.

What could be more beautiful than inner freedom—namely, freedom respecting the other person? It seems easy then: it is sufficient to be tolerant and that is it. However, as usually happens, even here the most obvious and easy way leads, if not to perdition, at least to deception.

In fact, the magnanimous man does not insist upon the trivialities that make up a major part of human events, though he does turn out to be unmovable on those few things that are of importance to him. For certain, the benevolent man respects his friend, but even more respects that greater good that, if shared, becomes a basis for friendship itself. Paradoxically, it could be said that intolerance respects any fundamental, basic condition and makes authentic tolerance truly possible with respect to various derivative and secondary realities.

This is most apparent if you pay attention to the very essence of freedom, which consists in the realm of one's own choices. To choose is in fact equivalent to having the means to the end, and it is precisely because he who chooses determinately wills an end that he is able to submit to the means that lead to his fulfillment. Something analogous occurs also in intelligence. The evidence of principles alone allows one to reach many conclusions. In both cases—those intellectual and those moral—so-called “open-mindedness” rests firmly on a decisive adherence to the true and the good.

On the contrary, “open” minds at the level of principles prove to be rather dull, petty, and quarrelsome in terms of practical consequences. Additionally, they establish a limit to freedom. The attempt to “liberate” man from God, as the French Enlightenment failed to do, does not necessarily guarantee that the above-mentioned liberty might not turn into “destructive fury.” It is not enough to proclaim that one's neighbor is to be respected; rather it requires making reason count and regulating moral norms. In fact, what can be said of the mean and tyrannical disposition (narcissistic infantilism) of the so-called “Libertines” from a

psychological point of view (assuming that you are not repulsed by the object of such studies)?

Freedom, properly understood, is situated in the realm of means and established in the adhesion to ends. It does not exclude but seeks and requires the obligation to improve oneself. “It is a happy necessity that compels us to what is better,” as Saint Augustine says. However, Leszek Kołakowski has both surmised and wished that the Church had abandoned “the traditional Augustinian concept of so-called ‘positive’ freedom,” and denies that it belongs to “the dogmatic body of the Church.” Rather, the roots of positive freedom are founded in the same divine Scriptures: “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed” (Rom 6:17).

The tolerance or forbearance of evil cannot be absolute, since evil has to be suffered sometimes, but at other times it must be tackled and gotten rid of. Excessive tolerance becomes permissiveness, such as when an exaggerated intolerance provides a means for tyranny. Both extremes are closer allied than is commonly thought. This sense gives support to V. Strada’s hypothesis, according to which the “total negation of self” (anarchy) and “the false positive sense of intolerance” (totalitarianism connected with the Marxist thesis of the “transformation of the world”) must be overcome, which expects neither to interpret nor to transform the world, but to rescue it.

This attempt at “rescuing,” however, neglects the fact that intolerance is “transformative,” i.e., revolutionary. Though, in this sense, far from being the practice of the good, intolerance is placed against the very nature of man and society, such that it is not intolerance as such. In this case, as always, it is a question of the object, as tolerance adjudicates by way of a sound discernment that which may or may not be tolerated. That this thesis is “interpretative” of the world becomes wrong only if it degenerates

into skepticism, such that it would have you falsely believe that there is an impartiality between opposites.

Indeed, more than opposition, it is a matter of a cause (anarchic liberalism) that produces an effect far more monstrous still (collectivist totalitarianism), which Plato himself knew already and exposed with admirable lucidity. The solution, which attempts to “rescue” the world and human nature, must not simply extend beyond but improve upon the alternatives of “tolerance/intolerance.” Such an endeavor will succeed only if one knows to relativize the latter combination. This is, however, something far from easy in the mindset which, forgetting the object, caters only to subjective attitudes.

In fact, tolerance is relativized only if it narrows the scope it deserves, namely, that of the subject. On the contrary, intolerance fulfills the laws and the requirements of the object (the objective good, as such, is not the same as the evil, but conscience can err or have difficulty discerning one from the other).

Indeed, once again we must look to the principle of human action: that it nevertheless pertains to a rational, deliberate, or free act that it can and must submit to certain finalistic orientations inscribed in human nature itself and likewise expressing moral norms. Again, it is exemplified in the relationship between the subject (free action) and the object (the moral good that is due). Therein lies the very essence of morality. In such a relationship, the object is (morally) due and therefore creates around itself the necessity of intolerance. On the contrary, the action which proceeds from the operating subject is (psychologically speaking) free, and creates around itself an atmosphere of tolerance, as has been stated.

So, in ethics freedom and obligation belong to each other. Similarly, tolerance places demands upon the subject. Worthwhile intolerance cannot be thrown off halfway by limitations placed upon the subject, which ought to be summoned imperatively by its laws. From this it seems that a perfect equality cannot exist

between the relativity of tolerance and that of intolerance. Indeed, the object is established as a measure and rule of the subject to which it is subordinated. Intolerance, provided it is trained to a good object, will in turn be good if further moderated by prudence.



Instead, tolerance presents itself on the side of a free subject, which is not realized properly. If man freely adheres to the good, it is absurd to speak of tolerance. This is evidenced with respect to the one whom, expressing his freedom, lacks the realization of the moral value due, so that “tolerance,” strictly speaking, is doubly relative. It is relative when it is confined to the sphere of subjective freedom, and it is relative in the genuinely urgent instance when freedom is not properly realized on moral grounds (it is not the virtuous, but, if anything, the sinner who is to be treated with “forbearance”).

TOLERANCE WITHIN CIVIL COEXISTENCE

Since every serious social ethic starts from the indisputable fact that the individual is the foundation of social life, it is necessary to examine the essence of tolerance, primarily in terms of the single

person as the subject of morality. This individual is neither a type of substance in his own right, nor a monstrous *automaton* whose dialectic passes over our heads and, if necessary, over our bodies.

This does not mean, however, that the first and privileged application of tolerance (or intolerance) occurs precisely at the level of complicated social relations. Not only does it occur between individuals themselves, but also and especially in the relationship between individuals and society. This delicate ordering of the individual citizen to the political multitude is neither due to chance nor to historical circumstances or contractual initiatives (think of Rousseau), but once again to nature. Man is by nature social; and this nature is immutable in itself, though by this we do not mean inert or inactive.

The foundation of the natural tendency to social life is twofold: one is related to concupiscible love (passionate love, in the good sense), which consists in the need to let ourselves help our fellow man (since left alone we have little chance to live decently, indeed even to survive in the most basic sense). The other one comes from the natural benevolence or friendship that every human being practices with his neighbor, except in pathological cases. Man delights in this kind of benevolence, when he does good for another. And with due discretion, he desires it spontaneously.

In this way, the union of many individuals becomes a society by virtue of an order moved towards a social end, which is a political friendship. It is a good shared by all, but it is also greater than all, because while all are together, society is not necessarily attributed to one in particular. Political friendship is of fundamental importance, as participation is to the advantage of each one. This is the well-known *bonum commune omnium* of Thomistic memory.

Since this good surpasses every individual, as is obvious, the individual is organically subjugated to it. This might seem to suggest a totalitarian view, insofar as the individual good serves the greater good of the society. Yet this is not the case, as the dimension of the moral good (*bonum honestum*) in the individual

is in fact the ultimate end, and not just a means with respect to society.

St. Thomas Aquinas likes to distinguish between two types of common good: one immanent, which is the communal peace intrinsic to the body politic; and the other, even higher and transcendent, which is the full, moral realization of man, the achievement of his own happiness and the ultimate goal of his life. We know of it as the social ethic (or social doctrine) of the Church, which rests on the twin principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. The first expresses precisely the subjugation of the individual to the common good, while the other expresses the respect due by the society to smaller entities, and, ultimately, to the individuals who live within it.

Here, too, it is easy to see how intolerance (adherence to the common good) and tolerance (respecting individuality), far from excluding each other, postulate and complement each other. It is evident that large communities rely upon a sizeable individuality, while great men find their connatural setting in a society ideally attracted to serving with loving dedication.

What is particularly interesting is precisely that good, delightfully pertaining to the *bonum commune omnium*, to which we assign the enigmatic term, “an ideally attractive society.” This pertains to an especially exquisite reality that great nations realized at fortunate moments in their history and is commonly called “culture.” The current inflation of this term is a sign of a bad omen, because only decadent cultures like to speak excessively of culture. By contrast, those who have it “in their blood,” so to speak, live it almost inadvertently.

Take even a superficial reading of Oswald Spengler. One may disagree with him on many points, but his profound insight regarding what he calls “the morphology of cultures” is undeniable. His understanding supports an important conclusion: culture does not exist where a people does not share in a spiritual, and ultimately

religious, heritage. It can disappoint the so-called secularists, but religions are the midwives and nurses of all cultural peoples. The religion must not simply be a natural religion but supernaturally revealed such as it is in Western culture, which is Christian to the “marrow of its bones.” Where it is no longer so, the culture tellingly loses its identity.

In these periods of “grace” in the life of a nation, it is superfluous and misleading to speak in terms of tolerance/intolerance. Everyone thinks in these categories, which is obviously of little intelligence, though the surprise is that everyone thinks so, spontaneously and without constraint. The nations of culture are therefore neither tolerant nor intolerant in themselves. If anything they respect those who are not their own, as has been very well highlighted by Lellia Cracco-Ruggini: “What mattered was the difference of culture. The barbarians who acquired Greco-Roman culture were considered, even by the more deeply rooted ‘barbarian-phobic,’ ‘Romans’ through and through.” Medieval Christianity is treated similarly regarding its views on intolerance. The critique is furthered by a more or less hidden bad faith, which is in bad taste and unfortunately widespread. In other words, to tolerate or “to bear” with those in the body politic who think otherwise is a typical requirement of an era that sees its culture (spontaneous adhesion to a common heritage of ideals) crumble little by little.

The individual/society relationship is first and foremost a matter of justice—that of law and obligation. Man is by nature subject to law. By virtue of his spiritual dimension, man arises from the surrounding world. He is not possessed, but instead possesses. At the same time, however, the individual, who is a ruler of particular things, is submissive, not to things, but to the common and global good of which he forms a part. This is expressed clearly in the fundamental right to private property, which St. Thomas Aquinas understands as a means to acquire and distribute. St. Thomas notes that the use of goods is for a common nature, certainly not in the sense that everyone uses everything indiscriminately, but in

the sense that the well-being of individuals must be ordered to that of the society.

Similarly, the individual enjoys within himself inalienable rights that the society cannot but approve. At the same time, he also has specific obligations in this respect. This means that every properly ordered society is composed of a system of freedom. So as to not equivocate over a rather compromised term with respect to the individual, the same is applied to institutions, which order the individual to the good of all. There is not much thought given to income or the like, because the common good, more than the national earnings, consists in a good of another kind and of another standard. This is the spiritual heritage before which the individual finds himself, and it shows to what he must avert. He must not squander with foolish contempt the clear obligation to administer wisely.

Tzvetan Todorov proposes a certain (and very fair) asymmetry between tolerance and intolerance, but unfortunately he uses Enlightenment terminology for freedom and equality, affirming the need to limit the first and to establish the second unconditionally. Rather, it is not freedom which needs to be limited but tolerance, inasmuch as freedom is sovereign and directed toward the good. Meanwhile, tolerance is the forbearance of evil, and it is clear that the domain of one's actions is in itself moderated by the final good end. If not, freedom is achieved psychologically but fails morally, and is no longer freedom in the fullest sense. By contrast, the forbearance of evil has precise limitations, dictated by political prudence, which are externally imposed.

Equality, therefore, is not as absolute a value as one would like it to be, or at least we need to clarify what we mean by equality. The only real equality is of a metaphysical or ethical kind, inasmuch as human nature does not permit variations of degree. There either *is* or there *isn't*, but there cannot be *more* or *less*. This fact expresses itself in equality before the law. But, positive law, if it is wise, knows



RUDOLF VON ALT - VIEW OF THE OLD TOWN SQUARE
WITH CHURCH IN PRAGUE

how to distinguish between different social situations within its order, because on the social level—and this is the great deception of the Enlightenment—equality is more an anti-value than a value. Indeed, it is said: extreme right may produce extreme wrong.

It is contrary to nature to expect everyone to be as equally strong, healthy, receptive, intelligent, and refined in taste. And, if imposed as a way of “realizing a utopia,” it begets violence, and what is more, unjust violence. Rather, at the social-political level it may be necessary to recognize the twofold link rising from the joint responsibility of the subject with the common good (the value of obligation and duty, based in lawful justice) and that which descends from subsidiarity, uniting the collective to the individual. This unity is, at the same time, to be respected and protected (the value of freedom and law, founded on distributive justice). Only when the two movements join together (as happens in times of cultural crisis) does intolerance enter the picture, since it beckons the individual to respect the common spiritual heritage and the tolerance proclaimed before institutions on behalf of private citizens who do not share in the unwanted burden anymore.

The transcendental values are, in themselves, immutable, yet the approach of men and nations to them is historical, such that each culture expresses temporally (and unfortunately also temporarily) a wonderful reflection of the objective and the eternal True, Good, and Beautiful. Without these Ideas (to use the language of the great Plato), souls and entire populations pass away, and devoid of true prophets they perish. They have laws which are opposed (opposing principles). It is needless to say that even if supported by the masses that are axiologically freed, they can never complain about such things. Indeed, the answer is not in the power to vote for referenda. Yet, attempts to do so are telling proofs that man has lost his sensibility.

How true and wise is the resounding and stern warning of the unforgettable Pope Pius XII, of happy memory, especially in light of recent events: “That which does not answer to the truth and to

moral norms has objectively no right, neither to existence, nor to propaganda, nor to activity.” If the error cannot be counted with the truth, tolerance can represent a lesser evil with respect to the social upheaval that might ensue. Though, under certain decisively upsetting historical conditions there could be the temptation to its absolute suppression. This is recognized, respectively, in Saint Augustine’s exclamation: “What can be said of vulgar harlots...? If you remove harlots from human affairs, you will throw everything into confusion because of lusts. If you make harlots become wives, you will dishonor the latter by stain and misbehavior.” To tolerate means to bear an evil in view of a greater practical good. Though it certainly does not mean exalting the evil so as to weigh it equally with the good, neither does it mean making of tolerance itself an absolute principle.

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Above all, it is fitting to accurately distinguish religion from faith. Both obligate man morally with respect to God, but on different levels. While the first belongs to human nature, the other is a supernatural gift, freely given. Both are commonly obligated (although in varying degrees, depending on the awareness more or less explicated by the revealed facts), because universally proposed to everyone by God in Christ, our Lord and Savior. A society which apostatizes from the faith loses a more sublime good. And, an irreligious or ungodly society loses a more fundamental good. Yet, apart from the proper distinction rests the fact that faith, precisely because it is supernatural, presumes and grabs hold of nature by its religious dimension, such that in our cultural context, to lose one means losing the other, and vice versa. One does well to be attentive: to whom much is given, much will be required. While a populace with simple religion can still find faith, a populace that loses its religion and its faith too is deprived of its very soul.

To give due worship to God and to revelation handed down and proclaimed, and to believe in the mysteries of God constitute clear

and objective obligations. But it is obviously an obligation of the moral order, such that these obligations compel one's acceptance subjectively—in freedom and with conviction. It is useless to try to do away with such an essential law of God through the invocation of the tiresome and repetitive antiphon of “changed times.” Changed then in what sense? Morally we are certainly not improved. Joseph Ratzinger once offered a clear and precise condemnation of those attempts to divide the history of the Church into fictional pre- and post-conciliar periods.

In this light (which every Christian believer supernaturally perceives with the *sensus fidei*), it is shocking to talk about “change” in the Church with regard to basic issues such as revelation and of doctrinal errors, invoking no less an authority than Pope John XXIII, of happy memory, as does Giuseppe Alberigo, citing a passage from the inaugural speech of the Second Vatican Council. One recognizes in the text that the sadly missed Pontiff, while hoping for pastoral formulae, not only does not abolish that doctrine—and how could he—but also explicitly demands the adaptation of the formulae. Though he renounces condemnations he does so not because they are no longer valid but for the reason of their excess, given the doctrinal maturity of Christians (so that what changes is not the doctrine, but the historical circumstances in which it is announced. Although, on the latter point, the optimism of John XXIII was “cruelly disappointed” in the words of Joseph Ratzinger).

The same is true of Leszek Kołakowski's call to reinterpret the principle “*Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*” (outside the Church there is no salvation). In fact, when this principle was still being dogmatically elaborated and fixed, St. Thomas was already familiar with the expression “God does not restrict his mercy to the sacraments.” The obligation to honor God and submit to His word does not change with the passage of time, and it is not from history. Rather, it is from the essence of moral norms that one can and should expect a just solution to the problem.

We have already seen that the culture of a people is ever full of references to concepts decidedly religious. So it was for Christian Europe wherein the faith gave life to entire peoples who recognized themselves as brothers and sisters in Christ, forming amongst themselves an authentic *res publica christiana* (Christian polity). Heresies subvert both faith and culture and are at the same time disruptive (just think of the iconoclastic fury displayed by various sects from impoverished classes), though they are not able to ruin religious and institutional unity as such. A decisive change, such as a collapse of the aforementioned spiritual cohesion, happened right at the time of the Reformation, where most movements were more or less frantic and whole nations turned away from Catholic unity. Then and only then did one aspect of intolerance emerge, which was the attempt to give the society one or another religious orientation. At the same time we witnessed the progress of tolerance wherein a considerable minority could neither be converted nor subjugated, merely “bared with.” It is Adriano Prosperi who deserves the credit for bringing this state of affairs to light.

Similar circumstances still persist. While apostasy has claimed an increasing number of casualties and has become more monstrous, and while the vast spiritual desert has increased dramatically, it is useful to note again with Norberto Bobbio that if tolerance has a rationale, so does intolerance. Undoubtedly, institutions of the State must educate citizens in virtue. This also entails a certain incentive to remain faithful to the religious principles inherited from our fathers. *Gaudium et Spes* teaches unabashedly of the necessity to incorporate the law of Christ into the institutions of the State, which was eloquently reiterated by Pope John Paul II in his recent address at Loreto.

The distinction between the natural and the supernatural order rightly demands that religion (and faith) respects the autonomy of political life, as the latter pertains to the natural moral order.

However, the consequence of humanity's fall because of original sin also permits societal life to be inspired by the principles of revealed religion, which alone is capable of bestowing upon individuals and society the medicine of healing grace.

What about those who want neither to believe in God nor to praise Him? They are first and foremost invited to correct themselves. Then, if, given the iniquity of time, they cannot manage to do so, they are to be tolerated, but not praised. They are to be respected simply as persons who honestly seek the truth, but not as if they have already found it. This gives a context for the requirement for charity according to the Thomistic doctrine which holds that we are to love our neighbor for God's sake, or because he is already in God, or if unfortunately he is not yet, he will be as soon as possible by a free choice, mature and confident.

As for tolerance elevated to an absolute principle and boasted as pluralism and broadmindedness, it is easy to see, based upon experience, how it leads to indifferentism, relativism, and ultimately, to immorality, since morality and integrity are in fact a whole. To be good one needs to be whole. To be evil is fine enough within a "pluralism" of values fabricated *ad hoc* according to one's own convenience. As it is said, an action is good when good in every respect; it is wrong when wrong in any respect. Such an absolute tolerance, where it is possible, should be amended. If it is unfortunately realized, it is best tolerated, but tolerated truly as one of the gravest evils that can befall a people rich in tradition and culture.

Translated by Cassian Derbes, O.P.

Cassian Derbes entered the Order of Preachers in 2009.

PRAYER FOR BEATIFICATION OF SERVANT OF GOD TOMÁŠ TÝN

Eternal Father, abounding in mercy, you sent your Word into the world to lead it from darkness to the light; we thank you for the gifts that you have granted to your Servant Tomáš Týn. Deign, we beseech you, to raise him to the honours of the altars, so that the exemplary witness that he has given us as a worthy son of our Holy Father Dominic and the Blessed Virgin Mary may be a spur to the many in following Christ, and through his intercession grant us the grace that we ask you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ...Amen. Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be...

WITH ECCLESIASTICAL APPROVAL

ENDNOTES

Fr. Týn's essay was originally published in Italian as "In Memory of Father Tomáš Týn, OP: His Collaboration in the Journal 'Immartedì,'" pp. 9–14. It was a paper presented at a conference on "Intolerance: Similarities and Divergences within History" held in Bologna, Italy, from December 12–14, 1985. It is translated here with the permission of Fr. Giovanni Cavacoli, O.P., former postulator of Fr. Týn's cause.

EX NIHILO

ORIGINAL PROSE AND POETRY

MISSING DEPARTURE

John Dominic Bouck, O.P.

Where *is* he? Circling the airport for what seemed like the hundredth time, Connor Gould was losing his patience. As he passed by the arrivals gate once again, he wasn't sure whether he should be angry or worried. "Why can't anything be simple with him?" Still not seeing his brother Arnold, he decided to enter the parking ramp and go inside to take a look for himself.

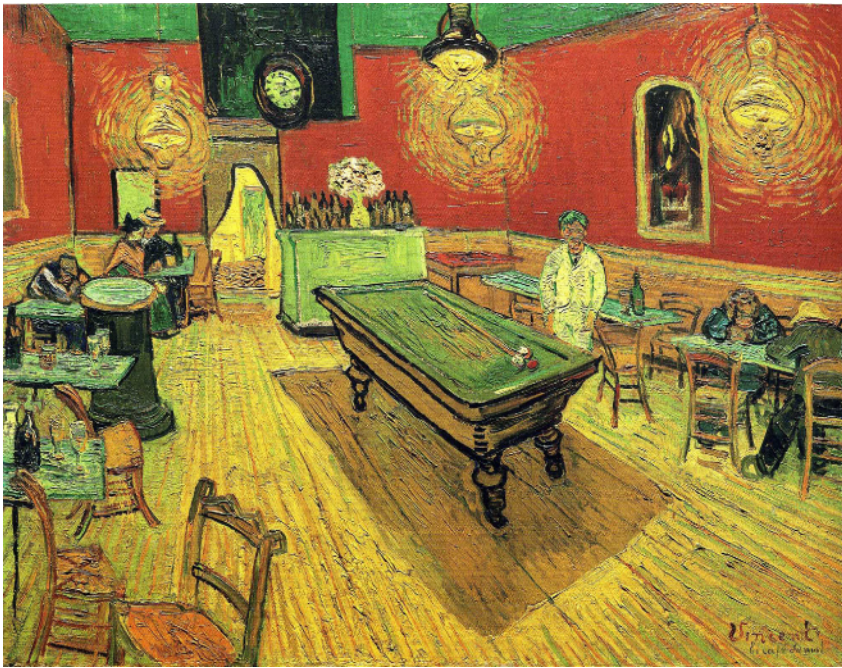
"Chicago... Delta 1632... On Time... 4:13pm... it's been on the ground for over an hour, where is he?" Connor made his way to the desk attendant.

"How may I help you?" she recited.

"Could you please tell me if Arnold Gould was on that last flight from Chicago?"

"Umm... the passenger log says that he had a reservation and checked in, but never boarded... Sorry."

Connor pulled out his cell phone and called his brother. "*Beep... Hey this is Arnold, sorry I can't speak to you right now because it just got a lot harder to get a hold of me. Please don't be angry with me. I wish things could have gone differently. See you later.*" Connor pulled the phone away from his face and looked at it with disbelief. "That's not his normal message. What's going on?"



VINCENT VAN GOGH - THE NIGHT CAFE

As Connor headed towards the door, he noticed a lone black briefcase on the now-stationary baggage carousel. It looked like a briefcase that he had bought for Arnold a few years ago for Christmas. He went over and picked it up and saw a tag on the handle with the name “Arnold Gould” on it. “I hope that he’s all right,” Connor thought. He nervously took it and opened it on a bench nearby. The only item in the briefcase was a single sheet of poorly torn-out notebook paper.

Dear Connor,

Relax man, I’m ok. This probably seems really weird for you right now, but I am not coming to L.A. to visit you. I know I should have called you but I got nervous, and writing’s easier than talking. I really appreciate that you bought me this ticket, but to tell you

the truth, I was going to visit you in L.A. to have a good time, and then ask you if I could stay with you longer and look for a job, but by that I mean use your money (you have plenty you know) and then live my usual life of using and being used. I know that sounds harsh, but it's not because I want to use you; it's just that I have some problems in me. Anyway, I came up with this crazy plan to give you a note. I met this guy last night at the bar. I'm usually not much for just talking to random middle-aged men at bars, but we made some small talk, and something happened inside of me, it's hard to explain, and I basically told him my life story and then cried. I don't think I've cried since junior high. It was horribly embarrassing, but I felt so free. I know it sounds weird, but you just have to believe me that a good thing happened inside me. It turns out that this guy I met is pretty rich and he arranged for me to get into a rehab center. It was strange. I don't like people feeling sorry for me, or just giving me handouts, but he seemed to actually feel what I was feeling. I think he may even have been crying a little bit (I know it seems weird). I will let you know when I get out. I hope you are doing well and I'll see you someday, I hope soon.

Peace,
Arnie

Connor set the page down in disbelief and sat down on the bench, exhausted by this recent turn of events, muttering under his breath in confusion. "Where is he? Who is this guy? He's my brother and I've told him a hundred times to go to rehab, and he never listened to me. I've never taken a handout in my life... I just don't get it..."

John Dominic Bouck entered the Order of Preachers in 2012.

ENCULTURED CHRISTIANITY

Athanasius Murphy, O.P.

It's a medicinal discipline to which no one is listening
We self-limit our freedom all bounded without even thinking
About the reason for the way that we're living
And concede to the preaching of this high secular vision
That denies the existence of the encultured Christian.

All enfettered by the message of an atheist perspective
That'd be bettered more by its measured use of reason than rhetoric
That denies and relies on words drawn with false lines
And its half-hearted phrases that make the faithful seem skeptic.

But that's not truth let's correct this message.
Turning to the verses of a rhythmic protreptic.
Shattered from the patterns of my personal reality
And scattered laterally from selfish formalities.
Without limit yet embattered in a parting of purpose
From the truth that speaks truly and the more modern currents.

When compared to the totality of this humanity
That stands grounded by grace in the peace of Christianity
Which teaches mankind of the God-man's plan
That touches our lives as our horizons expand
For the heart contrives but seen with no eyes
The gift God's made for those who are saved
By His sacrifice that pays for the sins that we spin
And they all wonder why Christ underwent the cross
That all might gain grace from His glorious loss
So cry to arrive and abide with the one
Who made us all alive in the blood of His Son.

Athanasius Murphy entered the Order of Preachers in 2010.

FRIARS' BOOKSHELF



PIETRO DELLA VECCHIA - ST. DOMINIC AND THE DEVIL

NEGATING THE NEGATIVE

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK TO ST. THOMAS

Slavoj Žižek, *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*. New York: Verso, 2012.

Slavoj Žižek is something of a sensation. Known as the “the Elvis of cultural theory,” this Slovenian philosopher is adored and abhorred by the political right and left. *Less than Nothing*, which he describes as his “true life’s work,” is something of a culmination of his thought up to this point. In the book one finds everything that makes Žižek so interesting, for good or ill. Refreshing politically incorrect positions: “OK, enough of this muddle about neo-colonialism, the responsibility of the West, and

so on—do you want to do something to really help the millions suffering in Africa, or do you just want to use them to score points in your ideologico-political struggle?” Paradoxical yet significant statements: “The first gesture of a genuine materialism is not to deny the divine, but, on the contrary, to deny that there is such a thing as ‘mere (animal) life.’” Unabashed overstatement: “The whole art of Thomas Aquinas culminates in a form of sophistry designed to reconcile the literal meaning of the Bible with the demands of a hierarchical society.” And inappropriately violent rhetoric: “Crazy, tasteless even, as it may sound, the problem with Hitler was that *he was ‘not violent enough,’* his violence was not ‘essential’ enough.” What you will unfortunately not find in this book is an editor. The work reads as if Žižek kept a tape recorder around him while reading aloud various books on a whole tapestry of topics: Christianity, Communism, Marxism, quantum physics, cognitive science, political theory, sexology, psychiatry, “and so on and so on.”

But as longwinded and unnecessary as much of the book is, there is a theme and guiding principle: the dialectic of Hegel as fundamental to reality. This is the reference of the title, Hegel’s notion of “the negation of negation” as a positive return of an original position in a new way. And Žižek does, for the most part, make this dialectic intelligible through interpretations of two important thinkers: G. W. F. Hegel (1770—1831) and Jacques Lacan (1901—1981).

THESIS – FOR HEGEL AND LACAN

Although separated by time, nationality, and discipline, Žižek shows that both Hegel and Lacan develop their ideas through the dialectic, that three-part system of thesis—antithesis—synthesis illuminated by Hegel himself. With Hegel we learn about the dialectic; with Lacan we learn how to use it in our lives.

Žižek spends much of this work, in good didactic style, teaching and giving examples of what Hegel’s dialectic is all about.

According to a standard school yarn, Hegel's dialectic is about a compromise of two opposing views: the combination of a thesis and an antithesis brings about synthesis. Žižek calls this the "synthesis of opposites" view and opposes it to a correct reading of Hegel:

When, in Hegel's dialectics, we have a couple of opposites, their unity is not a Third, an underlying medium, but *one of the two*: a genus is its own species, or, a genus ultimately has only one species. (144)

In simpler terms: first there is a position (something), then it is negated by its opposite (nothing), then this negation is itself negated, reinstating the position in a different way (less than nothing as something, but differently).

An example makes this clear(er): For Žižek, Hegel is "the ultimate Christian philosopher" precisely because Christianity to Hegel is this negation of a negation. It is the dialectical synthesis of the Jews and the Gentiles. According to him, before Christ, God was known as a transcendent Lawgiver, who created and ruled the world as the Supreme Being (the position of the ancient Israelites). This form of theism can be submitted to negation, to an antithesis: there is no transcendent being, there is no God: atheism (the pagans). Until Christ's coming these two options were in eternal strife with one another: the Jews and the Gentiles. But Christ brings about their true synthesis through Hegel's "speculative Good Friday": God must declare himself dead in order to be re-experienced as the Holy Spirit. Jesus' death on the cross, for Hegel, is this self-declaration of God's death; it allows for the Spirit to go beyond the theism-atheism duality, for God to be re-inscribed into history *as something different*.

The monstrosity of Christ, this contingent singularity interceding between God and man, is proof that the Holy Ghost is not the big Other surviving as the spirit of the



MIKHAIL NESTEROV - THE PHILOSOPHERS

community after the death of the substantial God, but a collective link of love without any support in the big Other. (232)

If Hegel denies the God outside of us in order to make room for the coming of the Spirit, Jacques Lacan denies the God in us, the unconscious, in order to make room for the Subject. The dialectic goes like this. The basic position of psychology is of a stable self: we are in control of our thoughts and desires (thesis). Then Freud showed that our egos are anything but stable. Rather, they are

in constant tension with our *superego* (the moralistic norms we inherit) and our *id* (the pleasure-principles we are born with). Our thoughts and actions are the various victories of these two entities of our unconscious (antithesis). Finally, Lacan makes the properly Hegelian move of affirming this negation by going beyond it in a negation of the negation; he believes in the unconscious, not as external forces from nature or nurture, but as a fundamental split *in the subject himself* (Lacan's symbol for this is \$). Unlike Freud, Lacan makes the split between conscious and unconscious desires *internal* to the subject, not subject (*ego* in Freud) versus unconscious, but subject that *is* unconscious *and* conscious.

This is why the Lacanian 'decentered subject' does not imply the kind of de-centering usually associated with psychoanalysis: 'there is something in me more than myself, some foreign power which runs the show, so that I am not responsible for my acts...' If anything, Lacan insists on the subject's total responsibility: I am responsible even for acts and decisions of which I am not aware. (551)

Here we find the Hegelian third as a negation of the negation: a return to the absolute responsibility of the subject/self by means of the immanentization of the unconscious. The eternal strife between consciousness and unconsciousness is dialectized in Lacan's \$.

ANTITHESIS – AGAINST HEGEL AND LACAN

This is fine and good and interesting ... but what of the truth? Are Hegel and Lacan compatible with Catholicism, or even Christianity? The answer seems to be a resounding "No," any attempt at recognition a ruinous project undertaken only by those already atheist at least in their unconscious thought.

Take Hegel for instance. He champions Christianity as the "absolute religion," and his theory of crucifixion is intriguing, but

what about the resurrection? Did not St. Paul say that if Christ was not raised, then our faith is in vain, that we are to be counted as the most pitiable of men (cf. 1 Cor 15:13-19)? Hegel's Trinitarian thought leaves the Second Person in the grave to make way for the Third; yet one of the mysteries of our faith is that "Christ will come again," not to mention his current reign as the resurrected, living King. In short, the negation of the Father by the Son cannot be merely a negation. Hegel's thought appears to fall into some form of modernist modalism.

And Lacan? His notion of God as the big Other, the unconscious symbolic authority behind our immediate desires, may explain some neurotic religious practice and morality; but is it true that there is no "big Other" outside of us at all? This new formula of atheism is impossible for a Christian to accept or believe.

SYNTHESIS – BEYOND HEGEL AND LACAN TO ST. THOMAS

One of the definitions of *aggiornamento* is "to update." And this updating process is by no means new; in fact, St. Thomas is a good example of how exactly it should work. One part of his genius was to take previous knowledge and develop it through an infusion of the truths of the Catholic faith. His synthesis of Aristotle and the Catholic faith is a perfect example: St. Thomas took up the impressive metaphysical thought of Aristotle, removed what was irreconcilable with the faith, and purified what was left. While Thomism is not the only way of doing theology, it is not without reason that the Church refers to St. Thomas as the *doctor communis*, the Common Doctor. In a similar way, perhaps both Hegel and Lacan can be "updated" with the thought of St. Thomas, bringing out what is beneficial and true in their thought.

Hegel's "speculative Friday" is not necessarily a denial of God *per se*, but a denial of a god, a god that shows up frequently in the polemics of atheists. This is a god who is a mere inflation of one's own understanding, a god after one's own image. In the *Prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae* St. Thomas insists that God is not

a finite being like us, but is *ipse esse per se subsistens*: subsisting being itself. God is not an entity that can be categorized or collected under some classificatory system; he is the very act of being itself, a verb, so to say, who is the source of all nouns. God is not a thing among others, no matter how superior or special; he is wholly Other. Hegel's notion of crucifixion admits as much: his speculation on the cross is aimed at putting this idea of a finite god to eternal rest. But Hegel must be updated; the death of this god does not herald atheism but the presence of the real God, the one Christians call Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is we who are made towards his image, not the other way around. Hegel's insight into Christianity's absolute truth remains correct: only Christianity, with its notion of a God beyond our limited imaginations, avoids idolatry.

Lacan too, although with more difficulty, can be of help with his notion of the split subject (\$). St. Thomas's *Prima secundae* revolutionized Christian ethics by including as principles of human morality the Beatitudes as well as the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Human morality is not a law-following endeavor, whether the laws come from external (Freud) or internal (modern subjectivist ethics) sources. The moral life of one person living virtuously is the work of two: the human person and the Holy Spirit. By the grace of God working through the Spirit in one's life, the Christian does the things that he cannot do by himself. Lacan's \$ provides a model of this interpersonal psychology even though he denies its specifically Christian content.

Hegel and Lacan, and perhaps even Žižek, are not necessarily our intellectual enemies, but merely modern partners searching for Truth and in need of correction and assistance. Happily, St. Thomas, the Common Doctor, is also the *Dottore di aggiornamento*, the Updating Doctor. He continues to provide salubrious wisdom to all those lost in their own finite thoughts.

Bonaventure Chapman entered the Order of Preachers in 2010.

MICROPUBLISHING AND MONASTICISM

Dom Guy Marie Oury, *Light & Strength: Mother Cécile Bruyère, First Abbess of Sainte-Cécile of Solesmes*, tr. M. Cristina Borges. Hulbert: Abbey Editions, 2012.

The progress of technology often takes the curious form of retrograde motion: as advances are made in certain areas, technology paradoxically regresses in other respects. In the transition from manuscripts to printed books, for instance, the reduction of time needed to produce each individual volume caused an accompanying decline in the practice of the exquisite art of calligraphy and manuscript illumination. In the domain of liturgical books, it was not until the nineteenth century that printed Gregorian chant notation attained the elegance that had been achieved in the time before the printing press—indeed, it is likely that this is the reason why chant manuscripts continued to be produced by hand for several centuries after printed books had superseded manuscripts in most other domains. A similar apparent decline in the quality of book production occurred in many circles after the development of computer typesetting systems in the twentieth century, with the elegant type-setting of earlier decades at times giving way to blocky and unpolished information dumps.

In more recent years, the development of the Kindle and other ebook devices has brought a regression to 1990s-era Internet formatting conventions; at a moment when HTML5 has made logging into Gmail a sort of swashbuckling adventure in elegance, the Kindle has led its book developers to relearn their basic coding skills. In each of these cases, the advances made by each development seem to justify the accompanying frustrations, which are in turn lessened as the technology continues to develop—and

yet it is disconcerting to think how easily we are led to tolerate infelicities that would have grievously offended our sensibilities before the latest development made them necessary.

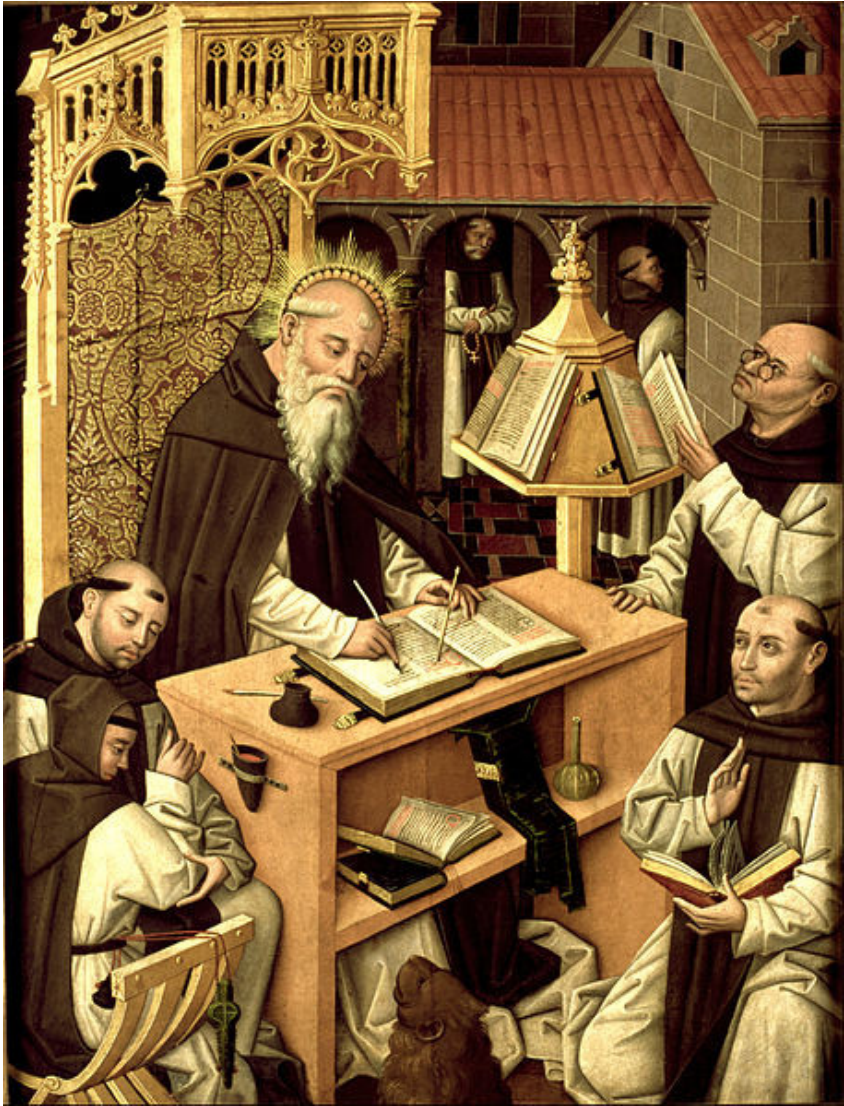
One recent development which has brought a sort of retrograde motion in both a positive and a negative sense is that of print-on-demand book publishing. Thanks to the development of Internet-based printing presses such as Lulu.com and CreateSpace, it is now possible to make books available that are individually printed and bound when they are purchased by a customer, allowing individuals or institutions to publish books without an initial expenditure of printing costs. The development of what has been called “micropublishing” has made it possible to acquire physical copies of books that, under previous production models, may have quickly gone out of print or might never have been produced except by means of a vanity press. At the same time, this development has flooded the online market with both cheap facsimiles of older books and poorly edited or ineptly typeset newer volumes. The reader, at times, might be faced with the situation not unlike that of a medieval reader trying to determine whether a particular manuscript is a reliable example of a particular text.

Amidst this orthographical distress, it may perhaps be comforting to learn that the Benedictines, the great copiers of manuscripts in the Middle Ages, editors of texts in the Enlightenment, and typesetters of plainchant in the Romantic period, have now begun to contribute to the great task of taming the wilderness of on-demand printing. Abbey Editions, the imprint of Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey in Hulbert, Oklahoma, has entered the domain of on-demand printing with *Light & Strength* (2012), an English translation of Dom Guy Marie Oury’s life of Mother Cécile Bruyère (1845–1909). This volume, translated by M. Cristina Borges, with the assistance of the nuns of the Monastery of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Westfield, Vermont, recounts the life of the foundress of the women’s Benedictine Monastery

of Sainte-Cécile of Solesmes, the sister-monastery to the famous male Benedictine monastery at Solesmes founded by Dom Prosper Guéranger.

Through a fortunate series of events, the young Jenny Bruyère had the opportunity to receive instruction for her First Communion from the famous abbot. In time, Guéranger became her spiritual director and eventually her formator as she embraced a vocation to monastic life and a charism to found a new monastery for Benedictine nuns. Brought up in an environment remarkably free from the prudishness common at the time, Bruyère was, from a young age, able to appreciate the full meaning of the vow of virginity, which she felt attracted to profess in imitation of Saint Cecilia, whose name she took at confirmation and later at religious profession. Enraptured by the liturgy of the Church and the splendor of the musical tradition that was then developing at Solesmes, Mother Bruyère was able to articulate her profound understanding of liturgical prayer in *The Spiritual Life and Prayer According to Holy Scripture and Monastic Tradition*. This book first appeared in French in 1886 and was translated into English, German, Spanish, Italian, and Dutch in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In addition to her apostolate of spiritual writing, Bruyère also guided her monastic community through the difficult years following the death of Dom Guéranger in 1875. During this period, Mother Bruyère helped the men's monastery of Saint Pierre at Solesmes through the crisis of persecution at the hands of the secular government in the early 1880s, notably by making the chapel of the women's abbey available for performance of the Office in alternation between the monks and nuns during the times when the monks were unable to celebrate the liturgy in their own church. The influence of Mother Bruyère upon the monks of Solesmes led in turn to persecution by disgruntled former monks of Solesmes in the 1890s who accused Bruyère of being a sort of guru. This in turn



MASTER OF PARRAL - ST. JEROME IN THE SCRIPTORIUM

led to Bruyère and Abbot Delatte of Solesmes being temporarily suspended from their offices until the accusations were proved to be unfounded. Finally, due to further secularist persecutions (now

of both male and female religious in France), Bruyère led the nuns of her community into exile in England in 1901 where she died on the Isle of Wight in 1909.

Unlike many of the micropublished books now available, *Light & Strength* is competently typeset and well edited. The English edition includes helpful annotations by the translator which give further details about the various figures of 19th century French ecclesiastical and secular life who would otherwise be a mere litany of names to an English-speaking reader. The life and writings of Mother Cécile Bruyère deserve to be better known, and we may well hope that this new translation of her life will incite further interest in Bruyère and the Benedictines of Solesmes. Further, one hopes that just as the Benedictines of old passed down the heritage of the Patristic Church and paved the way for the re-articulation of the classical heritage by the scholastics of the 13th century, so too this publication will serve as a model for other religious in presenting aspects of their patrimony in the contemporary form of micropublishing. In the Order of Preachers, for instance, there are encouraging steps already being taken by imprints such as the New Priory Press of the Province of St. Albert the Great in Chicago and DNS Publications of the Dominican Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary in Summit, NJ. In 2012, DNS Publications published a translation of Blessed Raymond of Capua's *The Life of Saint Agnes of Montepulciano* by Sr. Mary Martin Jacobs, O.P., and in 2013 the New Priory Press published an English translation of Giacinto D'Urso's *Catherine of Siena: Doctor of the Church*, translated by Fr. Thomas McDermott, O.P.

In micropublished books, it is essential to devote time and careful attention to editing and type-setting so that the seriousness of the content may shine through undiminished by an unprofessional appearance or careless typographical errors that so often plague micropublishing projects which exploit the ease of contemporary printing technology. In all of these respects, Clear Creek

Monastery's new edition of *Light & Strength* can serve as a model for anyone striving to take advantage of contemporary technology to spread the Gospel and the charisms entrusted to their institutes by the Holy Spirit.

Innocent Smith entered the Order of Preachers in 2008.

IF YOU BUILD IT, WILL THEY STAY?

Michael White and Tom Corcoran, *Rebuilt*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2013.

Realizing the need to bring back the lost sheep, Fr. Michael White and his pastoral associate Tom Corcoran sought to transform a parish in the suburbs of Baltimore. *Rebuilt* depicts this journey and proposes a model to be adapted by other parishes to address their own particular needs. While it seems that their efforts at Nativity Catholic Church in Timonium have been extremely successful, they very honestly acknowledge their mistakes and seek to present their failings as opportunities from which other pastors can learn and then improve.

A review of this book is quite challenging. Truly, they have made a noble effort with much good as a result, and there is much to learn from their advice about hiring and firing, conducting group meetings, using a cooperative approach in ministry, and creating a welcoming atmosphere. In fact, almost all of their practical HR advice is quite useful and transferable to other parishes. At the same time, it is very hard to gauge the long term success of their model. Will Nativity turn into a Catholic version of the Protestant mega-churches that simply fizzle out a few years after they open their doors? Hopefully not. To proceed, it seems that the most helpful way to review their model will be to look at two of their principles and evaluate the presentation on a more fundamental level.

A PRINCIPLE FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

There is a classical Thomistic principle which relates to evangelization—whatever is received is received according to the mode of the receiver (cf. *ST* Ia, q. 84, a. 1). In other words, it is important to meet persons where they are because their “mode” or current place in life is going to be the lens through which they see everything. And thus, the message needs to be tailored to meet the needs of the audience.

White and Corcoran hit this nail right on the head. They recognize that they need to seek those who have fallen away and meet them where they are (93). They seem to pinpoint this locus of encounter as the marketplace. These people are lost in a world of consumerism where they expect to have their needs catered to (2). They expect to get the product they pay for. But like any wise consumer, they are only going to buy in after they have cross-referenced the *Consumer Reports* of “Churchworld” (37). On so many occasions, they gave church a bad review in the past, and yet, this church seems to present itself as something new. They then ask themselves, “So what is the new product that *this* church is offering?”

Having seen that this was the perspective of so many people, White and Corcoran began there. They met the consumer, whom they dub “Timonium Tim,” and tried to sell the product of “church” to him (72). They created an “irresistible environment” where they could market themselves to Tim and try to draw him in through things like adequate parking, a welcoming environment, and liturgical music with which he and his family could connect (113). Overall, this approach to meeting the lost where they are and trying to assist the transformation of their lives seems to be good guidance for many pastors.

Yet, as White and Corcoran admit, they ended up losing another type of consumer—Nativity Nancy, the churchlady who had been going to Nativity for ages and expected things to go the way they



JOHN SINGER SARGENT - LEAVING CHURCH,
CAMPO SAN CANSIANO, VENICE

had always gone (62). When Nativity changed modes and began catering to the lost, the churchpeople, who were already there, left. Granted, White and Corcoran admit that they are still trying to find the balance between “meeting the legitimate needs of our congregation and pandering to consumers,” yet they unfortunately seem to downplay the great importance of this (274). What about meeting Nativity Nancy where she is and trying to draw her along too? After all, they describe the reason for the book as being a strategy to help both Timonium Tim and Nativity Nancy: “By looking beyond the people in the pews to the people who are not there, creating a path to help them get there, and leading both parishioners and newcomers to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ, you can rebuild the culture of your parish and make church matter” (xviii). While White and Corcoran cover the first two parts of that thesis very well, they almost entirely skip over discussing how to lead current parishioners to grow as disciples.

THE DEPICTION OF DISCIPLESHIP

This leads to the second principle worth drawing out—discipleship. White and Corcoran present the disciple in two lights, namely as a student and as a leader. They present a number of ways that the disciple can become a good leader (243–252). Most of these ways are good for those who have already come on board and have begun to operate as the manufacturer’s coworkers. Yet, even for the person who has bought the product and fallen in love with it, simple experience is not enough to keep up sales in the long run. He needs to know the product’s specs and to have a sense of what is happening in the company on a larger scale. This necessitates training. The same is true with regard to any sort of work or ministry. Training is required, and this is where White and Corcoran skimp on details. In other words, their training manual to help the parishioners is fairly empty.

This becomes clear when it is put into the context of one of the other principles of evangelization—the evangelist needs to meet the Lord before he can share Him with others. Before he becomes a leader, he should become a student. As St. Thomas Aquinas put it, the evangelist needs to contemplate before he can share the fruits of that contemplation (see *ST* IIa-IIae, q. 188, art. 7). In modern lingo, this translates as “you can’t give what you don’t have.” If the employee has to train himself, he is probably going to make a ton of mistakes and possibly break some of the machinery in the process. Likewise, the disciple who does not sit at the feet of the Lord likely will end up preaching himself and his own experience rather than Jesus Christ and His grace. Thus, if there is no training manual and no clear explanation of what it means to be a student, the explanations of the leader will be hazy, like trying to see through a thick fog. While this hopefully will not lead to problems down the road at Nativity, it does seem to be a major oversight on the part of White and Corcoran, especially if it

is their intention to present *Rebuilt* as a guide for helping pastors minister to both Timonium Tim and Nativity Nancy.

CONCLUSION

Rebuilt has much to offer. White and Corcoran give fantastic advice on how to bring back Timonium Tim. Moreover, their practical principles for running a parish can be used with little adaptation. Yet, they lack an explanation of how to help Nativity Nancy. As they admit, they have yet to figure out how to balance seeking the lost and serving the faithful. Unfortunately, this likewise leads to the lack of an explanation of how to help Timonium Tim once he has come back to the faith. Nevertheless, rebuilding means starting somewhere, and in the interests of the New Evangelization this book offers such a start, even if it is in need of some principled re-tooling along the way.

Peter Martyr Yungwirth entered the Order of Preachers in 2007.

FAITH AND FAMILY

Mary Eberstadt, *How the West Really Lost God*. West Conshohocken: Templeton Press, 2013.

Mary Eberstadt is a social commentator, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. She has authored *Adam and Eve after the Pill* and *Home-Along America*, and her most recent work is *How the West Really Lost God: A New Theory of Secularization*. In it she notes that in Plato's *Republic* it is opined that an ideal society would see the family dissolved in favor of having children be raised by the state. The impartial, rational state could ensure that the best citizens possible would be raised up by providing only the best education and training. In our modern society it might be argued that we are edging closer to Plato's ideal. We are witnessing the voluntary abandonment of the natural family by the culture at large, while the state certainly seems to be growing more and more comfortable taking upon itself duties that have traditionally been the prerogative of the family. As a challenge to the common assumption that this decline of the family is a result of the decline of Christianity, Eberstadt asks whether the cultural trend might instead be having an adverse effect on Christianity. She argues that it does, and if her argument obtains, this change is obviously one aspect of the ambient culture that the Church must not accommodate.

The heart of Eberstadt's book is beautifully illustrated in a couple of passages from another recent release which also touches on the relationship between faith and the family. In the encyclical *Lumen Fidei* Pope Francis writes: "In the family, faith accompanies

every age of life, beginning with childhood: children learn to trust in the love of their parents. This is why it is so important that within their families parents encourage shared expressions of faith which can help children gradually to mature in their own faith.” Further on, the Holy Father says: “Absorbed and deepened in the family, faith becomes a light capable of illuminating all our relationships in society. As an experience of the mercy of God the Father, it sets us on the path of brotherhood.” We see here how closely connected are Christianity and the family. The family is the soil in which faith takes root and flowers, and faith likewise illumines the relationships within the family and throughout society. The Church, a constant and staunch promoter and defender of the family, has long understood the family’s importance both for society and for the propagation of the faith. Eberstadt has articulated this important link between Christianity and the natural family in the form of an intriguing new social theory. She characterizes faith and family as being the “double helix” upon which Western society is based. They are “two spirals that when linked to one another can effectively reproduce, but whose strength and momentum depend on one another” (22).

The opening premise of *How the West Really Lost God* is that there is something lacking in current theories of Western secularization. Eberstadt sets out to discover the “missing piece of the puzzle” in the explanation of why Christianity has lost much of its influence in the West. She finds it in what she terms the “Family Factor.” After first explaining why no current theory of secularization is completely satisfactory, she examines the evidence for this hitherto unnoticed connection (at least in the world of social theory) between faith and the family. Using demographic records and sociological studies ranging from late 18th-century France to present-day Ireland, she makes the case that family size and form, rather than being simply the results of religious belief, can also be “conduits” to it. In other words the natural family can be a catalyst to people’s attending church. Children, she says, seem



WILLIAM CONGDON - NATIVITÀ

to “drive” their parents to the practice of religion. If this is true, argues Eberstadt, then we should revisit the common theories explaining why faith and the family are in the state that they are in today. In short, she says that the decline of the family “is not merely a consequence of religious decline” but rather “family decline in turn helps to power religious decline” (5-6). In Chapter 7 and in the Epilogue, Eberstadt offers a few reasons why this might be so. She claims that contrary to the assumption of some (notably

Nietzsche), Christian belief is not often an “atomistic decision” made by individuals. Rather, faith seems to involve a natural and “holistic response to what is evidently a profound desire to tether family life to something transcendent” (214). Furthermore, the tenets of Christianity are often expressed through the language of the family and familial relationships. God, for example, relates to the human person as “Father.” If someone grows up without a loving father in the home, it seems that he would be at a disadvantage in coming to understand this language describing God as Father.

Once Eberstadt finishes building her case for the “Family Factor,” she turns an eye in the last couple of chapters to the future of our society and discusses whether or not there is any hope of recovery for faith and the family. Then in the Conclusion, she puts forward a case for why anyone should be concerned about this future at all and argues that both of the institutions at stake are important for society. She cites such apologetic evidence as donations to charity, health, and longevity, in defense of Christianity. Regarding the natural family, she says that, contrary to the insistence of such theorists as Friedrich Engels and Sigmund Freud, it is integral to a healthy society. To support this assertion, she draws from research on the development of children in various living arrangements showing that they are better off in stable families where there is a married mother and father.

Although Eberstadt cites an array of sociologists in support of her work, the amount of data she actually presents and her particular use of it are perhaps too light for *How the West Really Lost God* to be taken seriously by many of the experts in sociology. I say this because in the book itself she anticipates and readily admits that her work could be vulnerable to the critique that “correlation does not prove causation” (105). In other words, she expects that some will complain that just because she can show that the family and Christianity have declined concomitantly she has not necessarily proven that familial decline causes religious decline or

vice versa. The reasoning described above, though, is compelling enough to give serious consideration to Eberstadt's interpretation of the data. Furthermore, her claim that the "Family Factor" is one of several factors that explains secularization is more mild than revolutionary. She does not wish to deny that other theories of secularization are valid and helpful, nor does she absolutely deny the common account that family decline is due to religious decline. Interestingly she even explains how the "Family Factor" might fit in with some of the other theories.

The retired Resurrectionist priest who taught my high school Latin class once commented that the family was the seedbed of vocations. He said that it is in the family that children learn how to make sacrifices, and that, where there is no willingness to sacrifice, there will be a dearth in vocations. He was speaking of priestly and religious vocations, but the same holds true of the vocation to marriage as well. Where the family dissolves, the upcoming generation will be ill-prepared for any vocation, and society and religion will dissolve right along with it. Eberstadt's book contributes to getting this bit of common sense into the sophisticated realm of social theory.

Joachim Kenney entered the Order of Preachers in 2010.

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Natività, 1960

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CLOISTER CHRONICLE

COMMUNITY

On August 10, nine brothers made solemn profession: Br. Boniface Endorf, Br. Innocent Smith, Br. Cassian Derbes, Br. Charles Shonk, Br. Vincent Ferrer Bagan, Br. Cajetan Cuddy, Br. Clement Dickie, Br. Philip Neri Reese, and Br. John Baptist Hoang.

The formal installation of the Very Rev. John A. Langlois, O.P., S.T.D., as the new President of the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception (PFIC) and of the Rev. Thomas Petri, O.P., S.T.D., as the new Vice-President and Academic Dean of the PFIC took place during a Mass at the Dominican House of Studies priory chapel on Friday, September 6. The principal celebrant of the Mass was the Archbishop of Washington, D.C., Donald Cardinal Wuerl. Fr. Langlois returns to the PFIC, where he earned his M.Div., S.T.B., and S.T.L., and was Assistant Professor of Church History and Pastoral Studies. Most recently, he was Socius to the Provincial. Fr. Petri also earned his S.T.L. from the PFIC. Prior to his appointment as Vice-President and Academic Dean, he was an Assistant Professor in the Theology Department at Providence College.

On September 7, Br. Cassian Derbes and Br. Cajetan Cuddy were ordained to the diaconate. The ordination was celebrated at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception by the Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout, auxiliary bishop of Washington, D.C.

PREACHING

This past summer, the Thomistic Institute at the Dominican House of Studies hosted a week-long symposium on Dominicans and the Renewal of Thomism. Over 100 friars participated from around the world, representing over twenty provinces. Frs. Serge-Thomas Bonino O.P., Paul Murray O.P., and Gilles Emery, O.P. were among the presenters.

On August 14, Dominicana launched its *To The Heights* video series on the Dominicana Blog. In these short videos the student brothers seek to show how the faith offers compelling answers to life's essential questions, with the series's progression based upon the structure of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

On October 31, the Vigil of All Saints, Dominicana Records made available for purchase its first album *In Medio Ecclesiae* (In the Midst of the Church): *Music for the New Evangelization*. This album features sacred music tracks of chant, polyphony, and hymnody performed by the Schola Cantorum of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

On November 11, the Very Rev. Romanus Cessario, O.P., was formally installed as a Master of Sacred Theology, a title that confers the Order's highest academic honors.



DOMINICAN STUDENTATE (2013-14)