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ARGUMENT

For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and preserving the way of his saints.

—Wisdom 2:6-8

On Christmas Day 1886, in no less a church than the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, while a choir of children sang the Magnificat during Vespers, the French poet-statesman Paul Claudel—by then a convinced atheist—came to believe in God. He writes,

In an instant my heart was touched, and I believed. I believed with such force of adhesion, with the assent of my entire being, with a conviction so powerful, with a certitude which left no room for any doubt, that, since then, all the books, all the arguments, all the coincidences of a restless life, could not shake my faith—nor, truly, could they even touch it. (*Contacts et circonstances*, 1940)

Grace struck Claudel. In that instance God moved his mind to intellectually believe and his heart to assent that God exists. The poetry of Paul Verlaine, Charles Baudelaire, and most of all Arthur Rimbaud helped Claudel to see beyond the constricting materialism of his age. The transcendence of Romanticism led

Claudel to embrace the conviction that providence and love order the universe, imbuing the world with meaning beyond that which is quantifiable or empirically sensible.

The challenge presented by reductionistic, scientific materialism continues, more than a century after Claudel's moment of conversion, in our own age. To speak convincingly to an audience at best apathetic about—at worst hostile toward—the ancient and everlasting truths about the heart and destiny of man demands a certain artistic sensibility, an intellectual agility and spiritual authenticity. The contributions of these pages present an ample sampling of all three, fortified by the dynamism of the lived experience of the authors' own religious lives.

Evangeliization is done on one's knees! ... Let us cultivate the contemplative dimension, even amid the whirlwind of more urgent and pressing duties." The Holy Father, Pope Francis, continues, "And the more the mission calls you to go out to the margins of existence, let your heart be the more closely united with Christ's heart, full of mercy and love." These words, addressed to seminarians, novices, and young people discerning religious vocations, continue to echo, as Pope Francis has inaugurated 2015, *the Year of Consecrated Life*. Beginning with the first Sunday of Advent, the Church will consider with particular attention the breadth and the depth of what consecrated life means.

This present issue therefore attends to the topic of consecrated life. Read the debate about the necessity of religious life between Brs. Philip Neri Reese, O.P., and Louis Bertrand Lemoine, O.P., and see how consecrated life belongs at the very heart of the Church's life and holiness. Delve into a fine specimen of seventeenth-century French preaching by reading the homily preached on the occasion of a religious profession by Fr. Charles-René Billuart, O.P., translated by Br. John Sica, O.P. Finally, enjoy the thoughtful consideration of consecrated life presented in an interview by Br.

Jacob Bertrand Janzcyk, O.P., with Archbishop Anthony Fisher, O.P., archbishop of Sydney, Australia.

In keeping with the tradition of this publication, we aim to compose pieces that will be of interest to all men and women of faith, but particularly those of Dominican sympathies. Marked as the Order of Preachers is by our charism of study, it is our fervent hope that this issue will impart a modicum of the fruit of these labors. May the words herein raise hearts and minds to the One, the True, and the Good, and contribute to the salvation of souls.

Br. Patrick Mary Briscoe, O.P.
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ESSAYS

RELIGIOUS ATHEISM AND THE BEAUTIFUL

Bonaventure Chapman, O.P.

Math, anyone? I will keep it simple. Say you have a coin and you flip it twice. How many different outcomes are possible? Answer: four, of course. Heads-Heads, Heads-Tails, Tails-Heads, Tails-Tails. Why do people think math is so difficult? Who knows. In any event, and probably to your great relief, this essay is not about math, or coins either. It is about religion—the Christian religion in particular.

It seems that a helpful way of dividing Western attitudes toward Christianity today is along the lines of our coin toss example, this time with heads representing true and tails false. Now image two coin flips. First, Is Christianity True? Two outcomes are possible. Second, Is Christianity Good? Again, two outcomes are possible. If we combine the two questions, we have four fundamental attitudes towards Christianity

THE FUNDAMENTAL FOUR

First, the traditional (and Christian!) attitude is that Christianity is **both true and good**. The claims Christianity makes (God exists, he is Triune, Jesus Christ is God and man, he died and rose again, through his redemption we have eternal life, etc.) are historically, philosophically and, inasmuch as they can be, scientifically true.

These claims are also good; they are a source of moral growth, comfort, and peace amid a world of sin, corruption, and chaos.

Second, a more recent phenomenon has been to say that Christianity is **neither true nor good**. From this perspective, Christianity's claims are not in any sense, other than a vaguely mythical one, true; and Christian morality is far from recommendable. Thanks to the *evangelizing* work of Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and the late Christopher Hitchens, this sort of attitude is common now in bookstores and college campuses. For them, Christianity is a tribal way of living and thinking, sorely in need of scientific updating in both doctrines and morals. One wonders whether the *evangelical zeal* necessary to sustain this atheistic view is possible for the masses, especially since it promises a world full of meaninglessness and incoherence on a cosmic scale. But perhaps Gnosticism is what these evangelists are really after; too many times refused entrance into the "cool club" growing up, now there is chance for cliquish revenge. But I digress, since this essay will not deal at all with this attitude.

The third option seems very rare: Christianity is **true but not good**. The group closest to espousing this would be some version of hyper-Calvinism (I know whereof I speak...). For such a Calvinist, God is the utterly supreme and sovereign commander of all being, and his predetermining decrees span all space and time. So far, so Thomist, but the Calvinist goes a step further and admits that even sin, or at least the decree of eternal reprobation, is within God's sole control: God predestines some for eternal glory, and he predestines others for eternal damnation. He is the cause of their damnation, creating some (most?) of humanity as the infernal black canvas upon which he paints the dazzling white mercy and justice of his elect. Vessels of eternal wrath: this doctrine Calvin rightly called the "dreadful decree (*Decretum horrible*).” It is hard work to show that such a theology is *good*, even if you think you can show it to be logically and philosophically *true*. Happily, those with this attitude are a chosen few and do not pose much of a threat to the traditional Western attitude.

Have you been keeping track? There is only one possibility left: Christianity is **good but not true**. This, I think, is the newest and most threatening modern Western attitude to Christianity. Now you may be asking: How new? And how threatening?

THE NEW(ER) RELIGIOUS ATHEISM

As to newness, is not this good-but-not-true attitude just that of the Enlightenment that sought (and still, in places, seeks) to rob Christianity of its dogmas but to keep its moral precepts or principles? Is not this the common form of liberal Protestantism that Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar, to name two theological giants of the twentieth century, consistently railed against? How is this different than the “Jesus as moral teacher” view of many Americans today? The difference is not one of origin; I think it can be shown to come from the Enlightenment view, although I will not develop that genealogy here. The difference lies in content: the Enlightenment view still believes in the truth of Christianity; it just waters it down so much that this truth is so thin as to be useless. The Enlightenment view believes in the truth of Christianity inasmuch as this amounts to a truth of Deism or pantheism or whatever-theism. It is half-true and half-good, barely-true and barely-good. We have here a paring down of truth, not an outright denial of it.

The attitude I want to address is more radical: it is atheistic to the core, *but* it still believes in transcendent goodness, in something beyond the microscope or the biology lab. It believes firmly, and with a conviction described by its adherents as faith, in truth with a capital T. For these persons, in moral matters there is always a right answer; but this answer is not grounded in God nor is it a subjective expression of personal preference. It is objectively the *right* answer. Such a perspective is new.

And it is threatening. This view has all the benefits of the scientific, naturalist one, but without the disappointing and morally unbelievable side effects. It offers a way of thinking morally about the world that does not involve God or Christ, but does not lead

to some form of nihilism or new Stoicism. It claims to secure the goodness of Christianity without the apparent baggage of dogma, something neither of the other two non-traditional attitudes could manage.

This view has a history. Perhaps its first proponent is Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. If it were to remain the avocation of postmodern French philosophers like Alain Badiou and Quentin Meillassoux it would garner as much attention as the hyper-Calvinist attitude. But it is becoming more mainstream, especially as presented in the work of two university professors in America: Roberto Mangabeira Unger and the late Ronald Dworkin. Unger's latest book is called *The Religion of the Future*. Dworkin's small *Religion without God* was published after his death in 2013. Both advocate the good-but-not-true attitude, although in different ways. Both present a vision of religion that I think will have more influence in the twenty-first century than the scientific "screedal" view. Both also allow for a new kind of witness, one I will sketch out with the assistance of a painting by Andrew Wyeth. This witness is the revelation of beauty.

UNGER'S PROFANE CHRISTIANITY

Everything in our existence points beyond itself. We must nevertheless die. We cannot grasp the ground of being. Our desires are insatiable. Our lives fail adequately to express our natures; our circumstances regularly subject us to belittlement. Religion has been both an attempt to interpret the meaning of these irreparable flaws in the human condition and a way of dealing with them. It has told us that everything is ultimately all right. However, everything is not all right.¹

Thus opens Roberto Unger's new book, *The Religion of the Future*. Well, perhaps not a book. What does one call a 456 page document *with no footnotes*? Manifesto? Essay? Poem?

Long-winded rant? All of the above, but under one large banner: *existential prophetism*. As he says: "The gates of prophecy are never closed (196)." This phrase marks the turning point in the work. Chapters proceeding it chronicle past efforts of religion to deal with the fundamental defects of the human condition: mortality, groundlessness, insatiability, and belittlement. In the second half Unger offers a prophetic vision of any future religion. But what are the religions of the past?

THE RELIGIOUS STANCES

According to Unger, religion is the perennial response to the four fundamental defects of life. He categorizes three basic religious responses to them. The first is called "Overcoming the world." This religious stance emphasizes world-transcendence: "It must treat history as a nightmare from which we seek to awake rather than as the stage of our salvation" (78). It is the stance that ignores the fundamental defects of life by denying significance to this life: one must overcome the world by escaping it in transcendent experience and hope. The second stance is labeled "Humanizing the world." Instead of avoiding the world's terrors and life's defects by escape, one embraces them: "We can step back from the edge of the abyss and build a human realm sufficing to itself. In this realm, human beings create meaning, albeit in a meaningless world" (91). Both of these fundamental stances are inadequate to the task of living though; overcoming denies life and humanizing denies the spiritual dimension of humanity. This leads to a third stance, called "Struggling with the world."

The central idea here is "that there is a path of ascent, requiring and enabling us to undergo a transformation of both society and the self, and rewarding us with an incomparable good." What is this incomparable good? "A greater share in the attributes of the divine...or a greater life, with higher powers, making us more godlike" (121). Struggling comes in two forms: sacred and profane. The sacred is that of the Abrahamic faiths, but

Christianity in particular, due to its doctrines of the Incarnation and Redemption. How is struggling different from overcoming and humanizing? Struggling embraces the three human defects and aims to conquer the fourth. Struggling, especially its Christian form, accepts mortality (the death of Jesus), groundlessness (the importance of faith), and insatiability (the desire to be godlike) and has a plan for solving belittlement, namely, becoming godlike through the theological virtues.

STRUGGLING WITH THE WORLD IN TWO MODES

The aim is godlikeness. This is not the traditional liberal Protestant form of religion, which Unger castigates correctly as “a halfway house between belief and unbelief” (261). Still, the religion of the future is not Christianity. Even the sacred version of struggling, Unger thinks, must be transcended in the profane version, for Christianity has marred itself in the world and its defects through political institutions and Greek philosophy. The believer of the future must replace “the idea of our radical dependence on God with a view of our divinization, according to which we can become at once more human and more godlike without mistaking ourselves for God” (287). Unger seeks the liberation *of* the world, not redemption *from* the world.

How is one liberated from belittlement? The cardinal and theological virtues, Unger says. The first he labels virtues of connection: respect, forbearance, fairness. He then adds the virtues of purification, virtues which “had no place in the philosophical and religious traditions that preceded the revolutionary emergence of the higher religions” (378). These virtues are based in the idea of kenosis, taken from patristic theologians, meaning “an emptying out, undertaken for the sake of a raising up of our faculties of resistance and reception, valued as a heightening of life” (379). Virtues of purification are simplicity, enthusiasm, and attentiveness. Finally he offers the virtues of divinization, our theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. “Among the world

religions, they have no secure place, other than in the Christian conception” (382). He offers a summary of these virtues:

Openness to the other person is the equivalent of charity. Openness to the new is the equivalent of hope. Acceptance of the vulnerability required by the always inadequately justified commitment of life to a particular direction is the equivalent of faith. (383)

These virtues provide the key to the religion of the future. What Christianity got right was the development of these virtues; where it went wrong was in the stress on God, as opposed to a stress on humanity. The religion of the future, this profane struggle with the world, should

make us more willing to unprotect ourselves for the sake of bigness and of love. It should convince us to exchange serenity for searching... Then, so long as we live, we shall have a greater life, and draw farther away from the idols but closer to one another, and be deathless, temporarily. (444)

DWORKIN'S DEEPER RELIGION

The theme of this book is that religion is deeper than God. Religion is a deep, distinct, and comprehensive worldview: it holds that inherent, objective value permeates everything, that the universe and its creatures are awe-inspiring, that human life has purpose and the universe order.²

The late Ronald Dworkin was one of America's most pre-eminent legal scholars and political philosophers. His final book, *Religion without God*, was published posthumously and is largely his text from his Einstein lectures given in 2011. This short work is something of an application of the theory he developed in his magnum opus, *Justice for Hedgehogs*. In that work he argued

for two connected theses: the unity of value and the independence of morality. “Morality stands or falls on its own credentials. Moral principle can be neither vindicated nor impeached except through its own connivance.”³ He makes the unfashionable claim that morality and value can neither be reduced to some more fundamental account of biology or physics, nor fretted away by a insipid relativism. There are objective moral values and moral truth, like it or not! In *Justice for Hedgehogs*, Dworkin already pointed to the religious implications of this objectivity: “We need not rely on our own religion, leaving those other faiths behind, when we argue for the innate rights of all human beings. We can argue not from what divides us but from what unites us. We all—Muslim, Jew, or Christian, atheist or zealot—face the same inescapable challenge of a life to lead, death to face, and dignity to redeem.”⁴ *Religion without God* develops this religious position, one he calls “religious atheism.”

DWORKIN’S RELIGIOUS ATHEISM

The phrase “religious atheism” requires explanation. “The religious attitude accepts the full, independent reality of value. It accepts the objective truth of two central judgments about value” (10). The first is the objective value and meaning of human life. The second is that nature, “the universe as a whole and in all its parts,” is something beyond mere fact. It is sublime, “something of intrinsic value and wonder” (10). These two judgments are, of course, the same two that Immanuel Kant made famous at the end of his *Critique of Practical Reason*: “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*.”⁵

Since religious atheism “rejects all forms of naturalism” (13), the ideas of Dawkins and his followers are out. But what about non-atheistic religion? Dworkin admits that there are many ideas of god: the pagan gods, the “Sistine God” of Abrahamic faiths,

the “bookmark God” of deistic Enlightenment faith, and even the impersonal god of pantheism, ancient and new. All of these may have arguments for or against their god, but these mean not a whit for value and morality. Why not? Because for Dworkin that puts questions of science in the place of questions of value, and the independence of value strictly prohibits just such a reduction. “The science part of conventional religion cannot ground the value part because—to put it briefly at first—these are conceptually independent. Human life cannot have any kind of meaning or value just because a loving god exists” (25–26). For Dworkin, the question of God’s existence is a question for speculative science (not far from St. Thomas here), and reasons can be given for or against. Crucially, however, the result of this speculative reasoning has *nothing to do with morality*. Morality is an objective realm of values that cannot be affected by any fact of the matter, whether that fact is a physio-chemical one or a theological one. “What divides godly and godless religion—the science of godless religion—is not as important as the faith in value that unites them” (29).

SCIENCE AND BEAUTY

Dworkin develops his religious atheist position through a discussion of cosmological aesthetics. He argues for the intrinsic beauty of the universe through a discussion of mathematical simplicity and symmetry used in the selection of physical theories. Beauty is an indication of truth. “Whether a theory is beautiful seems a very different question from whether it is true. But what is the alternative? Shall we say that, on the contrary, the beauty of a true scientific hypothesis is only a coincidence” (52)? But is there any ultimate reason for the universe as it is? Dworkin finds a negative answer unacceptable: “If the universe just is whatever way it is, for no reason, then it would make no sense to presume that it is beautiful or awe-inspiring. It could then be beautiful, if at all, only by coincidence” (81). This is because “the scientific presumption

that the universe is finally fully comprehensible is also the religious conviction that it shines with real beauty” (104).

LIVING WELL AND RELIGIOUS ATHEISM: BEYOND THEOLOGY

In the final two sections of the book Dworkin turns to the second of Kant’s causes for wonder: the moral law within. What does it mean to live well? Is there such a thing as objective human morality? In *Justice for Hedgehogs* Dworkin argued that the question of objective morality is inescapable: any position on morality is a moral position. Morality cannot be reduced to something else. It stands on its own credentials and judgment—this is the independence of value thesis. The question of what it is to live well always follows upon the more fundamental point that there is a way to live well, an objective way to act in accord with moral truth. This assumption of moral truth is “as much available to an atheist as to a theist. Provided, that is, that the atheist is a religious atheist” (155). He concludes:

That is the crucial point. What matters most fundamentally to the drive to live well is the conviction that there is, independently and objectively a right way to life...it is not available to a naturalist who things that reality consists only of matter and mind.... In this most fundamental respect religious theists and religious atheists are at one. The existence or nonexistence of a god does not figure in the instinct of value that unites them. What divides them is science: they disagree about the best explanation of the truths of matter and mind, but it by no means follows that they disagree about the further truths of value. (155-156)

THE RELIGIOUS ATHEISM OF UNGER AND DWORKIN

Religion, and Christianity in at least Unger’s work, is *good but not true*. According to these two thinkers one can (and perhaps

should?) be a religious atheist, one who believes in objective morality and virtuous living but does not accept the idea of God that is traditionally used to support this moral objectivity. Both recognize that faith and conviction are essential to the moral life, yet both deny the validity of scientific naturalism. Religion is essential to making life worth living, but God is not essential or necessary for religion.

How should one respond to this vision of reality which I suspect will become more and more prevalent once the naturalistic forms of atheism are left behind? One could give a Thomistic response starting from the natural virtue of religion, showing that much of what Unger and Dworkin are arguing for is perfectly correct with respect to the virtue of natural justice—it just needs further metaphysical grounding. Alternatively, one could use John Calvin's notion of the *sensus divinitatis*, a natural sense of the divine, and its source in the workings of the Holy Spirit. Or one could even use Kant to argue for the necessity of God, not in speculative reason but in practical reason, in order to provide the ground of duty to the moral law that Dworkin takes from Kant's second *Critique*. All of these—and others—are perfectly acceptable and worthy avenues of attack. I will take a different one, following the lead of the Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar.

BALTHASAR'S PRINCIPLE: BEAUTY FIRST!

Hans Urs von Balthasar grappled with truth and goodness. He saw modernity as turning against both notions, especially in regard to Christianity. To combat this rejection he offered a new strategy: *start with beauty, and then work back to goodness and truth.*

Most people dare not make strong affirmations about the ultimate nature of the world's essence [truth] or about the ultimate justice of human actions [goodness]. But all those who have been once affected inwardly by the worldly beauty

of either nature, or of a person's life, or of art, will surely not insist that they have no genuine idea of what beauty is. The beautiful brings with it a self-evidence that en-lightens without mediation.⁶

Balthasar agreed with Dostoevsky's idea that beauty would save the world, especially in modernity. People who close themselves off to Christian truth and goodness may yet be open to Christian beauty. And because Balthasar believed that beauty was convertible with goodness and truth, beauty once secured can provide reason for the other two. I think this "beauty first" strategy goes a long way in answering the challenge of a religious atheism. To show how this works concretely I offer an interpretation of a painting from one of America's greatest artists, Andrew Wyeth.

ANDREW WYETH'S *OFF AT SEA*

Wyeth was a virtuoso, known especially for his work in tempera, a medium that requires extreme patience and technical skill. His works are breathtaking, as anyone knows who has been in the presence of his most famous works such as *Christina's World* or *Wind from the Sea*. The detail is incredible, but it is more than precise painting that makes Wyeth the artistic genius he is: this accolade comes from his ability to express aesthetic and moral truth *through* the painted medium. His works express the transcendent truth of the world in the immanent frame of everyday life. This makes Andrew Wyeth, following the intuition of Balthasar, an antidote to the religious atheism of Unger and Dworkin. Let us gaze and reflect upon one of his masterpieces: *Off at Sea* (1972).

Off at Sea is a haunting image. Its hues, shapes, emotions...it is truly a work of beauty because one is transfixed in its presence. The painting is not something to be known, nor something to be acted on, but something to be experienced, something to rest in

as it arrests one's gaze. In this piece one finds the presence of the true, the good, and the beautiful united and interwoven on one extremely detailed canvas.



OFF AT SEA, 1972 TEMPERA © ANDREW WYETH

Off at Sea is beautiful: the colors, shading, proportion, harmony, and shadows. But these are merely elements in an insufficient explanation of the painting's beauty. It draws one in, forcing thought to go out and forcing one to stand fixed on the dazzling white present throughout. There is an intuitive grasp of beauty here, described by Balthasar as bringing its own self-evidence. This is not merely a beautiful work—it is a moral one too.

Off at Sea is good. The painting itself tells a moral story. The stark white colors evoke a primordial purity and goodness. The simplicity of the scene intones innocence, yet the clouds beyond the window threaten with a sense of foreboding: all is not well, but goodness remains in the forefront. The light falling on the bench offers warmth and friendliness while the dangling hanger speaks of loss or absence. This is a picture of good and evil in the everydayness of Wyeth's world, a good holding evil at bay while recognizing its power. It is a moral work, one that tells a sophisticated story of goodness and infuses something of that goodness in the viewer. But this goodness is not just beautiful in its whitewashed ebullience. This is a picture of truth.

Off at Sea is about truth. Finding the true is about finding the essence of a thing. And this search was something Wyeth reveled in. Many of his paintings began their lives with a person included, frequently a member of the Olson family with whom he lived and painted. But Wyeth sought to get to the things themselves, in true phenomenological style, removing the people from his paintings when he could convey the truth of them without them. *Off at Sea* is a perfect example: it originally included a boy sitting on the left end of the vestry bench, but upon a later visit to the paintings environs he noticed a coat hanger and was able to convey the sense of presence through its metallic curves better than through the human figure. He removed the boy and we are left with a geometrical masterpiece—the truth of figures and angles and lines. In some ways the beauty and goodness depend on the mathematical precision and photo-realistic detail of the work. Everything in it is as real as can be: the grain of the wood, shadows of the bench, light falling on the seat, and the shine of the silver hanger. The truth of the vestry is proclaimed in this painting, but not as would a photograph with its mechanical reproduction. Rather it is true but more than true. It has that distinctively human and transcendent truth about it.

Off at Sea offers an experience of the unity of beauty, goodness, and truth. It is true in its beauty and goodness, good through its

truth and beauty, and beautiful as true and good. Wyeth's work can teach the religious atheist (as well as ourselves!) that something truly good must also be beautiful and true, that it is not necessary nor even desirable to separate goodness from truth. The traditional stance of Christianity as both true and good is reaffirmed through unity with or in the beautiful.

THE PRESENT ABSENCE OF THE PERSONAL

A second revelation from *Off at Sea* is the simultaneous absence and presence of the personal, the absent presence of an Other. On a superficial level the painting has nothing human about it: it is an empty room with a window open to the sky. But this is a naïve interpretation; sustained reflection finds this painting saturated with personal presence. First it is not a natural landscape that is depicted but a human, all too human setting: a bench in the vestry of a small country church. The floor, walls, window, and white bench itself all point to human works of calloused hand and sweat-worn brow. We are looking at a human world, even if no humans are presently present. Second, of course, is the coat hanger. Dangling at head level, it is the reminder of a recent presence and a promise of a return. The absence of a person is proclaimed as temporary. We are catching a short strip of time where the going and coming of people are registered. But will he return? The title is a euphemism. *Off at Sea* refers beyond the temporary absence of a fishing trip, a day at the beach, a holiday after holy worship. It is a New England phrase meaning "Lost at Sea." The dangling hanger may remain unused—our eyes shift from it to the ominous clouds and a thought dawns on us: he will not return. The painting is now marked with remembrance, white becomes absence of color and feeling as the emotion enters the viewer. The geometry of the bench becomes the desiccated bones of a wayfarer lost to us. But the person is not absolutely absent. In a third moment the white becomes the haunting of a ghost; he remains.

This absent presence of the personal, the haunting of the painting by a ghost, is an apt description for our religious atheism. Upon initial reflection it seems that the world, scientific and moral, remain devoid of Another who stands above and beyond it. But as we attune ourselves to the beautiful we find that the absence of God is not an absolute absence, a negation or privation, but a hidden transcendence. The truth and goodness of the world are permeated by the still, small, beautiful presence of Another, one who may seem far away but is actually hinted at, pointed to, hauntingly present, all around us. This is true of the painting as well, not just in its subject matter, but also in its composition. This can only be an Andrew Wyeth painting, a unique creation of his aesthetic genius, and knowing him and his story is as important for understanding the painting as any merely technical artistic knowledge. It is impossible to escape the personal in looking at *Off at Sea*: the absent presence of the man at sea stands before us while the ghost of Andrew Wyeth stands behind us, offering silent hints and suggestions about the meaning of the painting and of the world.

RETURN OF RELIGION AND GOD

The new attitude to God found in religious atheism, as exemplified in Roberto Unger and Ronald Dworkin, is not as threatening as we first thought. It merely presents a new horizon for Christianity, a new moment in this secular age's attempt to escape its loving Father. Perhaps it is even a maturing of the infantile atheism offered by the scientific naturalism perspective: it looks at the world and finds moral truth, objective value, and goodness. But it still misses the ground of this goodness, the truth structuring and ordering such a morality. Yet because it is open to beauty, open to the transcendent, it remains open to Another, to a presence that is all the more present in being absent, at least from a certain perspective and for a certain time. Even here *Off at Sea* offers an answer, or at least a thought. As the painting ages the boy

seated on the left, painted over, becomes more visible, a shadow darkening under the lonely coat hanger. The piece becomes a palimpsest, a painted parable for the future of religion: the return of God. The religion of the future remains the religion of the past, because it is the religion of the eternal present.

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ENDNOTES

1. Unger, R., *The Religion of the Future* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 1. All page numbers in the text of this section refer to this work.
2. Dworkin, R., *Religion without God* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 1. Unless otherwise noted, all page references in this section refer to this work.
3. Dworkin, R., *Justice for Hedgehogs* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 79.
4. *Ibid.*, 344.
5. Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. M. Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy*, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 269.
6. Balthasar, H. U. v., *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, trans. E. Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 37.

THE FREEDOM OF GLORY AND THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH

Innocent Smith, O.P.

*Then the priest and the others return to their own affairs.
The priest returning to his own place is Christ, who, having
finished His mission, ascended to the Father in glory; the
faithful, too, will return and will be freed from the exile of their
imprisonment and be carried off into the freedom of glory.*

—William Durand, Rationale IV.59

The difference between a book and a person, according to Plato, is that a book can only offer one answer, no matter what question is asked of it. On the other hand, a book has this advantage: it can keep on offering that same answer, even centuries after its more versatile counterpart is no more. Ever since the invention of writing, books (whether preserved on skin, paper, or screen) have allowed the insights of individuals to be conveyed to countless generations that have succeeded their authors—provided, that is, that individuals in each succeeding generation have taken the bother to reproduce or preserve the book in question. It is staggering to realize the effort that has been expended simply in passing down the answers preserved in the books of previous generations, from the monastic scriptoria of the Middle Ages to the printing presses of modern times and down to the critical editions, scholarly translations, and popular printings of the present day. We are grateful to have the opportunity to encounter these books which pass on the answers of their authors, particularly because our new context and questions shed light on and are illuminated by the single answers that their authors committed to writing.

In considering the history of a particular book, it is striking to notice the individual life cycles of individual books. One volume

might have created something of a stir in its author's lifetime and yet be entirely forgotten today—at times with good reason. (I once had a job of cataloging rare books at a university with a preoccupation for Irish studies, and had to trawl through dozens of editions of the 1796 bestseller *The Children of the Abbey*). Other books have lain dormant in the Big Chief tablets of their authors, only to bound to glory after their creators could appreciate the fruits of their future fame. Some books have remained unappreciated by the many due to the relative obscurity of their original languages; others have leapt forth upon the world's stage, translating themselves into all the languages devised at Babel. Whatever the circumstances of their origins, books that have managed to be passed down through the centuries are like objects of destiny, plotting their influence upon the world with careful consideration—or at times reckless abandon.

Sometimes a book can make a reappearance after a long sojourn in obscurity. This can happen due to a variety of circumstances: a determined effort by an industrious editor, a calculated wager of an enterprising publisher, or a welling desire on the part of the book purchasing populace. For a long dormant book to make a reappearance, at least two of these conditions are usually necessary.

In this context, it is interesting to note the nearly simultaneous appearance of modern English translations of two of the most seminal treatises on the medieval liturgy. In December 2013, Brepols Press published an English translation of the section on the Mass from the thirteenth-century *Rationale divinatorum officiorum* of William Durand (c. 1230–1296), and in October 2014, Harvard University Press published a Latin-English edition of the ninth-century *Liber officialis* of Amalar of Metz (d. c. 852). Each of these texts was immensely popular in its own day, and yet neither book has hitherto been able to reclaim the level of influence and attention it enjoyed at its inception. Now, perhaps, that will begin to change. For each of these new productions we can thank industrious editors and enterprising publishers; only time will

tell if the book purchasing populace will commit to restoring the books to their former stature. If we are to take full advantage of the wisdom they offer, however, we will have to learn to ask them the right questions.

AMALAR OF METZ

Born in Burgundy towards the end of the eighth century, Amalar of Metz had an influential but tumultuous life as a missionary, diplomat, bishop, editor and author. Serving as archbishop of both Trier and Lyon but deposed from both sees on account of a variety of political motivations, Amalar found solace in sharing his insights into the liturgy, whether in correspondence with Charlemagne about baptism or in the form of commentaries on the liturgy, founded on insights that came to him like “rays of light” from God concerning the meanings inherent in the liturgical rites (*Liber officialis*, Preface). Intrigued by the differences between the liturgy of Gaul and the liturgy of Rome, he attempted to reconcile them in his (now lost) *Antiphoner*. In addition, Amalar sought to explain the diversity and significance of the liturgical rites.

Amalar’s most famous work was a treatise known as the *Liber officialis* or the *De ecclesiastico officio*, a four part exposition of the Mass and Divine Office of the early ninth century. Surviving today in more than seventy medieval manuscripts that convey three distinct recensions, Amalar’s *Liber officialis* was the most popular and widely available exposition on the liturgy written in the Carolingian era. Despite provoking ferocious criticism from certain individuals who objected to some of its allegorical readings of the liturgical rites (objections which were sometimes intermingled with political considerations related to Amalar’s role as bishop of Lyon), Amalar’s adaptation of the methodology of patristic scriptural exegesis to the study of the liturgy had a decisive impact on the history of liturgical exegesis, setting the tone for the next four centuries of liturgical commentary and serving as

an implicit or explicit inspiration for successors such as Rupert of Deutz, Jean Belet, Sicard of Cremona, and Innocent III.

WILLIAM DURAND OF MENDE

Four hundred years after the first circulation of the *Liber officialis*, William Durand of Mende was born in Provence around the year 1230. Like Amalar, Durand served the church in a remarkable number of modes, as a canon lawyer, papal chaplain, conciliar peritus, diplomat, bishop, and editor of liturgical books. As a papal chaplain and theological expert, Durand served alongside the Franciscan and Dominican cardinals Bonaventure and Peter of Tarentaise (the future Pope Innocent V) at the Second Council of Lyon in 1274. Having earned a doctorate in canon law at the University of Bologna, in 1276 Durand published a massive legal textbook known as the *Speculum Iudicale* [Judicial Mirror]. Ordained a priest at a relatively advanced age in 1279 after many years as a subdeacon, Durand was subsequently elected bishop of his native diocese of Mende in 1286. Alongside his duties as pastor of Mende, Durand undertook two liturgical projects of tremendous historical significance: the compilation of a *Pontificale*, a book of ceremonies celebrated by a bishop, and the composition of the *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, a commentary on the liturgy which synthesized insights from the four centuries of liturgical commentary that had followed in the wake of Amalar's *Liber officialis*. Durand was not merely a liturgical exegete, but also played an important role in crafting the liturgy itself; his redaction of the *Pontificale* served as the major source for the post-Tridentine *Pontificale Romanum* of 1595-1596.

After a long life of service to the Church, Durand died in Rome on the feast of All Saints in 1296 and was buried in the Dominican basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, where his tomb may still be visited today. In the centuries that followed Durand's death, his *Rationale* became the most popular liturgical commentary ever written. In addition to two hundred extant Latin manuscripts,

the *Rationale* was the second non-biblical book to be printed by Gutenberg in 1459 and was subsequently reprinted more than an hundred times.

AMALAR'S *LIBER OFFICIALIS*

In the new edition of Amalar's *Liber officialis* from Harvard University Press, published as volumes 35 and 36 of the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library series, Eric Knibbs has offered a readable English translation of the *Liber officialis* alongside a lightly adapted version of Jean-Michel Hanssens's 1948 critical edition of Amalar's Latin text. Although Western Latin writers of the Middle Ages did not use the term "liturgia" or liturgy, preferring instead terms such as "divina officia" [divine office] or "ecclesiasticum officium" [ecclesiastical office], Knibbs' slightly anachronistic translation of the title *Liber officialis* as *On the Liturgy* has the advantage of being accessible to contemporary readers who might as yet be unfamiliar with the breadth of what medieval writers included by the term "office."

Just as Knibbs has recognized that a more literal translation such as "The Book of the Office" might have proved more opaque to a contemporary reader than the title he has chosen, readers who wish to gain more than historical tidbits about ninth-century attitudes towards public worship will have to make a concerted effort to both understand Amalar's intentions and adapt his insights with regard to their own experience of the liturgy today. Although this task may occasionally seem daunting, it is one which may be richly rewarding to the contemporary worshipper. Knibbs' edition and translation will aid this process immensely, and the handsome typography and binding of the volumes is an attractive invitation to take the content seriously. It is unfortunate, however, that the notes to the translation and the single index included in the second volume are not as useful as they might be. For instance, the index does not include a listing of the liturgical texts quoted by Amalar, which renders it difficult for the reader to identify commentary

on particular texts or chants in which he or she may be interested. Strangely, the scriptural citations from most books of the Bible are included under the heading “Bible,” beginning on page 673 of the second volume, whereas the psalms are listed individually beginning on 690. It would have been extremely helpful to include a more clearly organized index of scriptural citations as well as a separate index of liturgical incipits of prayers and chants. Nor do the notes make adequate use of Dom Hesbert’s *Corpus Antiphonalium Officium* (published after Hanssens’ edition), despite an allusion to the usefulness of this collection of office antiphons in the introduction. Scholarly study of Amalar must necessarily continue to rely on the tables and indices in the third volume of the critical edition of Hanssens in order to enable a more ready analysis of the breadth of Amalar’s liturgical citations.

In the *Rationale*, named in honor of the “rationale iudicii” or “breastplate of judgment” of Jerome’s Vulgate translation of Ex. 28:15-30, Durand, like Amalar, offers an extensive commentary on the variations and inner meaning of the medieval liturgy. In the new volume from Brepols, Timothy M. Thibodeau offers an English translation of Book IV of the *Rationale*, “On the Mass and Each Action Pertaining to It.” Thibodeau, who coedited the three-volume *Corpus Christianorum* critical edition of the entire *Rationale*, has previously published translations of the first three books of the *Rationale*. In 2007, Columbia University Press published his translation of the Prologue and Book One, which focuses on the church building and its ornaments, and in 2010 the University of Scranton Press published his translation of Books Two and Three, which treat of the clerical ranks and liturgical vestments.

Of the three volumes, the latest enjoys the most pleasing layout, offering source identifications and helpful notes on the translation at the bottom of the page and containing marginal references to the pagination of the critical edition. In addition, the Brepols volume presents an exemplary set of indexes at the end of the volume,

allowing the reader to quickly assess and identify individual instances of Durand's use of the Bible, theological and exegetical sources, legal sources, and liturgical texts. The translation on the whole is good, although one notable weakness is the apparent lack of recognition that the antiphon commonly known as the "Introitus" was also known in some liturgical traditions (such as the Dominican and Sarum rites) as the "Officium." This leads to a somewhat convoluted translation of the word "officium" in the chapter "On the Office or the Introit of the Mass" (see especially IV.5.4, p. 87). In addition, there are occasional typos or awkward moments in the translation, such as text presented as a quotation from St. Augustine that lacks a subject for the verb (p. 60), or the addition of an inappropriate article (p. 65), but these occasional deficiencies do not diminish the tremendous value of the book.

The translations that Knibbs and Thibodeau have published will surely be of great assistance in helping many readers to encounter the liturgical exegesis of Amalar and Durand. Aside from the inherent historical interest in coming to know more about the liturgical context of another time and place, however, of what value are these volumes today? Are they mere academic curiosities, or could they be helpful in the spiritual lives of contemporary Christians who participate in the liturgy of the Church?

AMALAR, DURAND, AND REFORM

Iwould contend that the writings of these two medieval bishops are of great relevance for contemporary Christians. Both writers exemplify a form of spiritual exegesis of the liturgy based on the texts and actions of the Church. Each was an individual who allowed himself to be formed by the liturgy of the Church, but each also played an important role in reforming the liturgy. In this sense, they are important role models for the authentic liturgical renewal called for by the Second Vatican Council. Amalar and Durand were both faithful recipients of earlier traditions of

liturgical practice and exegesis; Amalar was heavily indebted to the patristic tradition of scriptural exegesis and mystagogy, whereas Durand had, in addition, both the witness of Amalar as well as



RATIONALE — FRENCH TRANSLATION CA. 1380

developments within monastic and scholastic liturgical exegesis of the tenth through the thirteenth centuries. Amalar and Durand thus exemplify the process of synthesizing received traditions while contributing to their development through their own insight.

In addition to this more general aspect of serving as role models for a faithful synthesis of tradition and innovation, many of the topics that Amalar and Durand treat remain of fundamental importance today. For example, Amalar takes particular care to consider why the liturgy exists at all: why is there something rather than nothing? In other words, why do the liturgical rites of the Church seem more complex than the simple words and gestures of the Last Supper? In the preface to the commentary on the Mass in Book III of the *Liber officialis*, Amalar acknowledges that “in ancient times among the apostles, merely the blessing of the bishops or the priests, without the cantors or lectors or the other things that we do during Mass, would suffice to bless the bread and the wine, which refresh the people unto the salvation of their souls.”

While acknowledging this primitive simplicity, Amalar believed that the development of ceremony within the liturgy has been a salutary development undertaken by the leaders of the Church. Amalar possessed a sophisticated understanding of the fact that the liturgical texts and rites have been developed and modified by individuals and groups throughout the history of the Church, but at the same time he understood this development to have been guided by the Holy Spirit. Because Amalar recognizes the rites to be something both humanly composed and divinely guided, he is eager to understand the human purposes behind the rites as well as the mystical significance with which they have been endowed by the guidance of God. Likewise, in the preface to Book IV of the *Rationale*, Durand recognizes that the Apostles and their successors developed the specific rites of the Mass on the basis of the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper, first by adding the Lord's Prayer and then by further developments. In the context of discussing the Canon or “Secret” of the Mass, Durand notes that, although careful scrutiny of the text reveals that it “was not composed all at once by one person, but rather, that it was composed part by part by many,” he nevertheless understands that the liturgy of the Church has a deeper synthesis that transcends

the roles and intentions of the individual humans who played a role in its development (cf. Book IV, c. 38). In the midst of the controversies that surround the practice of the liturgy today, it is helpful to reflect on both the legitimate liturgical development and diversity recognized by Amalar and Durand as well as their steadfast understanding of the divine institution of the sacraments and their trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the development of the liturgy of the Church.

At the same time, these authors help us to understand that controversy about the liturgy has always been part of the experience of the Church in this world. One particularly amusing witness to this fact comes in the preface of Durand's Book IV:

Certain faithless heretics reproach us because we read small, sliced-up portions of the Gospel at Mass, and because we add on other things, beyond the Lord's Prayer, to the primitive Mass. ... They also say that the Church of Christ neither sang a Mass nor Matins, and that neither Christ nor the Apostles instituted these, nor were they ever sung during the time of the Apostles; that the term 'Mass' was neither heard nor written anywhere at that time, but that what the Mass represents was called a 'meal [cena]' by the Evangelists...

Eager readers may have to wait expectantly for the next volume of Thibodeau's translation, however, as Durand ends this list of complaints that might seem like those of some of our own contemporaries with a laconic promise: "But we will clearly refute their error in the prologue of the fifth part." In addition to relating controversies of their own day, the witness of Amalar and Durand can also be of assistance in offering a deeper explanation for practices that may have become controversial since their time. For instance, Amalar presents several arguments concerning the practice of "ad orientem" worship (wherein the priest and people

face the same direction) that might fit well in the holster of a contemporary controversialist: “It is not appropriate for those who want to praise the Lord to turn their backs to him and their chests to his servants” (Book III, c. 8). “When we say: ‘Peace be with you,’ or ‘the Lord be with you,’ which is our greeting, we have turned to face the people. We present our face to those whom we greet, with one exception that occurs during our preparation for the hymn before the *Te igitur*. At that point we are busy about the altar, so it is more fitting for us to face one way than it is to look back, to indicate the pious intention that we have in offering the sacrifice. Nor should the plowman, occupied with a worthy task, look back” (Book 3, c. 9).

In addition to offering a window into their own controversies and ammunition in our own, these authors can also help us to gain a deeper understanding of some of the liturgical ideals that the Church puts forward today as being of prime importance in liturgical renewal. For instance, Amalar and Durand help us to understand more deeply the meaning of the participation of the faithful in the liturgy. For Amalar, the participation of both men and women in the liturgical assembly is an important factor in the symbolic completeness of the liturgy: “There is a multitude of ten thousand saints in the ecclesiastical orders and their listeners. There are seven ranks of ordained clergy, an eighth rank of cantors, and a ninth and tenth rank of listeners of both genders. A thousand is added to indicate their perfection” (Book III, c. 5). Further, although Amalar is quite attentive to the differing liturgical roles of clerics and laity within the liturgy, he also recognizes that the fundamental disposition of both should be the same: “Through the bishop’s greeting and the people’s response, we understand that the disposition of the bishop and the people should be the same, like the disposition of the guests of a single lord” (Book III, c. 9). In another context, while speaking about the spiritual attitudes that should be cultivated during the opening sections of the liturgy, Amalar states that “[w]hat we said individually about the

deacons and subdeacons and acolytes, we understand as relating to every disciple of Christ” (Book III, c. 5). In a related way, Durand’s *Rationale* presents elements of a profound ecclesiology that recognizes the importance of every individual member of the Church: “Church, which is a Greek word, means ‘convocation’ in Latin, because the Church calls everyone to herself; and this name corresponds more appropriately to the spiritual definition of the Church than the material because here, men are gathered together, not stones” (Book I, c. 1). In another context, Durand displays a balanced understanding of the symbolic importance of the fixed plural formularies of the Mass being appropriately matched by the actual presence of at least several individuals who are being addressed, while at the same time he recognizes the practical necessity of sometimes celebrating Mass with only one other person present (Book IV, c. 1).

Amalar’s *Liber officialis* and Durand’s *Rationale*, although long appreciated and studied by scholars of medieval liturgy and music, do not at present enjoy the fame that they once had. Nevertheless, the fascinating answers that they offer to the questions that contemporary readers may ask of them merit a renewed attention on the part of individuals who wish to enter into the spirit of the liturgy of the Catholic Church. The appearance of fresh English translations of both of these ancient books will allow many to approach these texts with a new interest. *Tolle, lege.*

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MARKETING CATHOLICISM

Corwin Low, O.P.

From the Church's beginning, people have accused her of bringing religion to the masses. Of course it has. When people receive the good news of the gospel, they want to share it with their neighbors. And it is their hope that these neighbors also see the light of Christ because they know that it will bring them everlasting joy. Obviously, the Holy Spirit was at work to bring the Faith to the people, but it was also due to the men and women that were so passionate about Christ and worked so hard to spread the gospel throughout the ancient world. Though one could call them secondary instruments of the Holy Spirit, one should not discount their contribution.

While it is quite anachronistic to say there was some heavy-duty marketing going on in the first century, it is hard not to see it looking back with our 21st-century's eyes. Given this information, one wonders if it is possible to use the same tools that were so successful 2,000 years ago for our 21st-century mindset. After all, few would deny that in the Western World, Catholicism has experienced a dramatic decline in fervor, if not in numbers. Marketing techniques have changed in the last few millennia, particularly with technology. Is it possible, therefore, to harness these new techniques to help evangelize? It is an interesting proposition, to be certain, and one that some people might find a bit distasteful, but there is no harm in giving it a bit of scrutiny.

There is no question that Christianity grew well beyond its Jewish foundations from its very inception. Jesus and his rag-tag

crew of Apostles scoured the Jordan River Valley converting people *en masse*. Each of the four evangelists recount multiple times where crowds followed Jesus wherever he went. Even the Jewish writers at the time were alarmed at their adversary's remarkable success. While it is true that Christian numbers were growing, if it were not for the eloquence and marketing genius of a certain convert to the Faith named Paul, it is difficult to determine whether Christianity would have spread beyond Palestine and the Jewish people.

ENDORSEMENT

Almost all good marketing campaigns have endorsements. These days it tends to be actors, musicians, movie and television stars, sports personalities and other people in entertainment. But prior to our age, famous people tended to be rulers, politicians, rhetoricians, writers, poets, and others that had heavy educational backgrounds. Regardless of the age, the adage "If it's good enough for them, it's good enough for me" still applies. The psychological advantage of being in communion with someone else, someone famous, cannot be discounted. In the absence of any tangible information regarding a product, including religious beliefs, points automatically go to the preferences of a recognizable figure. In our age, for example, Tom Cruise has increased the awareness and membership in the Church of Scientology, despite the fact that most mainstream Christians frown on its theology.

Scripture tells us that Paul was not just anti-Christian, but that he was a famous anti-Christian, witnessing and sanctioning the stoning of Stephen. His virulence was well known throughout Palestine and beyond. According to the Acts of the Apostles, his reputation for villainy reached Damascus, despite Jerusalem being nearly 150 miles away. So when he went through his famous conversion, his reputation grew on both sides of the Jewish and Christian divide, regardless of the side on which he finally settled. Nevertheless, he went from being the Jews' most ardent champion to being Christendom's most popular evangelist.

THE CHARISMATIC PERSONALITY

Every organization starts with one or two individuals that act as magnets to attract individuals to certain causes, for growth, and for membership. History is punctuated by certain individuals who have had exceptional orational and rhetorical skills. Paired with empathy, they seemingly have had the ability to read people's hearts and convince them to aid their cause. Such a capacity might sound incredibly self-serving. However, it really depends on the intention of the individual in question, which of course depends upon his respective morality.

Jesus was the quintessential Pied Piper, drawing people from all over Galilee—and, indeed, from all of Palestine—to hear his message. Jesus was exactly the opposite of self-serving, and he strove to help people to not just recognize the Kingdom, but also to seek it with all their hearts. Paul took up where Jesus left off and traveled to countless locations, setting up local churches wherever he went. Obviously this could not have been done if he did not have the strong magnetic personality necessary for success. His corpus of letters attests to his strong personality, revealing moments of anger, tenderness, strict discipline, and paternal love. While these characteristics do not necessarily indicate a strong charismatic personality, the fact that his foundational churches survived months between visits (though not without difficulties) does; and durability of these early communities is a testament to his influence and talents as a leader.

BARRIERS TO ENTRY

An additional marketing maneuver is to remove barriers to entry. This of course expands the potential market base, since those who had been previously outside are now inside. In 1989 the Toyota Corporation was forced to face the reality that they were a Japanese automobile manufacturer, known for cheap but economical vehicles. The wealthy and influential bought only

luxury goods from the likes of Cadillac, Mercedes Benz, and BMW. No matter what Toyota did to improve the physical comforts of its product, public perception ensured that its product was synonymous with “cheap.” In other words, by virtue of the class of product it was creating, Toyota always had a price point ceiling equal to the value of “economy”—which at the time was not much. Therefore, any comfort improvements had a direct, negative impact on the bottom line, since they did nothing to attract additional customers other than the company’s existing base.

In reaction, Toyota chose to take a different tact. It created a wholly-owned subsidiary called Lexus, which manufactured only expensive vehicles. While those on Wall Street knew of the relationship, most people did not. The Lexus branding became synonymous with Japanese luxury, and it attracted thousands and thousands of new potential buyers in North America, becoming one of the most successful product lines ever. Toyota removed a barrier to entry and subsequently opened its market to those who thought to buy above mere “economy.”

Whether it was intentional or not, the Apostle Paul did something quite similar. As is readily evident in Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, Paul and Peter had some heated discussions over how “Jewish” Christians needed to be. At various times in his ministry, Jesus made his gospel available to everyone, not just the Jews. However, this led to the argument as to whether Christian identity needed to be based on Jewish customs and identity. An action of Peter could have been interpreted to say that, yes, Jewish customs should be maintained. But Paul said no. If the newly formed Christian Church required all newcomers to adopt Jewish customs, it is likely that membership would have floundered. Observances such as circumcision and strict dietary laws, which fell under the Mosaic Law, were not simply laws; they were culture.

The idea that the Gentiles would need to adopt a completely new (and more importantly, foreign) culture just for the privilege of becoming Christians seemed doomed. And while not entirely

on the same scale, it would be much more akin to asking a culture of meat eaters to suddenly become vegetarians: possible yes, but probable no. Ultimately, the resolution of the matter was settled upon theological grounds, not through an opinion poll or a marketing study. Nonetheless, the human dynamics of this disagreement for the ‘sellability’ of Christianity should not be neglected. Paul argued against Peter and eventually won, despite the fact that Peter was effectively the leader of the burgeoning religion. It should be noted that this humility toward the efforts of a subordinate could also have been attractive to newcomers.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

It is no secret that having a presence in the most visible places increases recognition and accelerates growth. It is precisely why 5th Avenue in New York, Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, and rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré in Paris attract some of the most expensive



ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, NEW YORK CITY

shops. They become magnets for buyers and sellers, those who want to be seen, and those who are aspiring for retail greatness. They also command the highest rents in their respective cities. Yet, despite the rent, all of the shop owners still congregate there not for the effect of losing money, but precisely the opposite. With the influx of foot traffic and brand recognition, such well-placed shops can generate more than enough sales to justify their presence.

Commerce aside, people also congregate in places of importance: seats of government, centers of pilgrimage (e.g., shrines and relics of important people or events), foci for culture and religion, and places of education. Of course, it is usually commerce that enables these auxiliary nexuses to form. Nevertheless, it is at these points where a budding religion can not only flourish, but also become launching points for other communities via merchants using their existing trading routes.

Such was the design of Paul. In his three voyages he managed to visit all of the important cities in Asia Minor (now Greece and Turkey). And while not all of them have maintained their prominence in the present, they certainly had their influence in the ancient world.

And so, when Paul went on his missionary journeys, he cast his compass far and wide. It is estimated that Paul put more than 10,000 miles of walking (outside of nautical miles) in his journeys. This is not the action of someone who is lukewarm with his mission. He went to the hearts of populated areas: Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Philippi, Colossæ, and so on. While some of these locations are not burgeoning places in our modern world, they certainly were in the ancient world. Essentially, Paul incorporated theology and the then-existing social networks into his endeavor, and thus the message of Christ spread throughout the Roman Empire.

NEED FOR EVANGELIZATION

The big question in our day and age is whether or not we can achieve what Paul did in his. As mentioned earlier, it might be anachronistic to think that Paul was one of the most successful marketing individuals ever. Nevertheless, one thing that he did not do was to accept the status quo. Were he to have done that, Christianity might still be limited to a few small congregations, splintered off of the Jewish faith—still trying to figure out if it has a place in the world (and probably to the ire of Jews as well).

According to a 2008 study from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 23% of self-professed Catholics regularly attend Mass. Even within the six years since the publication of this study, this number has probably dropped by some amount. If there are some 70 million Catholics in the United States, then the number of people in the pews is somewhere around 16 million people. Given that there has been a recent push for a so-called New Evangelization, then clearly this evangelization cannot be in the parishes alone. If it were, then it would address a mere 5% of the US population (from an estimate of 300 million). Furthermore, parochial-only efforts would be literally “preaching to the choir.” This, by definition, has little to do with evangelization, let alone “new” evangelization. What about the 95% of the population that does not practice the Catholic Faith? What about the very sizable percentage that never hears the Word of God and that never receives the sacraments?

There are tens of millions of US citizens who go through their daily lives without ever thinking about church, something that has changed significantly in the last 50 years. How do we reach these people? We may not be able to duplicate Paul’s success without having all of his tools in play, but we can set up the lattice or framework that would allow for at least some of it. But then one or two prominent individuals, charismatic individuals, eloquent

individuals, savvy individuals, would have to rise to the occasion. Who might this individual be?

This person would have to go directly to centers of influence, challenge the status quo, and debate the secular forces on their home turf. It, of course, would not be easy, and it may initially seem like things could end in failure. After all, Paul was eventually beheaded in Rome. Nevertheless, his legacy remains, and the Holy Spirit helped to ensure the endurance of his efforts. Not only did Paul strengthen Christianity by bringing in significant numbers, but he also contributed to nearly half of the New Testament Scriptures. How is this exactly a failure?

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THE PRIEST CAN'T HIDE

A LOOK AT CALVARY AND ITS PREDECESSORS

John Dominic Bouck, O.P.

The priest can't hide; we can see him coming, which becomes important visually... It must be like a Samurai warrior putting their armour on every day to go out to battle the forces of darkness, so that's what it became, I guess.

— *John Michael McDonagh*

Considering that the modern, mainstream culture is so often at odds with the Catholic Church, her teachings, and her priests, it is noteworthy that every few years there is a fascination with this ancient fraternity of celibate holy men. The Catholic priest has been portrayed by countless secular authors and filmmakers in the modern world, the most recent portrayal being of Fr. James Lavelle in the movie *Calvary* (2014). Many of these fictional accounts seek to highlight the holiness of a particular priest; many others seek to expose his sinfulness. The most memorable ones, however, depict the priest as he is, as a man, complex as any other man, yet charged with a unique function: shepherding a people and bringing God to them and them to God. Let us now take a look at the priesthood as it is depicted in this movie, written and directed by John Michael McDonagh, and its admitted predecessor, *The Diary of a Country Priest* by Georges Bernanos; we will consider as well *The Power and the Glory* by Graham Greene. (Beware: there are spoilers for all three works below.)

GOOD PRIEST VS. BAD PRIEST

Good

Calvary opens with a startling and graphic confession of an unseen man who details his horrible abuse at the hands of a priest when he was a small child. Immediately we are confronted with the image of the bad priest. But the “penitent” tells Fr. James, who is hearing the confession, that he—Fr. James—is a good priest. The headlines from the past twelve years and more can give us plenty of fodder for reflection and revulsion about bad priests. The good priest does not often make headlines, however, so the viewer is drawn into the main question of the film: what makes a good priest good? To help sort it out, I will identify three qualities that make up the good priests in these three works.

SACRAMENTAL

The good priest is *sacramental*. Once again, this is how *Calvary* opens to the viewer. The good priest, Fr. James, is hearing confessions. Next, he is shown celebrating Mass and distributing Communion to his flock. Similarly, for Greene’s whiskey priest, distributing the sacraments amidst persecution is just about his only redeeming quality. The Curé in *The Diary* accomplishes his main victory when he convinces one of his parishioners to end a longtime grudge against her husband, finally bringing her to forgive and be forgiven.

None of the priests seen here view the sacraments as mere symbols, but, rather, as effective moments of grace, moments of salvation. Fr. James dies protecting the spirit and letter of the sacramental seal. The whiskey priest dies because he refuses to run away or apostatize, instead going around the countryside performing his sacred office for the people of God. The Curé dies not performing, but receiving the sacraments from his friend, a laicized priest.

This brings us to an important aspect of priestly identity: the ancient doctrine of *in persona Christi*. This states that because Jesus Christ is the one true priest, all other priests of the Church participate in his priesthood and act sacramentally in his person. The priest, then, is effective *ex opere operato* in carrying out the sacraments, regardless of his personal sanctity. Thus one can be a bad man and yet a “good” priest because confecting the sacraments does not depend on his worthiness.

PASTORAL

The priest is pastor, shepherd of a flock. Fr. James in *Calvary* inserts himself into the lives of his parishioners; he tries to interrupt the ordinary with the extraordinary. God does not respect our malaise. He knows we need a concrete reminder of his presence. Thus, God became flesh and entrusts his ministry on earth to fleshly representatives. It is harder to shut out a living breathing man than a gentle voice in the heart.

The Curé also insists on encountering his parishioners on his terms. His great triumph was bringing Mme. La Comtesse to forgive her philandering husband. As a pastor and the one who had care of her soul, he knew she had to confront this particular demon deep in her heart even though she wanted anything except for it to be exposed. The good shepherd knows his sheep, and sometimes has to be active in corralling the stray.

SACRIFICIAL

The direct consequence of being pastoral, of inserting God into the lives of others, is the need to be sacrificed. What do our hero-priests have in common? They die. What do they have in common with Christ, in whose person they act? They die. In this they join the ranks of priests gone before them who would rather be killed than cease performing their sacred duty: Becket, Nepomucene, and Fisher to name just a few. It is not sanctimony. It

is gritty, humiliating, and lonely. Why does God appear to forsake them? We see an answer in *Calvary*.

When Fr. Leary, the bad associate, leaves the priesthood, he is confronted by Fr. James, who the previous night had given him a drunken verbal assault.

Fr. Leary: I didn't realize you hated me that much.

Fr. James: I don't hate you at all.

Fr. Leary: Then, why?

Fr. James: It's just you have no integrity! That's the worst I can say about anybody.

Indeed integrity, as will be seen below, is Fr. James's greatest gift, and one he exemplifies without counting the cost. He will not defend himself by exposing his attacker because of the spirit of the sacramental seal and his desire to convert his attacker. He will not kowtow to a rich donor because he is rich. And even though he almost fails, he will not run away when the moment of his death arrives. He is not suicidal as some critics have opined. He allows himself to be offered as a victim like the Son of God, so that, through him, others might have life, such as his daughter, who learns forgiveness through his selfless integrity.

BAD

In *Calvary*, *The Diary of a Country Priest*, and *The Power and the Glory*, the heroic priests are depicted alongside of what we might call "bad priests." What do we see in them that reveals their failure to live up to the sublime calling of the priesthood? Again, I think we can separate it into three categories.

PRACTICAL

Good priests are called to be practical, of course, but the bad priests are practical to the point of casting off their other-

worldly identity. As we have seen in *Calvary*, the associate Fr. Leary ends up leaving at the end, conflicted by doubts he has in the faith. But earlier in the film, there is an amusing but disappointing scene wherein Fr. James and Fr. Leary are interviewing a businessman who is trying to make a donation to the parish, seemingly to humiliate the Church. Many jokes are made throughout the film about how the Church would do anything for money. Fr. James sees this empty offering for what it is and challenges the tempter; Fr. Leary takes the bait and is blinded by the monetary temptation. Fr. James's motivation is the salvation of souls in his care, and everything else stands in relation to that, leading him even to the point of trying to convert his assassin. As the Curé in *The Diary* says: "We pay a heavy, very heavy price for the superhuman dignity of our calling. The ridiculous is always so near to the sublime. And the world, usually so indulgent of foibles, hates ours instinctively." The priest of today has to show that there is in fact another world, another set of criteria for life, which is not easily apparent, even if this means looking foolish.

SELF-CENTERED

The ex-priest, M. Dufréty, who ends Bernanos's novel by hearing the final confession of the country priest, left the priesthood to live with a woman. In a letter written to the Curé, he says, "We were always playing at make believe; we invented our troubles and joys, we invented life instead of living it. A busy healthy life, normal in every way...should contain no mysteries." What M. Dufréty did not realize in his creed is that the mysteries of life—the mystery of redemption, salvific suffering, the life of unmerited grace—are what remove us from the abyss of meaninglessness in daily life. The mysteries are what transform life to make it worth living. The priesthood exists for others: it is a yoke which is unbearable for man, but that is why a mere mortal cannot bear it. It must be borne by the one true priest, Jesus Christ. Then is the yoke easy and the

burden light. The priest must in some way sacrifice “living life for himself,” for the sake of the lives of those in his care.

COWARDLY

The worst priest seems to be Padre José in *The Power and the Glory*. Not only has he left the priesthood, he will not exercise his sacred healing for a dying confrere for fear of the authorities. It is hard to imagine one who reflects Jesus Christ, the great priest-victim, more distantly. As the whiskey priest finds himself on the eve of his execution, he makes his last request: “If you would give me permission to confess.” When the lieutenant approaches the only priest around, Padre José, his brow-beating wife forbids him go. “It will be all over town...There’ll be no end of it—everybody will be wanting to confess, and the Governor will hear of it, and the pension will be stopped.” Padre José responds, “Perhaps dear it’s my duty...My dear, it’s only that...well...I am a priest.” However, he gives in to his wife, and fails to go. The priest cannot hide, not even this despicable character. And yet, he can try.

In *Calvary*, Fr. James is always seen wearing his cassock, or soutane, until a climactic moment in the end, where he too tries to hide wearing a simple sweater, trying in vain to escape. However, in the airport, he is approached by a woman whom he counseled, whose faith is strong. The woman, French, lost her husband while traveling in Ireland.

Teresa: Father? You’re going to Dublin?

Fr. James: Yeah. Just getting away for a while, you know?

Teresa: I’m bringing him home. [*Referring to her husband’s coffin*] To his family in Italy. Dublin and then... Rome.

Fr. James: How have you been?

Teresa: People here have been very kind to me. I mean... You know, sometimes...I think I cannot go on. But...I will go on.

This is Fr. James's "Quo Vadis" moment. Beautiful in its simplicity, Fr. James is trying to hide and escape the cross: the cross of his own weakness of alcoholic rage which reared its ugly head the night before, and the cross of his death. But he cannot hide. He is met by a woman who has lost her husband, but courageously chooses to "go on" through Calvary to the Resurrection. How can he not now? When about to board the plane, he sees the coffin about to be loaded and the baggage workers leaning on it in total irreverence. This seems to be the last straw. Without the intrusion of grace in life, he sees man returning to an animal state.

ANALYSIS

Do these works present a worthy account of the modern Catholic priest? I think that, for the most part, they do. In these artistic works, we see the priest as a paradox. Cardinal Newman in his excellent treatise on the priesthood writes: "[God] has sent forth for the ministry of reconciliation, not Angels, but men; He has sent forth your brethren to you, not beings of some unknown nature and some strange blood, but of your own bone and your own flesh, to preach to you." God sent living, breathing paradoxes to continue the mission of salvation. The priest is a "real" man, as Fr. Robert Barron of Mundelein Seminary notes in his review of *Calvary*. He is a mere man who must lead others above the realm of mere men. And this paradoxical person of the priest makes for great literature, just as the paradox of a God-man has transfixed billions for the past two millennia.

G.K. Chesterton, commenting on Job, writes, "We see Job tormented not because he was the worst of men, but because he was the best. It is the lesson of the whole work that man is most comforted by paradoxes." The stories of good priests in France, Mexico, and Ireland, persecuted by their flock, comfort us. They show that God is not put-off by our rejection. We are not aliens any longer, but because of the Incarnation, we are invited into the

divine. We are made beautiful paradoxes as well—in the world but not of it.

And this leads us to a further quality of the good priest: he is *relatable*. The priest of God has to perform a unique function, but he does it in the trenches. He is at home in the trenches because he himself is a sinner, witnessing to the sanctifying grace that he hopes to impart through his priestly ministry by displaying the effect it has had in his own life.



YOUNG PRIEST PRAYING — JOEL BALLIN

Of course, the priest's ministry is not limited to his weakness. His witness to the grace of Christ transforming him makes his priestly ministry that much more effective. "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses," said Blessed Paul VI, "than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." The whiskey priest witnesses to the effectiveness of the sacraments. That is essential. But the priests in *Calvary* and *The Diary of a Country Priest* witness to how the sacraments affect their own lives, weak as they are, revealing sanctification both in the performance of their duty and in their reception of grace. The priest is not chosen because he is good; he is called to be good because he is chosen.

If we look at the golden mean of a depiction of a priest, I think the two extremes to avoid are a certain "saccharine" style that Fr. Barron points out and a certain over-dramatization, especially in the sexual dimension (think of *The Thorn Birds*). The stories of the country Curé, the whiskey priest and the Irish pastor walk the virtuous line, showing their humanity without exploiting it. I suppose this is a good rule of literature generally, but it is particularly helpful in depicting the priesthood.

As the writer and director of *Calvary* said, "the priest can't hide." Like any other human being, the priest has his own demons to deal with; but he receives a particular call, in the person of Christ the head, to help others encounter God. Ultimately, he clothes himself with Christ to fight the demons without and within, so as to help shepherd God's flock to their heavenly homeland. When this is depicted in a way that does not over-dramatize or over-sanitize the reality of the man-priest, get ready for a good story.

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DISPUTED QUESTIONS:

ON THE NECESSITY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

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 editors, who do not pretend to play the role of master.

THE QUESTION

The Church speaks with resounding clarity, telling her children through the ages, time and time again, that men and women of every time and place are called to be holy. Married or single, priests or religious, consecrated persons, rockstars, physicists, and the like: God calls the characters of creation, the actors of his universal drama of salvation to respond to his invitation to communion. Moreover, it seems that God, caring for the world, guiding and sustaining all things by His providence, intends for each person a certain kind of life in which they can actually themselves become holy. This then brings us to our question: Must we have monks and nuns? Is religious life necessary?

TO FREQUENT HEAVEN'S COURTS

Louis Bertrand Lemoine, O.P.

John Paul II. Elizabeth of Hungary. The Curé d'Ars. Athanasius. Grignon de Montfort. Louis IX. Monica. Charles Borromeo. All these men and women are saints and, therefore, in heaven. None of these men and women were members of a religious order. Therefore, religious life is not necessary for salvation.

My treatment of this question must make me seem like quite the Scrooge at the beginning of the Church's Year of Consecrated Life. However, the issue seems rather clear-cut. Bah humbug!

This being said, a Dominican can hardly decide what shoes to wear without making a few distinctions, and I do not intend to settle the important matter of the necessity of religious life in forty-nine words. If my initial answer to the question at hand seems true though petty and minimalist, that is because it is.

God became man that men might become gods. This theme of the Eastern and Western Fathers is extraordinary and striking. As arresting as such a way of speaking may sound, the Fathers saw divinization as another permutation of the Scriptures' vision for man's sanctification—or man's salvation, we might say in a more Scriptural idiom. Whether one looks at Psalm 82:6, 2 Peter 1:4, or other selections from God's word, it is clear that God has startlingly big plans for mankind. "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

It is our salvation to contemplate our God who is one yet trinal. God's Word proceeds as perfect Image, the perfect and

consubstantial Representation of God. From the Father and the Son, the Spirit is breathed forth as Love Proceeding. Augustine left a priceless treasure to humanity in his insight that man retains a certain vestige—or better, image—of this life-filled Trinity in his ability to know and will, his ability to generate images internally and move his will toward a beloved.

An illustration can help one understand this profound analogy. Imagine a young wife waiting in an airport for her husband's flight. He returns today from his eighteen month deployment to Iraq. Picture the moment when she sees him in the terminal. As she looks upon him, the sight of him becomes vivid interiorly for her. This is another way of saying that she realizes her husband is present before her. Think of the unspeakable joy that she experiences once she realizes this, a joy that is also a longing within her that can only be satisfied by being very close to her husband once more.

Religious life is kind of like that. Really. Let me explain.

When a man or woman becomes a child of God, he receives the ability to know and love God. This is why we call faith, hope, and charity the *theological virtues*, since they have God (theos) as their object. According to the Thomistic school, this can be called *the theological life*. In the theological life, a man or woman knows God (by faith) and loves God (by charity) and thus images our Trinitarian God to the highest degree possible for a human this side of heaven, for by his inner acts of knowledge and love of God, he resembles the God who Knows and Loves himself perfectly.

Much more could be said, but I will bring this point to its conclusion. With this picture of the Christian life as the theological life, all true Christian life is contemplative life. The Christian in a state of grace lovingly contemplates or views God, even if in a weak or embryonic way. Indeed, this theological life can exist in a person to a greater or lesser degree, as a man or woman knows and loves God more or less clearly and fervently. This theological life is a gift from God. It can be possessed by all the baptized, whether they have gone on to the further consecration of religious vows or not.

However, are there ways in which we can more or less dispose ourselves to the full flourishing of this life? Is there a way of life that can be helpful for growing in salvation and sanctification along the lines of the portrait painted above?

In his *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas addresses the question of whether those who are not well-practiced in a life of virtue should enter religious life. Against the depiction of religious life as an honor-roll society or country club of the Christian life, Thomas writes, “the religious state is a spiritual schooling for the attainment of the perfection of charity. This is accomplished through the removal of the obstacles to perfect charity by religious observances” (ST II-II, q. 189, a. 1). For St. Thomas, religious life is a school (*exercitium*) in pursuit of charity. Contemplation is the highest and most profound activity of a religious. Perhaps this is the reason for the strong statement of the *Code of Canon Law* on religious life: “The first and foremost duty of all religious is to be the contemplation of divine things and assiduous union with God in prayer” (c. 663, §1).

For a particular person, the religious life may be necessary for him to fully flourish in the theological life. Would John of the Cross have been John of the Cross, or would Bernard have been Bernard without the supports of their religious life? I think that such impossible hypotheticals are annoying at best and harmful in the pursuit of truth at worst. God chose for such men and women to fully flourish in the salvation described earlier with the help of the religious life— and these are many helps indeed, helps such as a rule, interior and exterior spaces created for prayer, a defined manner of responding to the Lord’s call to lay down our lives in love, and membership in the living organism of grace and merits that is a religious institute.

The ‘school’ that is religious life can be helpful. However, the end result of religious life—the salvation that is the contemplation of God—can be attained through other “schooling,” such as the

life of marriage and family. Indeed, union with God is available to all the baptized. As such, we can find, simply put, that men and women who are not religious frequent heaven's courts. Therefore, the religious life is not necessary for salvation.

Louis Bertrand Lemoine entered the Order of Preachers in 2010. Prior to joining the Dominicans, he studied philosophy at the Pontifical College Josephinum, in Columbus, Ohio.

THE WAY UP AND THE WAY OUT

Philip Neri Reese, O.P.

It is the end of *Metaphysics II*. Aristotle has been waxing unpoetically for a while about why an infinite regress of causes-causing-causes gets on his nerves. He comes up for air. Then, with a breathtaking non sequitur, he observes that some people stubbornly demand certain kinds of arguments. Pedants want precision while accuracy annoys others. (Aristotle's students?) So, stories or syllogisms? Dramas or distinctions?

THE WAY UP (THE WAY IN)

The LORD: "Come, follow me." (Mark 1:17)

The creature: "Who am I, Lord God, and what is my house, that you should have brought me so far?" (2 Samuel 7:18)

The LORD: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I dedicated you." (Jeremiah 1:5)

The creature: "But I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet . . ." (Amos 7:14)

The LORD: "I will be with you when you speak. I will give you the words you are to say. See! I make my words a fire in your mouth!" (Exodus 4:12; Jeremiah 5:14)

The creature: "I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips!" (Isaiah 6:5)

The LORD: "I will take you away from among the nations; I will sprinkle clean water over you to make you clean, and from all your impurities I will cleanse you." (Ezekiel 36:24-25)

The creature: "How can this happen?" (John 3:9)

The LORD: "I will set my tabernacle in your midst, and I will not loathe you. Ever in your midst, I will be your God." (Leviticus 26:11-12)

The creature: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof." (Matthew 8:8)

The LORD: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Joshua 1:5)

The creature: "O Lord, who can abide in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?—he who walks blamelessly, and does what is right, and speaks the truth from his heart; . . . depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." (Psalm 15 1:-2; Luke 5:8)

The LORD: "I have not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners." (Luke 5:32)

The creature: . . .

The creature: "Behold, I am nothing; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth." (Job 40:4)

The LORD: "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:51)

The creature: "Show me, Lord, your way, so that I may walk in your truth." (Psalm 86:11)

The LORD: "I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." (Psalm 32:8)

The creature: “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.” (1 Samuel 3:10)

The LORD: “Come, follow me.” (Mark 1:17)

THE WAY DOWN (THE WAY OUT)

There are two ways that something can be necessary: intrinsically and extrinsically. If something is intrinsically necessary, then it absolutely must be so (Why? Because it would be contrary to its nature to be otherwise). This sort of necessity arises from two sources: either from the constituents out of which the thing is made (its matter) or from its character as the sort of thing it is (its form). So adult blue whales are necessarily heavy because they are made of more than 100 metric tons of stuff (intrinsic material necessity), while bachelors are necessarily unmarried because that is part of what it means to be a bachelor (intrinsic formal necessity).

In contrast, extrinsic necessity is not absolute. This sort of necessity gets imposed on one thing by something else—and so it is not contrary to the one’s nature to be otherwise. Like intrinsic necessity, however, extrinsic necessity also arises from two sources. This time the sources are compulsion (an efficient cause) or purpose (a final cause). So water levels necessarily fluctuate because of the gravitational effect of the moon (extrinsic efficient necessity), while time and labor are necessary in order to meet a writer’s deadline (extrinsic final necessity).

This last sort of necessity also divides in two. On the one hand, we find cases in which something is a *sine qua non* for reaching the goal—in the example just given, without time and labor it will be impossible to meet the deadline. On the other hand, we also find cases in which something is not, strictly speaking, a *sine qua non*, and yet we would still say that it is necessary for the reasonable or expedient accomplishment of the goal. This is how students need teachers, warriors need weapons, and hobbits need Second Breakfast.

We need one last distinction in order to answer the question at hand: that between an antecedent necessity and a consequent necessity. This distinction is more of a logical one than a natural or metaphysical one, but if we wanted to combine it with the divisions given above we could say that it comes first—i.e., “necessity” is either antecedent or consequent, and all of the above distinctions fall under the category of “antecedent” necessity. An example can help make this point clearer. Is it necessary that I am sitting right now? Neither my body nor my soul necessitates it; I am not being forced to sit by someone else; and I could just as easily get my writing done at a standing desk. So, based on all the forms of necessity discussed so far, our answer is “no.” But *granted that I am, in fact, sitting right now*, then necessarily, I am sitting. Put more formally, “granted that X is Y, it is necessary that the proposition ‘X is Y’ is true.” This kind of necessity is called “consequent” because it follows upon the actual state of affairs, rather than causing it.

So is religious life necessary for salvation?

The very question excludes the first three types of necessity: (1) antecedent, intrinsic, material necessity, (2) antecedent, intrinsic, formal necessity, and (3) antecedent, extrinsic, efficient necessity. Why? Because it asks about whether one thing is necessary *in order to achieve* another thing (final causality).

So is religious life necessary for salvation in this way? As a *sine qua non*, definitely not. There are plenty of Saints who didn’t live the religious life. But what about as something reasonably needed? Here it seems that our answer should be yes, at least for some people. Most religious, keenly aware of our own sinfulness, would admit that we *need* this way of life to get to heaven. The observances of religious life are a help for the spiritually weak, not a trophy for the spiritually strong. We enter because, on some level, we feel the need to do so.

A corollary to this concrete experience of neediness is the fact that religious life is a *vocation*, a calling. God does not force anyone to become a religious, he does invite many to do so. This is because,

in his mysterious, wise, and beautiful plan for salvation, he wanted this way of life to play a role. Given that divine choice, it must be so—and every religious gives thanks to God for it.

Philip Neri Reese entered the Order of Preachers in 2009. He is a graduate of Dickinson College, where he studied philosophy and religion.

REPLIES

A REPLY TO PHILIP NERI REESE

I am very thankful for Br. Philip Neri's generous authoring of this essay on religious life. The first part of Br. Philip Neri's essay—"The Way Up (The Way In)"—shows a remarkable degree of familiarity with the Scriptures and also betrays a tender piety on his part. What a gift. A conversation composed entirely of Scripture verses is a prayer that has a more universal applicability and usefulness. This conversation is also a beautiful meditation on the interior dialogue of a religious—"the creature"—responding humbly to the Lord's call to such a vocation.

The second part of Br. Philip Neri's essay—"The Way Down (The Way Out)"—is a helpful tool for purifying our minds of mistaken notions of the necessity of religious life. His distinctions slowly chip away, if you will, at any notions of the necessity of religious life that would put into conflict this important motif with some other part of sacred truth. His helpful and creative distinctions provide a work that is practically helpful and also unique—I have not encountered anything like it. Furthermore, this second part of his essay brings clarity and helpful distinctions to elements in my presentation that needed further development. For example, I wonder if my point near the end of my essay concerning whether or not John of the Cross would have been John of the Cross without religious life can be illumined by Br. Philip Neri's explanation of consequent necessity.

I think it is important to wonder why Br. Philip Neri made the creative decision to divide his essay into two parts. I wonder if he alludes to an answer in his introduction when he speaks about the possibilities of either pedantic precision or the opposite of annoying accuracy.

It seems to me that one way to understand the second part of his essay is indeed as "The Way Out"—a way to move from the

ineffable mystery to a body of thought that can be communicated and taught. In light of his introduction, does Br. Philip Neri think that this section of his essay is complete yet also, somehow, incomplete? It is useful for instruction. Would he point to the first part of his essay, however, as a phenomenological account of the experience of vocation?

St. Thérèse famously traveled to Rome on pilgrimage to personally ask the pope to permit her to enter religious life in spite of her young age. One wonders what so moved this young girl from the French countryside to trek across nineteenth-century Europe in order to make such a bold request. What was it that so captivated that young heart?

Her soul was simple, and brightly illuminated by love—by Love. She stood before the Lord as one profoundly aware of her weakness and also profoundly aware of the Jesus who so loved her—it is as though the very knowledge of her weakness fanned the furnace of Divine Love within her. The syllogisms and distinctions of the schools somehow seem out of place in the little hamlet of Lisieux. *Her* song was of mercy and love.

Good theology saves souls. It is a gift of inestimable worth in the Church. However, I think something will always seem provisional or tentative about theological discourse. Its straw-like quality points to the primacy of love. Something is timeless and angelic about the first part of Br. Philip Neri's presentation. I wonder if it is inevitable for love to eventually discard argument and to sail by a stronger wind. Love will always be restless until it becomes poetry.

— *Louis Bertrand Lemoine, O.P.*

A REPLY TO LOUIS BERTRAND LEMOINE

Br. Louis Bertrand's guileless essay, "Religious Life Is Not Necessary for Salvation," deserves a double commendation.

First, because it does an admirable job responding to the question posed from a sapiential perspective. One of the distinguishing characteristics of *sacra doctrina*, or sacred theology, is that it is—at one and the same time—both eminently theoretical and eminently practical. Revealed theology sets before our minds the most exalted things that can be known and before our feet the most useful paths that can be walked. I see both aspects at play in Br. Louis Bertrand's essay. On the one hand, his discussion of the theological virtues as principles for living the theological (not "theological") life clearly moves in the practical mode. On the other hand, his emphasis on the universal call to Trinitarian contemplation keeps the piece firmly fixed on the final primacy of speculative vision (seeing God face to face). If I understand him correctly, both of these dimensions of sanctification are united and expressed in the theme of divinization, or saint-making.

But the essay is not merely commendable for climbing the ladder of wisdom in both the theoretical and the practical orders. It also comes back down again, providing clear examples in accessible language. Appeals to individual saints book-end the argument, forcing us to get up from our armchairs and actually consider the facts. Moreover, at the center of the piece stands the arresting example of the young wife in the airport. What could better express the beatifying and exalting power of vision than that? On points like these, I think my own essay (which verges on obscurant) could take some pointers.

One aspect on which I must confess a bit of confusion has to do with discerning the identity of the distinctions that Br. Louis Bertrand says he will make in the essay's third paragraph. When, at essay's-end, we find the conclusion that "religious life is not necessary for salvation," I could not help but wonder for whom?

But perhaps on this point I am too much like Aristotle's men from *Metaphysics II*, and Br. Louis Bertrand would guilelessly reply: for John Paul II, for Elizabeth of Hungary, for the Curé d'Ars.

— *Philip Neri Reese, O.P.*

RECAPITULATION

Religious life, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council teach **R**us, does not belong to the hierarchical structure of the Church. Priests need not be consecrated religious to offer sacraments to the people of God. Yet, religious life, the fathers say, belongs to the Church's life and holiness. While as our dear brothers have pointed out, religious life may indeed be necessary for an individual soul, as only the mystery of providence could ordain, it seems the Church has no intrinsic need for religious life. The Church is holy because Christ, her head, is holy, not because any of her ministers or consecrated servants are holy. The Church does not, strictly speaking, depend upon consecrated religious for her holiness. In this sense then, religious life is not necessary.

And yet, like our forebears, we are a people hard of heart. Br. Louis Bertrand rightly suggests that the observances of religious life empower or otherwise enable a man to breach the heights of the spiritual life. Br. Philip Neri's penetrating exposition allows us to think seriously, deeply about precisely what we might mean when we speak the word "necessity." Ultimately, like a telescope that aids the eye to see far-off stars and planets, or a room that amplifies the still, quiet voice, religious life seems to make things that much more present to those with overwhelmed, overtaxed ears and strained, weary eyes.

— *The Editors*

THE LOCUTORIUM

REFLECTIONS ON CONSECRATED LIFE

*An interview with Archbishop Anthony Fisher, O.P.,
by Jacob Bertrand Janczyk, O.P.*

Pope Francis announced that 2015 would be the Year of Consecrated Life. Consecrated men and women give themselves completely to Christ, renouncing definite goods of this world so as to be more perfectly united to Him and to serve as witnesses to His Kingdom. *Lumen Gentium* teaches,

The religious state, whose purpose is to free its members from earthly cares, more fully manifests to all believers the presence of heavenly goods already possessed here below. Furthermore, it not only witnesses to the fact of a new and eternal life acquired by the redemption of Christ, but it foretells the future resurrection and the glory of the heavenly kingdom. (44)

The purpose and importance of consecrated and religious life seem to be slipping from the world, even in the Church itself. A life given to contemplation and apostolic endeavors through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience does not fit into the utilitarian framework cultivated by minds today. Nevertheless,

Christ's faithful must work to promote the gift of consecrated life for the sake of the Church and all peoples.

Archbishop Anthony Colin Fisher was appointed the archbishop of Sydney by Pope Francis in September 2014. Before his appointment to the See of Sydney, he was the auxiliary bishop of Sydney in 2003 to 2010 and was the bishop of Parramatta, Australia, from 2010 until 2014.

Archbishop Fisher was born in 1960 in Sydney. He entered the Order of Preachers in 1985 and was ordained a priest in 1991. He completed his doctoral studies in bioethics at the University of Oxford in 1995. He has lectured at the Australian Catholic University and at the University of Notre Dame (Australia). From 2000 to 2003 he served as the foundation director of the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, in Melbourne. Archbishop Fisher served as the organizer of the 2008 World Youth Day in Sydney. Before his episcopal appointment he also served as Master of Students in the Dominican Province of the Assumption in Australia. Archbishop Fisher has written and lectured extensively on Catholic bioethics, abortion, in vitro fertilization, euthanasia, and healthcare. After his appointment, Jacob Bertrand Janczyk, O.P., conducted the following interview with Archbishop Fisher.

In this issue of Dominicana the student friars are focusing on the importance and relevance of consecrated life in the Church and in the world at large. In Vita Consecrata, Pope Saint John Paul II writes, "Its universal presence and the evangelical nature of its witness are clear evidence—if any were needed—that the consecrated life is not something isolated and marginal, but a reality which affects the whole Church" (3). In what ways do you think consecrated life affects the whole Church?

Let me begin with a *via negativa*. In Australia, like many parts of the Western world, religious life has been in decline over the past few decades. Not uniformly, not always and everywhere: the

orders with a strong sense of identity (often marked by a habit), community, prayer and a clear common apostolate still seem to attract some vocations. The Dominican and Capuchin Franciscan men, the consecrated members of some ecclesial movements, and some overseas congregations with a presence here (such as the Nashville Dominicans and the Alma Mercies) are getting vocations. But in general the picture for religious life down-under seems gloomy. I think the Church in Australia has hardly begun to realize what an impoverishment that is—to its prayer life, its apostolic energy, its creativity and its holiness.

When we realize what this decline or absence means, we will realize what a huge plus thriving religious life is for the Church. Where religious life flourishes the Church flourishes in her prayer and evangelical and eschatological witness; without it, the Church struggles. No doubt, this is part of why Pope Francis has decided that 2015 is to be dedicated to consecrated life.

The idea of consecrated life in today's increasingly secular culture seems in many ways to have lost the notion of the sacred, even amongst Catholics. Do you think that the "universal presence and evangelical nature" of consecrated life is clear evidence that it is neither isolated nor marginalized in the Church? In other words, is religious life compatible with the 21st century?

Though the forms vary over the centuries and no particular version of religious life is essential to the nature of the Church, nonetheless I think there is every reason to think that in every age there will be forms of religious consecration called forth by the Holy Spirit and appropriate to the times. Even apparently perennial forms—such as the monks and friars—have evolved over time. Often it has seemed that religious life is dying and that it is no longer relevant; what has followed, after an experience of desert, has often been a real flowering of religious life. Consider, for instance, the state of the Dominican Order (and of other congregations) in the Europe of the age of 'Enlightenment' and

after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic campaigns: things seemed desperate. Who could have guessed that the second half of the nineteenth century would see the greatest flowering of new religious congregations in history, spreading across the globe (including far-flung Australia!) in works of missionary endeavor, of education, healthcare, welfare and the like? I expect something equally surprising in this new secular age: a new evangelization in which religious life once again plays a crucial role.

That religious life might seem ‘incompatible’ with modernity and its overemphasis on immanence at the expense of a sense of transcendence is itself a challenge and opportunity: *challenge*, because it means many young Catholics never even entertain a religious vocation and many of those who are already religious end up more children of the secular age than of the Gospel; *opportunity*, because so many people seem to be thirsting for something better and we can stand out as a radical alternative more clearly than at some other times in history. Whatever else we stand for, religious obviously do not (or should not!) stand for mass consumerism, sexual recreationalism, ‘the throwaway society’ in which no commitment or self-sacrifice is possible or desirable, the materialist age that only values those things that can be seen and exploited: we *are* different and, hopefully, obviously so.

That said, there are also many admirable things in modernity which we religious rightly find simpatico and with which we can work in common endeavors.

The Church teaches that “the first and foremost duty of all religious is to be the contemplation of divine things and assiduous union with God in prayer” (CIC 663.1). Could you elaborate on how this is reconcilable with the apostolic mission of consecrated men and women?

It’s an important question in a world that more than ever values people (and so we value ourselves) by what we do—what we make, what work targets we achieve (our KPIs [i.e., our key

performance indicators]), what we come to possess. There always appears to be a good 'apostolic' reason to reduce our prayer time.

I recently read about Mohamed El-Erian, the former CEO of trillion-dollar investment fund PIMCO. After repeatedly refusing his entreaties that she brush her teeth, his ten-year-old daughter presented him with a list of twenty-two times he had not be there for her at important moments in her life: her first day at school, her first soccer match, her parent-teacher night, a parade and so on... Of course he had good work reasons for missing these things: travel, meetings, urgent phone calls. But his daughter's list was a wake-up call. His work-life balance was askew and his job was overshadowing everything else in his life, including his relationship with his daughter. He was not giving her what she most needed and valued from him: his time. So earlier this year he quit his job and now works part-time so he can share the child-raising with his wife and be with his daughter more. There's a lesson there not just for parents but for us religious.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta was once asked by a young priest-bureaucrat how much time he should pray each day. She immediately recommended two hours a day. But, he responded, she surely did not know how much he had to do and how important his work was. His ecclesiastical tasks were so demanding, deadlines had to be met and so much depended on him. "Oh I'm sorry," she said apologetically, "I hadn't realized how important and demanding your work is: in that case you need to pray four hours a day!"

It is in fact the special charism of Dominicans to contemplate God and the things of God in order to pass on the fruits of this contemplation to our students, parishioners, etc. Balancing contemplation and action might be difficult, but it will be impossible to engage in fruitful action unless time is devoted to prayer and contemplation, and a contemplative spirit developed.

In the years following the Second Vatican Council, the Church experienced many changes in consecrated life, particularly an enormous decrease in numbers. What do you think needs to change or to be done by the Church and/or her faithful to reinvigorate consecrated life throughout the world?

The numbers in vows of religion have varied over the centuries, and after the huge rise in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the numbers were probably bound to fall—a bit like bubbles in housing or stock prices. There's no right number of religious: 10%, 1%, 0.1% of Catholics... But there is a wrong number: 0%. We should be more alarmed by the decline in religious, priestly, married and parenting vocations in the West than we are. I remember some years back an Australian Dominican who, when asked what he thought we should be doing that we were not presently doing, said “panicking.” Of course, panic never helps us make good judgments; I also happen to think that our current situation gives more causes for optimism than this friar's clever answer suggested. Nonetheless, he was right to suggest that we should have been taking the state of religious life more seriously than we did—and do.

The biggest thing that needs to be done about all this is, I think, that religious themselves recover their original inspiration (as appropriately evolved) and apply themselves with radicalism to it: not half-heartedly, not comfortably, not in a compromise with the zeitgeist. It also demands that the rest of the Church much more self-consciously and publicly value who religious are and what they do for the Church. Next year's Year of Consecrated Life presents a good opportunity for the Church in this regard.

Pope Francis has called for Synods of Bishops on the Family to meet in 2014 and 2015. It's clear that the family and family virtues are in constant attack today. Could you speak about the interplay between the Gospel witness of consecrated life and the role of families?

Too often I think family life and religious life are seen as alternatives. Of course it's true that you have to choose one or the other, as your life-plan, your vocation. But that doesn't mean there are two different species: the natural spouse-parents and the natural celibates. We are all natural spouse-parents and we are all supernatural celibates. Many of the same qualities are needed for each: a willingness to commit, for the long haul; an ability to compromise our own willfulness, to undertake acts of self-sacrifice; an eye to a common good beyond our personal preferences and pleasures; a certain generosity of spirit; a willingness to live and let live with others, to forgive, to grow through hurts; constant recourse to prayer, to divine grace, to live a vocation that often grates against our natural selfishness and that is little supported in contemporary culture. My thought is that sacramental marriage and religious life have far more in common than either of these states has with contemporary single or married life in the secular culture. That means that the gifts and challenges of families and religious communities should speak to each other, should be examples, witnesses, supports to each other. Of course, as Mary Eberstadt has shown, healthy families lead to healthy religiosity in society—from healthy, Catholic families come healthy vocations to the religious life.

I suspect, too, that many of the pastoral problems that each of these states of life is currently facing have aspects in common, e.g., how to deal with individualism and with an unsupportive, even hostile, surrounding culture; how to correct for the limited Christian formation (and damaging malformation) people have received before they seek admission to these states of life; how to help people discern well a vocation and form people for it and support them in living it... So there may be a happy providence in the two family synods bookending the Year of Consecrated Life.

You entered the Order of Preachers in 1985. What initially attracted you to religious life?

I read recently on a Dominican website that I entered the Order in 1965—i.e., when I was five years old! You are right that it was in fact in 1985. But I suppose vocations do start early. I had a great aunt who was a Mercy nun and I loved serving at the altar as a boy. So maybe there were some very early influences. From around the age of fifteen I thought seriously about priesthood and first considered the Diocesans (who were my parish priests) and the Jesuits (who were schooling me). I ultimately joined the Dominicans by a circuitous route. But my growing thought from at least age fifteen was that I needed the support of a community if I was to pray well and grow in virtue, and that I needed a clear apostolate with some intellectual grunt if I was to put all my gifts to God's purposes. So when the Dominicans came my way they were the obvious choice. But even before then religious life had its appeal.

What attracted you to Saint Dominic and the Order of Preachers in particular?

A friend of mine talked me into attending a national meeting of Catholic university student groups. I went along rather reluctantly, but there I met a fellow student who had been wanting to join the Dominicans since around the age of five! I already knew (and loved) some of the Dominican saints but I didn't realize the friars still existed... We talked about why the Dominicans might be right for me and the more I found out about their particular mix of active and contemplative life, the community and study and liturgical elements of their life, and above all their preaching apostolate and determined orthodoxy, the more it attracted me.

When I got home pamphlets started arriving mysteriously in the post for me with titles like "So you'd like to be a Dominican..." The more I read—including Tugwell's book, *The Way of the Preacher*—the more attracted I was. Eventually I met some real-life Dominicans and they failed to frighten me off. By then I was a lawyer. So I took leave from work and went backpacking around

the world, to make up my mind. I eventually wrote to the Order in Australia from the opposite side of the world and got a reply, two months later in a different country, telling me to come home quick and join up. I have loved being a Dominican ever since.

I have found time and again that I am surprised by different aspects of consecrated life. Certainly there is for all religious a period of institutional formation, but religious life is also a lifetime given over to the work of formation. What are some things that have surprised you about consecrated life?

As an amateur historian (history was my first university degree) I have been struck by the genius of religious life in its ability to come back after heavy pruning and to evolve new forms. So I think we can expect surprises...

As an amateur religious I've been surprised how hard it is to juggle all the aspects of religious life—there seem to be more good things to be and do than can fit into one life—and how often one brother is good at one aspect (e.g., community life), another at another (e.g., the academic or pastoral side), another at another (the contemplative or prayer dimension), and that together we seem to make one really good friar with several heads. When I started religious life I expected that all of us would be all those things—now I accept that we are doing well if we get most of it right and, between us in each community, get all of it. Occasionally, to my delight, I have indeed met men and women for whom religious life really has been a school of perfection in charity and who seem to have achieved all the aspects of their religious charism to a high degree—or at least God has achieved it in them.

In 2003 you were appointed auxiliary bishop of Sydney by Pope Saint John Paul II. Now, in September 2014, Pope Francis has appointed you the archbishop of Sydney. How do you think your life as a consecrated religious, and a Dominican friar in particular, has prepared you for or currently influences your episcopal ministry?

Some religious and some diocesan clergy have suggested to me that on being raised to the episcopate I have effectively been released from religious life. My own view is that *usque ad mortem* [“until death,” the time period for which a Dominican professes solemn vows] means just that and that, as the canon law suggests, I should live as much of my religious charism as is compatible with my new office. In fact I’ve found the preaching part of my vocation magnified as bishop: I get more opportunities to preach, and different opportunities to teach, than I had as a priest friar.

I never get over the privilege that is preaching: I love it more than I did when first I started; and I think my Dominican life was the best of preparations for that.

The Dominican thing has obviously influenced the way I pray—I still love the Divine Office and miss singing it in common; and the way I study—I love collecting books and sometimes I even read them; and my football team of saints—St Thomas Aquinas is still my hero, with St Dominic and St Catherine great favorites also.

How has being appointed to the episcopacy changed your life as a consecrated religious?

There’s obviously less community, a different kind of obedience and new challenges to live evangelical poverty while having oversight of significant funds. I have less support in my religious identity: I wear my habit as much as ever, for example, but I don’t have others around me doing so. Those who know me say I’m still very Dominican...

One quirky difference: I’ve developed a devotion to the Dominican bishop saints: Albert the Great, Antoninus Pierozzi, Pius V, Pedro Sanz Jordi, Francis Serrano Frias, Ignatius Delgado Cebrian, Vincent Yen, Dominic Henares, Jerome Hermosilla Liem, Josémaría Díaz Sanjurjo, Melchior García Sampedro and Valentine Berrio Ochoa. Then there’s the Dominican bishop blessed: Guala

of Bergamo, Bartholomew of Braganza, Innocent V, Benedict XI, James of Voragine, Augustine Kažotic, James Benefatti, Andrew Franchi, John Dominici, Terence Albert O'Brien, Benedict XIII and the soon-to-be-Blessed Pio Alberto Del Corona—there may be more! I regularly entreat their help...

It seems that often what holds back young people from entering the consecrated life is the fear of commitment. Sometimes the idea of discernment becomes the limiting factor. What advice do you have for young people who may be considering a vocation to consecrated or religious life?

Four bits of advice. First, don't romanticize discernment—as if there is one perfect vocation for you and by some magic process you can hit upon it and then must just do it. That's no more realistic than thinking there is just one Mr Right or Miss Right out there for people and by magic or good luck they just have to find him or her and tie the knot or be doomed. Discernment means applying our minds and hearts to an important decision, and therefore thinking through all the pros and cons, taking counsel from wise others, praying and taking this to the Lord in the sacred liturgy. Ultimately you decide to give it a try and you (and your community) work out over time whether it's right for you. Above all you hand it all over to God: I think we need a healthy theology of divine providence into which to situate our personal vocation, rather than a theology of me into which to situate God's plans.

Secondly, don't enter the Order of Perpetual Discerners. I know too many people my own age who are still deciding what to do with their lives, who or what to commit to, etc. Life has passed them by. Better to give something really good a go and see. If you intellectualize it and agonize over it indefinitely you'll just end up with a big headache. You'll never find the perfect fit, in religious life or married life: the fact is, we are fallen creatures and the best we can hope for is a *fairly good* fit.

Thirdly, ask your wisest friends, wisest family members, and some priest or religious for advice on what would fit your personality, gifts, virtues, and [what would] give you the opportunity to be the best you. Take that seriously and then, after all the rest I've suggested, decide. Deciding includes deciding not to keep weighing up and agonizing. It means taking the plunge.

Fourthly, let me say that the Church needs religious and many of your readers need religious life. There aren't internet dating agencies to match them up. But if people do give it a go they just might find, as I have, that there is no more fulfilling life than this!

Finally, what are your hopes for the state of consecrated and religious life in the Church for the future?

I pray daily for a spring-time for religious life in our Church. The new ecclesial movements give us reason to think there are new evangelical energies, new forms of Christian life, happening around us. I hope for a bright future for religious life. And I'm determined as a bishop to do my part in cultivating it on my diocesan and national patch. With Cardinal Pell I managed to lure the Nashville Dominicans and Alma Mercies out to Aus and now there are more than a dozen young Aussie girls in formation with them: that proves that there were women just waiting for something like that to join. There are many signs of hope.

Jacob Bertrand Janczyk entered the Order of Preachers in 2010. He is a graduate of Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, where he earned a degree in biomedical sciences.



The Vale of Rest — JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS

THOUGHTS FROM THE RHINELAND

Thirteenth-century Germany boasted a flowering of Christian mysticism. Meister Eckhart, John Tauler, and Bl. Henry Suso rank among the prominent Dominican figures who belong to this school. Inspired by this heritage, Thoughts from the Rhineland features meditations and commentary that seek to aid prayer and nourish contemplation.

THE LAND OF THE LORD

Luke Hoyt, O.P.

There is a trail that runs through Israel. It is about 620 miles long, from Dan in the fertile north country to the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea. It was constructed in 1995 by the Israel Trails Committee and can be completed by an average-speed hiker in about six weeks.

I have never been there, but it is on the top of my long-distance-trails-to-do list. Of course, many other trails would have more appealing scenery: much of the southern portion of the Israel National Trail is a trudge across the Negev Desert, and the northern trail, though pleasant enough, affords little by way of the kind of high-altitude views that hikers seek out.

However, this trail provides high-altitude views of a different sort. This is because it is the Holy Land. Just as we in the United States set aside certain lands that we consider special, making them national parks, so the land of Israel has been set aside by the Lord

—a land to be regarded as peculiarly his own. To walk through it is, therefore, to encounter a place that has been set apart from all other lands by the Lord himself.

HAVING ONCE WALKED IN EDEN

A long time ago, our first parents lived in a special land. We call this place the Garden of Eden, and it was itself a sort of original Holy Land. The Garden was a place where man resided with the Lord. In fact, so close was this mutual residency that sometimes the people there “heard the sound of the Lord God walking about in the garden” (Gen. 3:8).

But this Holy Land was lost, and thereafter the idea of a place where man could reside with his God became the stuff of legend—but also the stuff of promise.



PALESTINE — JOHN SINGER SARGENT

According to the biblical tradition, near the end of the Israelites' tramp across the desert, Moses took a hike up a mountain—Mount

Nebo, just east of the Dead Sea's northern tip—from which he surveyed all of Palestine:

The Lord showed him all the land—Gilead, and as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, the plain (the valley of Jericho, the City of Palms), and as far as Zoar. (Deut. 34:2-3)

Then God tells him, “This is the land about which I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ‘I will give it to your descendants’” (Deut. 34:4).

What is this gift of land? Certainly, there are the basic goods: a fertile region that will provide food, a place of security in the midst of enemies. But more than this, through this blessing, God has begun to restore mankind to himself. He has given his people a land like the Garden, where he himself dwells in a special way.

Jacob, journeying through this land as a young man, stops for the night in Bethel, in the northern hills of Judea. That night, the Lord visits him in a dream, and when he wakes, he exclaims, “Truly, the Lord is in this place and I did not know it!” (Gen. 28:16). Later, Jacob returns to the land after a sojourn to the east. Just as he reenters his homeland, he meets “God’s angels,” whereupon he exclaims, “This is God’s encampment!” (Gen. 32:2-3).

In short, this is God’s land. The Lord has given it to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants, and he calls it their home because it is the place where he particularly dwells. Since the Israelites are his people, and since he is their God, the only place where the Israelites should be truly at home is the place where God has made his home. It is like someone giving you a new house, and you go there and discover that it is actually your benefactor’s house. And then maybe you say, “Oh, I must have misunderstood

you—this is your house.” And he responds, “Exactly. I wanted there to be a place that we could both call home, you and I together.”

THE LAND THE LORD WALKED

After living in this land for a time, a curious sound was heard. It was too subtle to be noticed by many, but for those who were listening closely, it triggered an ancient memory. For the first time since leaving the Garden, men heard the sound of the Lord God walking about in their midst. “It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee” (Mark 1:9). Those who noticed responded with wonder, “It is the Lord!” (John 21:7).

And for a space of several decades, the Lord walked about in the land. Like Jacob before them, the people would marvel, “The Lord is in this place and I did not know it!” And, “This is God’s encampment!”

The people had already been dwelling in the Lord’s Land. But now the Lord had made this land his home on a far more intimate scale. Now he could be seen, touched, heard. His people could talk with the Lord and eat with the Lord; they could lie down at his side. They had already been in the Lord’s encampment. Now it would seem they were in his very dining room.

This reality continues in a hidden mode to this day, as God dots the globe with his presence in the Eucharist, with his presence in the Church. In fact, by virtue of the Eucharist and the Church, the whole world has become the Lord’s Holy Land - a world-land where the Lord dwells with us and we with the Lord. The ancient memory of the Garden is being awoken as the ancient promise of the Land is being fulfilled.

AWAITING THE INHERITANCE

And yet, we also still await the Land. The sound of the Lord’s footsteps were heard in Palestine twenty centuries ago, but he was in a certain way hidden in the humanity he had taken on. We see the Lord today in his Body and Blood which are offered at each Mass, but he looks like mere bread and wine. The whole world has

become the Lord's Land, and yet we know that there is a yet more perfect land, a yet more perfect home, where we may live with the Lord yet more perfectly. It is this ultimate and final Holy Land that Jesus is speaking of when he says: "I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be" (John 14:3).

This is what we call heaven. Heaven is the final Holy Land because it is God's ultimate home. And this was God's ultimate referent when he told Moses, "This is the land about which I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, 'I will give it to your descendants.'" God was revealing the image while having in mind the heavenly reality.

THE FINAL HOLY LAND

In the meantime, there remains the land of Israel. It sits there still, like an ancient artifact - our first model, if you will, of the Lord's Land; a miniature of the Final Holy Land.

The Israelites of old erected stone altars and memorials to commemorate the Lord's action or presence in a given place. And this is what the whole land of Israel is today: a great monument—to the Lord in himself, yes—but also to the Lord's presence among us, to the weight of his feet upon the ground.

The land of Israel is, therefore, a kind of really big icon. Icons allow us to see into spiritual realities by way of physical signs. When our eyes take in the wood and paint of an icon depicting Jesus, we behold something of the holiness of Christ. When our eyes receive the lines of movement and color from an icon depicting the Trinity, we behold something of the inner life of God. And when our eyes consider the land of Israel, we behold something of that final "place" where we will dwell in perfect union with God.

This great icon lies there, day after day, under the sun and under the stars, for all to see. Just by lying there it speaks of the home of the Lord, forever bearing witness to the final Promised Land. And just as it is right and good for us to consider the lines and color of a painted icon, so too is it right and good for us to consider the

lines and color of the land of Israel—to journey up Mount Nebo like Moses, whether in thought or in person, and look upon the topography of the land, naming the color of the desert spreading out to the south, beholding the Jordan valley descending from the north, smelling the salt on the wind blowing east from the Dead Sea, looking west to Jerusalem, the city of the Lord, pondering Mount Zion, the mountain of the Lord, speaking the place-names of the land: “Gilead, and as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, the plain (the valley of Jericho, the City of Palms), and as far as Zoar.”

By contemplating this first prototype of the Real Land, we prepare ourselves to enter the Real Land of Promise.

As with the land of Israel, there is a trail that runs through the Land of the Lord. It was made expressly for us, long ago, by the Lord himself. For he has not forgotten the promise that he made to our fathers, to bring us into his Promised Land, where he will be our God and we will be his people.

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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. (LCO 16)

SERMON FOR A RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

Charles-René Billuart, O.P. (1685-1757)

Editor's note: Charles-René Billuart, O.P., was a renowned preacher in seventeenth-century France. Serving his province as a prior, regent of studies, and prior provincial, he devoted his time to theological inquiry and the work of preaching. His first book, a commentary on the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas, is a tremendous scholarly work which won him a great reputation among the theological schools of his day.

For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

— St. Paul, 2 Cor. 4

Oh, the mysteries enclosed in these words of the Apostle! Living men who are dead, and a dead man who suffers so as to make life burst forth, to live while dying, to die in order to live—what an apparent paradox! A moment of

patience, my brothers; all these mysteries are going to develop in that profession of our dear confreres. Behold, *there* are the living and the dead of whom the Apostle speaks. It is in them that death will become fruitful. There are the two victims of life that charity, stronger than death, is going to immolate at the foot of the altar to the divine majesty, but who, like the phoenix, by the ardor of the same charity, will take on a more blessed life in the very ashes of their pyre.

I will explain myself and speak without riddles. Secular philosophers recognized but a single sort of life, which consists in the union of the soul with the body, and also but a single sort of death which is opposed to it and which consists in the separation of the soul from the body. But St. Paul, illumined by purer lights, recognized in man another type of life, which consists in the movement of fallen nature, conformed to perverse inclinations. He teaches us, consequently, to fight against it with another sort of death, which consists in the privation of these disordered movements. So, my brothers, it is in the profession of the religious life that all the types of this death are encountered: death to the world, death to all the passions, death to the senses, civic death, mystical death—which entails all that the most cruel natural death has of bitterness, and even something more. But this fruitful and active death is the source of a more blessed life. It is thus correctly that these dear brothers, at the moment of their profession, say to us with the Apostle: while we are full of life, we deliver ourselves to death for Christ Jesus. Nevertheless, this death will operate in us like life in you: *Nos qui vivimus*, etc. You will see them first over a bed of pain, in agony and dying, stricken under blows redoubled by divine love, making the sacrifice of their life for Jesus. *In mortem tradimur propter Jesum*: the first subject of your reflexions. You will see them next leaving gloriously from their tomb, taking on a life a thousand times more blessed than that which they left behind: *Ergo mors operatur in nobis* (the second subject of your reflections). My discourse will be, in one part, a funeral oration for these illustrious

deceased, and, in the other part, it will serve as a panegyrique to their victory and happiness. And to you, brothers present for this profession, dispose your hearts to the different movements of joy and sorrow. Shed tears over their tomb, and applaud at the same time their triumph. And *you* my most dear brothers *profitendi*, dispose *yourselves* to die, while we pray that Mary may sustain your courage to make this sacrifice and animate my voice to encourage you. *Ave Maria*.

THE FIRST POINT

What is it, “to die”? It is to do three things, or rather to suffer three separations, namely, separation from property, separation from parents and friends, separation of the soul from the body. Death says to a soul, at the moment she leaves the body, what God said of old to the patriarch Abraham: *Egredere de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui* (Gen. 12). *Egredere de terra tua*, go out from your land, leave behind your possessions, your property, and your inheritance: *Egredere de cognatione tua*, leave your parents and your friends, bid them an eternal adieu, break the chains of the flesh: *Egredere de domo patris tui*, leave the house of your father, that is to say, in a mystical sense, leave the prison of this mortal body which you have received from your parents. Three separations, my dear brothers, which are found in the action which you are going to make, with as much and more bitterness than even in death. Divine love, armed with three arrows, which are the three vows that you are going to make and which will deliver three mortal blows to you, shall address to you the same words: *Egredere de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui*. Leave, it tells you, by the vow of poverty; go forth from your land: *Egredere de terra tua*, part from your possessions, abandon your property, leave behind your inheritance. For, what is it, to make a vow of poverty? It is to renounce all rights, all goods, all estate, all property, and even all use without the legitimate permission of superiors. Death, says Tertullian, is, to the passage from life, like a porter to whom God has given the commission

to make us leave behind all our property. Such, my brothers, is the vow of poverty at the exit of the world in order to enter into religion.

It makes us leave everything; it deprives us even of the hope of ever being able to possess anything, and, not content with exterior renouncement, it enters even into our most secret confines and obliges our heart to dispossess itself of all affection that it might have for these possessions. But, take guard, my dear brothers, it would be to make only half a vow of poverty, or—to say it better—it would be to not make one at all, indeed, it would be to mock at God and religion if, while renouncing by mouth and exteriorly the goods of the earth, you would still guard in your heart a secret attachment not only for those things that you leave behind today, but also for those things which religion will permit you to use in the future.

It would be, I say, to live neither in religion nor in evangelical poverty if, after having renounced more considerable goods in the world, you would come—in following the vow—to have excessive attachment to [any other, less considerable] things. I do not say ‘superfluous’ things, for that would go manifestly against your vow, but even necessary things that religion will accord to your usage. You would be, says St. Bernard, more miserable than worldly men themselves, since, being thus attached to trivial things, you would lose all the merit of the noble action that you are going to make today: *Miserabiliores sumus omnibus hominibus nos monachi, si pro tam exiguis tanta patimur detrimenta.*

It is necessary then, my dear brothers, to renounce not only all your possessions, but even the affection that you could have for them and the hope ever to be able to possess anything else. Is there in death a more universal dispossession? Death, it is true, dispossesses us of all our property, but at the same time she places us beyond the state of needing it; religious life takes away from us every means of satisfying our bodily needs, but leaves us always the hard necessity of fulfilling them. You are going then, my dear

brothers, to expose yourselves to suffer hunger, thirst, cold, heat; to win, thus to say, your bread by the sweat of your brow; to give up the property which heaven has been pleased to provide for you in order to enter into a poor condition, in a convent which subsists only by the charity of benefactors. You are going to put yourselves in a state of mendicancy, you who possess the power to make alms for others. You will, finally, by this poverty, render yourselves contemptible, the scum of the people, a thing abhorrent to worldly men for whom poverty is more odious even than death itself. At last, what more? You will die: *In mortem tradimur propter Jesum*.

But, in order to die, it does not suffice to leave all one's property; it is necessary yet to leave one's parents and friends, to bid them an eternal adieu. It is necessary to renounce all pleasure, all friendship; to smash, to break up all fleshly ties. It is the second separation that is done to the death. It is also, my dear brothers, that to which the divine love condemns you. This is the second mortal blow that the divine love will bring to bear on you by the vow of chastity that you are going to make: *Egredere de cognatione tua*.

To vow perpetual chastity is to deprive yourself voluntarily of all the pleasures of the senses, even those that were otherwise permitted and licit. It is, says St. Jerome, to live without the body in that same body: *In corpore vivere sine corpore*. It is to not have any further part in its disordered movements. It is to choose God for the unique spouse of one's soul and for the unique object of one's love. It is to refrain from every interaction with creatures, every bond, every friendship which does not refer itself to God. It is to put oneself in a state of being able to say with the spouse of the Canticle: *Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi*, my beloved is all to me, and I am all to Him (Song 2). A religious after his profession is no longer able, without a type of adultery and sacrilege, to share his heart among God and creature, body and spirit, among the pleasures of sense and the mortifications of the interior life. God is a jealous spouse who does not suffer any sharing: *Qui totum dedit, totum petit*, he who has given all asks for all. To make a vow of

chastity—again, a blow—is to die to oneself, to all one's senses, to the world, and to flesh; it is to attach oneself, entirely alive, to the cross with Jesus Christ: *In mortem tradimur propter Jesum, ut vita Jesu manifestetur in carne nostra mortali.*

It is to say with the Apostle: *Mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo*, the world is crucified to me, and I to the world (Gal. 6). It is to wage a continual war on one's body; it is to hate one's very self and all that is not God and [precisely] in order to please God; in a word, it is to renounce all the pleasures of a worldly life and to deliver oneself to all the rigors of the spiritual life, austere and penitent. Cross, scorn, humiliations, disciplines, the hair shirt, the cilice, solitude, silence, fasts, vigils, prayers ... behold, my dear brothers, which things ought to be, hereafter, the object of your desires and the subject of your occupations, since they are the means both sure and necessary for conserving this treasure of chastity that you are going to vow today, that you are going to bear, as the Apostle says, in fragile vessels: *Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus*, we have this treasure in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4).

Let us accomplish the sacrifice. Death shall not separate a man only from his property and his parents and friends, but yet also soul from body. She does not say to him only that it is necessary to quit his land and his kinsfolk: *Egredere de terra tua et de cognatione tua*. She also says to him that it is necessary to quit the house of his father, that is to say, to separate himself from the mortal body that he has received from his father and mother: *Egredere de domo patris tui*.

There, my dear brothers, is the language that divine love addresses to you by the vow of obedience. It is the command that it pronounces against you: *Egredere de domo patris tui*. It is the last mortal blow—and the most felt—that it is going to deal out to you, one which will seize your life entirely and accomplish the consummation of your sacrifice.

It is true, my brothers, that the soul of a religious after his profession should not be left still united to his body. I dare,

however, to tell you that something more terrible than the material separation of the soul from the body (which happens at death) happens here. Behold how I shall prove it.

Death, which reduces our body to a powder, does not harm the soul. On the contrary, she sets the soul free. Death draws the soul, to speak, from the earth and the grave. But religious profession does not spare even this spiritual part. Profession mortifies the flesh by poverty and chastity, and far from freeing the spirit, like death does, she submits it by the vow of obedience to a long and cruel servitude. For, my brothers, I ask you if one can still live while the spirit itself—which is the life of the body—is not able to act any more. What is more similar to death than a person who does not move except when another moves him; or when one is treated, when one is turned as another wishes, without being able either to resist or grumble? This, my dear brothers, is the state to which obedience is going to reduce you.

It is difficult to imagine anything more heroic and at the same time, more terrible, more contrary to nature than this virtue. A man promises much, it is true, when he promises to God perpetual poverty and chastity. But when he vows an eternal obedience, he agrees to everything without knowing precisely to what he is agreeing. He makes a vow to render himself a slave for all his life to the wishes—let us say it frankly, the caprices and often, indeed, all the passions—of a person who is neither infallible in his judgments nor impeccable in his conduct. Still, if one were to submit oneself only to a single person, or if you were assured, my dear brothers, that all those who will govern you during perhaps the space of sixty years will all be as reasonable, as clear, as virtuous, as beneficent as that one to whom you have the happiness to render your first obediences, it would not be difficult to subject oneself to a conduct so sweet. Servitude in this case would scarcely be less agreeable than liberty. But it is not to this one here only that you will deliver yourselves, bound hand and foot like victims. You will abandon

yourselves with the same indifference to all who will succeed him. Whether they are noble or indulgent, affable or sad, prudent or indiscrete, wrathful or temperate. Whether they love you or naturally have an aversion for your temperament—whatever takes their fancy to command—you will oblige yourselves to obey them until death, under the pain of your eternal damnation.

If this is not dying, my brothers, it is without a doubt something more contrary to nature than even death itself. Should we be astonished that a young man who thinks to make a step so difficult would be sometimes attacked and fought for a long time before being able to resolve to do it? For it is not necessary to cover over that this death is, ordinarily, preceded by a cruel agony. I invoke you as witnesses on this point, reverend Fathers; and perhaps you too, dear brothers, know it already from your own experience. Nature in these encounters makes strange efforts to smother the grace which wants to smother her. The world and pleasure present themselves with charms capable of rattling a young courage. Religion, moreover, offers to the spirit only frightful images of humiliations, abstinence, and solitude. The whole man trembles at the sight of fifty or sixty years of constraint, with the sole thought of a life pricked by thorns, distanced from every pleasure, all property, of parents and friends; a life without one's own plans, without movement other than that which she receives from an exterior principle; a life which is, rightly, a continual death and martyrdom: *Nos qui vivimus in mortem tradimur*, etc.

Ah! My dear brothers, can you resolve to drink the chalice of bitterness, the chalice full of gall and wormwood: *Potestis bibere calicem*, can you drink the chalice (Matt. 20)? Can you, tender and delicate as you are, suffer all these holy rigors? *Potestis*? Can you resolve yourselves to these harsh separations? *Potestis*? Finally, can you endure this frightful death and this continual martyrdom? *Potestis*? But what can I say? Useless demands, vain precautions ... I do injury to your courage and piety. Yes! My God,

they can do it! *Possumus*. They can do it since it is for You. They can do it since it is with Your grace and example. They can do it, my God, since this death is nothing except a passage to a more blessed life: *Mors operatur in nobis et vita in vobis*.

THE SECOND POINT

Reassure yourselves, my dear brothers; calm your worries, recall your courage, if perhaps my too dire discourse had dispersed it. Wipe away your tears, Christians gathered in this enclosure; change your sighs into cries of joy. Death is vanquished by its own weapons: *Absorpta est mors in victoria*, death is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15). There are no greater triumphs, victories, pleasures, and happiness.

All the innocent combats that the God of peace gives you—and with which I just occupied you—shortly will be exchanged, says St. Gregory of Nyssa, with the joys of a chaste and divine marriage. This death in which you will deliver yourselves will be in you the source of a life a thousand times more blessed: *Mors operatur in nobis et vita in vobis*.

Three things make for the happiness of life: abundance of property, sweetness of pleasures, and complete liberty; three benefits which you seemingly renounce while leaving the world behind, but that you will recover a hundredfold in religious life—to a degree much more perfect.

You will renounce, it is true, by the vow of poverty all the goods of fortune and all that that you are able to claim in this age. But while offering them thus to God, it is by the same vow that you will assure them for yourselves forever. Houses are overthrown, scepters are smashed, but what one gives to God will never perish: *Tuta est haereditas quae Christo custode servatur*, safe is the inheritance that is preserved for Christ the watchman. It is a faithful deposit, says St. John Chrysostom, which will pay you back in superabundance. Moreover, you will exchange for this life of temporal goods another type of the most precious goods, which are the treasures of the grace

of God: the grace of predestination, the grace of vocation, the grace of justification and of perseverance: examples of virtue, salutary instructions, the efficacy of the sacraments, frequent inspirations; prevenient grace, concomitant grace, justifying grace. In a word, we can say of religion what Origen said of the terrestrial paradise: the air there is purer than in the world, grace more abundant, and God more present: *Aer purior, gratia uberior, Deus praesentior*. There, my dear brothers, are the rich treasures that you will receive for but a little amount of property, a little of the clay that you will abandon to the world. Finally, according to the promise of Jesus Christ, you will acquire not only the hundredfold but also eternal life, which ought to be the recompense of your generous action: *Qui reliquerit domum ... aut agros propter nomen meum centuplum accipiet et vitam aeternam possidebit*, everyone that has left house ... or lands for my name's sake shall receive a hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting (Matt. 19). Do not doubt, my dear brothers; there is a God who promises it to you. He is faithful in His promises, He wills all that He promises, He can do all that He wills. Blessed exchange of the creature with God; blessed death, blessed separation, lovable poverty, sweet and agreeable wound which procures for you a life so blessed, so full of immortal hopes: *O pulchrum vulnus, o felix plaga, per quam plagam vita subit aeterna* (Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Song of Songs*).

But in order to live happily, it does not suffice to possess great goods, it remains necessary to taste the sweetness of pleasures. Ah! My dear brothers, how great is your happiness in this! You renounce, it is true, by the vow of chastity the deceptive pleasures of the world and its false joys, to unite yourselves more closely to God; but, in exchange, what interior delights, perfect joys, sweet ineffable things are going to flow into your soul by this intimate union with her God, who is the source of true pleasures! The pleasures, joys, consolations, sweetness that He accords with such a profusion to those who renounce all to attach themselves to Him, such that thereby the soul is as drunk: *Inebriabuntur ab ubertate*

domus tuae, they shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house (Ps. 36). It is as if she [the soul] were entirely transformed in this sovereignly lovable object which fills her with delights, says St. Bernard, such that she no longer has any movement of joy and love except for Him: *Nec potest jam sentire aut sapere nisi Deum*. Yes, my dear brothers, as the prophet Hosea says, on that blessed day when I am going to make you leave Egypt in order to lead you into the desert, I will reveal myself to your heart in an ineffable manner, I will nourish you and will fill you with milk and my solid and divine consolations: *Ecce ego lactabo eam et ducam eam in solitudinem et loquar ad cor ejus, juxta diem ascensionis suae de terra Aegypti*, behold I will allure her and will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart, according to the days of her coming up out of the land of Egypt (Hos. 2).

Wonderful promises, abundant recompenses! How can you wish more, my dear brothers? God Himself will be your joy, your pleasure, your consolation by His intimate union and His familiar communication with you. Oh pleasure, oh joy without equal, oh sweetness above all my expressions! No, exclaims St. Augustine, my tongue cannot say what my heart experiences while rejoicing in God: *Non sufficit lingua mea cordi meo*. If all hearts were to form but one heart, says St. Thomas, this heart would not be able to know how great is the pleasure which is felt in a soul that is uniting itself to God: *Si omnia corda essent unum cor, investigare non posset quantam delectationem habet anima in congratulatione Dei*. Let us leave then, my dear brothers, let us leave your heart to taste what my tongue cannot make you know. Let us speak a language more intelligible to those who hear me, and let us say that your pleasure in religion will still be the repose of a good conscience, which is, says the Sage, a continual and delicious feast: *Bona conscientia iuge convivium*. This will be a lively hope of paradise, founded on the moral assurance of your predestination: *Spe gaudentes, in tribulatione patientes*, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation (Rom. 12). There will be, finally, this fraternal charity

which is the bond of true religious communities and which creates the pleasure of religion, so that we can rightly cry like the prophet: *Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum* (Ps. 132). Ah! How good, how agreeable that brothers should dwell and



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be united together! *Ecce quam bonum!* How good, how agreeable that grace should affirm in you the bond that nature has already formed: *Ecce quam bonum!* Blessed encounter of nature with grace, sweet and agreeable sympathy of two hearts united by nature and charity; a union, I hope, my dear brothers, not of the body only in one same religion, one same house, but perfect union of heart, fruit of holy love which will inspire in you one sole will and the same spirit in order to serve the same Father and the same master that we all adore: *Cum fratres nuncupantur, unicae voluntatis cari-*

tate concordēs sunt, in being named brothers, they are united by the charity of a single will.

But I have strayed. Pardon me, my brothers; the pleasure that I felt myself to expose to you the true and solid pleasures of religion made me forget the bounds that I had prescribed for myself.

Let us be brief, then, and let us say that in order to live blessedly, besides the abundance of goods and the enjoyment of pleasures, complete liberty is still necessary. You will sacrifice it in appearance, my very dear brothers, by the vow of obedience. But is it by the same vow that you will put yourselves in possession of the true liberty of the children of God: *Vos in libertatem vocati estis*, you have been called unto liberty (Gal. 3). God releases from this accursed captivity of worldly men, men who have as many tyrants as they have passions which they obey. You shake off blessedly this hard slavery of judgments, customs, reflexions, the critiques of the world which make all the days of worldly men sigh: *Jugum oneris ejus et virgam humeri ejus et sceptrum exactoris ejus superasti*, the yoke of their burden and the rod of their shoulder and the sceptre of their oppressor You have overcome (Is. 9). You will enter into possession of a holy liberty to practice in an elevated manner virtue by your state, without fear of insults, of raillery or reproaches. This is far from any possibility that the vow of obedience should weaken your liberty because it will remove from you in some way the power to do evil. To the contrary, it fortifies it, because this unhappy power to sin is a defect and not a perfection of our liberty, as theology teaches.

Yes, my dear brothers, as the Holy Spirit says to you by the mouth of Sirach, these bonds, these chains, this slavery—to which you will submit yourselves today—will serve to defend you, to fortify you, and to crown you with glory: *Et erunt tibi compedes ejus in perfectionem fortitudinis et bases virtutis; et torques illius in stolam gloriae et vinculum illius alligatura salutaris*, then shall her

fetters be a strong defence for thee and a firm foundation, and her chain a robe of glory: ... and her bands are a healthful binding (Eccl. 6).

Courage then, innocent victims. Courage, predestined souls. Accomplish the sacrifice that you have so generously begun. Ascend by a firm step to Calvary, and open your heart to the features of divine love: *Nuda pectus tuum divino amori*. Present your heart courageously to this lovable Tyrant, and receive without fear the mortal blows that He will bring upon you: *Nuda pectus tuum*. No, fear not, since this death that you will suffer for Jesus will produce in you a life a thousand times more blessed than that which you leave behind, while procuring for yourselves goods more precious, pleasures more perfect, a liberty more whole than in the world.

And you, my [other] brothers, do you think yourselves to have no part in all that I have just said? A strange thing: from the moment that one speaks of death, the cross, renouncement, separation, austerity, one imagines that this be addressed only to religious. An abuse, my brothers, an abuse. Know and remember that by baptism you died and were buried to the world with Jesus Christ: *Consepulti sumus cum Christo per baptismum*, we are buried together with him by baptism (Rom. 6). What a Christian says, a dead man says, a man crucified to the world, and to whom the world ought to be also. This example, then, my brothers, that I propose today to your eyes is not so strange to you as you may imagine. They die to the world, you ought to die to it: they separate themselves from the world, you ought to separate yourselves from it, if not from the body and goods like them, at least from the heart and affection. These are the promises, the engagements, the sacred and inviolable vows that you have made to God before heaven and earth in your baptism: *Consepulti sumus*, etc.

I return to you, my dear brothers. You burn—I see it—with a holy impatience to accomplish your sacrifice. Enkindled by the

ardor of charity, you sigh, like the Apostle, to break your chains in order to live with Jesus Christ. This death, all frightful, that I have depicted for you from the beginning of my discourse, has no longer for you but charm and attraction. The hope of a more blessed life animates you and renders you disposed. I perceive it, my dear brothers; and if, penetrating further, I enter into the secret of your heart, what ardor, what fire, what courage, what sentiments of love! Permit me, my dear brothers, for the edification of my hearers, to offer them on your behalf to the God of goodness for Whom you are going to die.

Sovereign arbiter of the life and death of men, God of mercy, lovable Savior of our souls, impelled by a true desire to please You, we come to the foot of Your altar to make to You a voluntary sacrifice of our life: *Nos qui vivimus, in mortem tradimur propter Jesum*. Yes, Lord, full of life as we are, we are going to die for Your love, for Your glory, in order to follow the holy footsteps which You have imprinted on this world. We are going to die so as no longer to live for ourselves: *Ut vita Jesu manifestetur in carne nostra mortali*. We are young, it is true, even in the springtime of youth, and yet, woe to us not to have aspired earlier to the happiness we are going to enjoy. Yes Lord, it is already too late to begin to serve You, it is too late to know You, it is too late to love You, oh goodness so ancient and so new: *Sero te amavi bonitas tam antiqua et tam nova*.

Blessed, a thousand times so blessed if, from the cradle, we have recognized that the life of the world is a frightful death and that to die, for us, is to live eternally; still more blessed if the first moment of our life had finished the course by a death as blessed as that which we are going to suffer. Ah! Lord, had we a million lives, that would yet be too little to be a sacrifice worthy of Your altar! Deign, though, lovable tyrant of our hearts, to receive that which we offer You today from all the expanse of our heart and our love, and by a continuation of Your favors, grant, O God of goodness, that our voluntary death may be in us the source of a

life more holy, more tranquil, and more blessed in this world, and that finally, it would be followed in the next life by the happiness to possess You for all eternity. This is the grace that we beg from You, and that I wish for you. *Amen.*

Translated by John Sica, O.P.

John Sica entered the Order of Preachers in 2010. He is a graduate of Providence College, where he studied philosophy.

This sermon first appeared in French as "Sermon pour une profession religieuse" in *Sermons du R. P. C.-R. Billuart*, ed. Étienne Lelièvre (Paris: Jacques Lecoffre, 1846), 2:259–74.

EX NIHILO

ORIGINAL PROSE AND POETRY

BELIEF IS BACKWARD

Timothy Danaher, O.P.

What game is this
You mean to play
Whose profits pay in poverty?
This wool you pull
So I can't see
But doing so
I'm made happy?
This invitation
Offered gift
Which, to accept, I must be taken
And taken from
Every day,
Your demands
For following on the way.
Before a Beauty
I do not myself have
A Truth which instructs
And in doing so confounds.
It began as being "part of the team"
As a taste of glory, or birth of a dream
But drawing near
Leads to the cross.



THE HERMIT — MIKHAIL NESTEROV

It was confusing then,
And confusing still,
This way
To take our sins away.
Sitting here
With pale skin
And no one to talk to
Where is the icing on the cake?
I have nothing to give

At first, there you were
Just going for it,
Walking through the closed door of my life
Telling me to go for it
Then leaving when I most wish you'd stay.
God grasped for a moment,
Then gone, and robbed
but for grace,
a flitting thing.

"Quiet," he says
"All is well.
Everything changes anyways."

We have grown poorer since the start
But freer...
We were always poor,
Nothing to give
Nothing to say
No great tasks to accomplish
Not really
Just vague dreams
We were always poor
But are only seeing it now.

"You know what, Lord...
I'm glad to be a part of it...
Despite the loss..."

Timothy Danaher entered the Order of Preachers in 2011. He is a graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville.

MID-YEAR'S HOPE

Jonah Mary Teller, O.P.

As pressing one's finger upon the sore
We think is only ours; as constructing
Awkward jumbles from the punk¹ we've held in store,
Building with bone-hard fingers and thinking
With clenched mind to bring ourselves to the wish
We built, we foolishly bludgeon. Inept,
And blundering, we beat ourselves to banish
A bruise that seemed to come while we slept.
And once we are too frail exhaustion brought
And sit amidst the tumble of our tears,
A whisper which we fled yet somehow sought
Cross-cradles us and softly sifts our fears.
 So Love did tongue Elijah from his cave.
 So too for us, who inside yet do rave.

Jonah Mary Teller entered the Order of Preachers in 2013. He is a graduate of the University of Dallas.

1 Wood so decayed as to be dry and crumbling.

FRIARS' BOOKSHELF

TELL ME JESUS AIN'T ALIVE

Clark Massey, *The New Evangelization: 2003-2013 Missionary Letters*. Washington, DC: S&T Minuteman Press, 2013.

I quit my job, sold my motorcycle, and poured my life savings into the founding of a small charity in southeast Washington, DC." So writes Clark Massey in the first of forty-seven letters compiled in *The New Evangelization: 2003-2013 Missionary Letters*. Massey is the founder of A Simple House of Sts. Francis and Alphonsus, an organization dedicated to serving the poor in Washington, DC, and Kansas City, Missouri. As the title suggests, the book is simply a collection of the newsletters sent out five times a year to friends and family (and anyone else who is interested). Just over half of the letters in this short volume come from Massey's pen, while the rest give voice to the insights and observations of nine other missionaries. The compilation of these letters into a single book allows for a beautiful, diachronic perspective on the unmistakable workings of divine providence over the ten or so years since A Simple House first took up its noble mission.

One need only read the letters of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati or Flannery O'Connor (others, of course, could be named) to learn firsthand that the profoundest insights into someone's life, mind, and habit of being are often found in his letters; so, too, for this book. The reader quickly realizes that the heart of this small organization's work is not at bottom a social agenda or mere material aid, but the spreading of the Gospel. This is not to say that the missionaries of A Simple House are ignorant of the societal problems that allow for the great depths of poverty so prevalent in

southeast DC or that they scoff at the corporal works of mercy—far from it!—but, rather, that the purpose of their work, the end towards which they labor, is to bring people to Jesus, and this by what they call “friendship evangelization.”

In one letter Massey aptly quotes St. Paul as a kind of exemplar of this friendship evangelization: “So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us” (1 Thess 2:8). For the missionaries of A Simple House, this sharing of their own selves is the context in which they serve the poor, cultivating authentic relationships which provide fertile ground for evangelization. It is also the pretext for their living an intentional life of fervent and frequent prayer and voluntary poverty, by which the missionaries imitate St. Paul in their becoming all things to all men that they might by all means save some (cf. 1 Cor 9:19–23).

The newsletters very frequently include anecdotes about interactions with the poor, thus giving the reader a privileged glimpse into the inner workings of this friendship evangelization. Often the stories are difficult and bleak, describing apparently insurmountable habits of sin (like a prostitute who was able to get off the streets for a while but, before long, found herself back there again), serious struggles with mental illness (like a homeless woman convinced her memories were not her memories), and even sudden and violent deaths (like a young man shot and killed mere hours after a visit from the missionaries, or an alcoholic who murdered his elderly neighbor with a hammer).

Aside from these exterior afflictions, the letters also unmask that insidious interior incapacitation of the will, despair. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, this is one of the most important elements of the book, because it is here that the mission of A Simple House comes into full focus: the many and varied forms of material assistance they offer are ancillary to their fundamental goal, namely, to “rekindle hope through little stages of help and friendship.” It would be difficult to overstate the influence here of

Mother Teresa, who observed, “We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked, and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for is the greatest poverty.”



TAYLOR, ARIZONA — FREDERICK SOMMER

The relationship between material and spiritual poverty lies at the roots of authentic Christian service to the poor, and it is implicit throughout the book as the driving force for the whole project, like a river's constant current. It is often the materially poor who suffer the greatest spiritual poverty; after all, man is both body and soul. But with regard to spiritual poverty a further distinction could be drawn: there are those who are poor in spirit and inherit the kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 5:3); and then there are those who are desolate and destitute in spirit, who feel empty and defeated and powerless in the face of their affliction. We read about the missionaries doing what they can to bring the latter group into the company of the former, to help dispose those who are hopeless and despairing to be transformed by grace into men and women

awaiting the blessed hope and the coming of our savior Jesus Christ into their lives.

This brings us back to divine providence. The book is replete with utter reliance on God's loving plan, because A Simple House is essentially a project of trusting in providence. They have renounced endowments and savings accounts, and as a rule they have no more than three months of operating funds on hand at any given time, though frequently they have less than that. To this end, a charming story is recounted which could come straight from the lives of the saints. At one point there was not enough money to keep operating, so the missionaries met to discuss how to go forward. Shortly after they prayed, the mail arrived and with it a check for ten thousand dollars.

The trust in God which fuels the life of A Simple House runs much deeper, however, than considerations of finance. It is bound up with the mystery of suffering, personal weakness, and the victory of Christ on the cross. Countless stories are told illustrating the interconnectedness of these towering themes, but the best summary is perhaps found in the account of the missionaries' friendship with one man in particular, an alcoholic who drank thirty beers a day just to avoid feeling sick. At one point during his recovery, something as simple as bumping into an old friend at a gas station was enough to bring the reality of God's abiding presence into sharper focus for him, and he cried out, "Tell me Jesus ain't alive!"

After reading this moving collection of newsletters, I found myself exclaiming the very same thing—"Tell me Jesus ain't alive!"—and praising God for the wonders of his love.

Peter Joseph Gautsch entered the Order of Preachers in 2011. He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he studied theology and music.

THIS ARTISTRY OF TRANSLATION

Kevin Vost, *The One-Minute Aquinas*. Manchester: Sophia, 2014.

When passing from one language to another, translators have to make choices, and—all too often—words once rich with ambivalence and steeped with meaning are rendered with flat denominations, utterly lifeless and vacuous. Scripture scholars have made an industry of pointing out just how much can be lost in translation. *Traduttore, traditore*. To translate is to betray. And the experience is not just limited to the written medium. How many times have we heard someone remark: “Oh, the book is much better than the movie!” And yet, despite our acknowledgement of the limitations of translation, we continue to do it. Part of the motivation is the money to be had, most painfully evidenced by the division of *The Hobbit*, a three-hundred page book, into three (count them, three) movies. And yet, despite the Marxist temptation to leave it at that, there’s more to the question. We translate to make available the inexhaustible riches that we have discovered with difficulty. The movie producer makes the candid recognition that all will not read the book, but yet it is worthy of a wider audience. To that end, he translates the written word to speech, gesture, lighting, music, motion, and staging; hoping to capture, transpose, and (in some rare cases) amplify the truth and beauty of the original composition. The artist is a translator and his task is lofty.

Theology shares in this artistry of translation. Rather than translating from Latin to English or from script to cinema, the theologian is called by God to translate the divine wisdom into human words. Though he stands before the super-intelligibility of the Almighty as an owl before the noon-day sun, this in no way mitigates the fact that man can come to know something of God, by his gracious assistance, and can communicate this knowledge

to his contemporaries and subsequent generations. St. Thomas was just such an artist. By a generous participation in God's intelligible light, he gazed deeply into the mysteries of the faith and scrutinized the manifest presence of God in the world around him. With the assiduous determination of a true soldier, he penned tome after tome in an effort to expose God's deep intelligibility—giving sound doctrine to teachers, solid food to contemplatives, and glory to the most high God. Unfortunately, by a confluence of factors, his light does not shine as brightly as it ought in the present day, and for that reason, he himself stands in need of translators.



LOVE LEADING THE PILGRIM — EDWARD BURNE-JONES

Kevin Vost's most recent foray into Thomistic translation provides just such a help. In its most popular translation, the *Summa Theologica* numbers over 3,000 pages. Beyond mere length, it doesn't always admit of easy access. For the catechist giving a talk on Christ, it can be difficult to sift the fifty-nine questions on the Incarnation, hypostatic union, and the mysteries of Christ's life in search of the perfect content for a forty-five minutes presentation. Add to that, the somewhat specialized vocabulary of Aristotelian natural philosophy and metaphysics, the initially difficult structure of scholastic argumentation, and the bevy of subordinated clauses and prepositional phrases, and voilà: for some, it is just easier not

to try. What Vost has done is to employ the artistry of a translator to render St. Thomas's master-work eminently accessible to students of every walk of life. Like Josef Pieper before him, Vost has brought St. Thomas into the realm of contemporary plain-speak and, in so doing has compromised nothing of the rigor and vigor of the Angelic Doctor. *The One-Minute Aquinas: The Doctor's Quick Answers to Fundamental Questions* is a compact rendering of the key insights from the *Summa Theologica*, divided into small enough portions as to be readily digestible. Vost takes each treatise in St. Thomas's master work, and reduces it to a short chapter without adornment, skillfully abbreviated to incorporate only the most essential distinctions from each section. In so doing, he cleaves to the intention of St. Thomas's original inspiration for "instructing beginners" without an undue "multiplication of arguments." And so, while to some it may seem a violence to reduce the treatise on justice (sixty-six questions and almost three hundred pages in translation) to a mere five pages, he is able to maintain a sense of scope and proportion which affords the reader a representative sampling of what matters most. Students of St. Thomas often find that it can take time to enter into his thought world, but that once done successfully, his reasoning and insights begin to register with a connatural fit. The genius of Vost's work is that it expedites this initiation and saves the student a few classes in Aristotelian philosophy without attenuating St. Thomas's theology.

Besides penning very readable prose, Vost also breaks up the progression by what he terms "Dumb Ox Boxes." In these delightful intermissions, he attends to less important questions that are nonetheless interesting for today's reader: drinking, science, devotion to the saints, and distraction in prayer all receive brief but helpful treatment in these snippets. In the spirit of a true artist, he has even adapted St. Thomas's doctrine to the curiosity-driven-point-and-click tendencies of the current culture, using it as a vehicle to draw the reader deeper in love for the Thomistic approach to God and reality.

Vost's area of expertise is psychology, and so, quite understandably, he expresses a preference for the morals section of the *Summa* (the sizeable Second Part). In fact, the Second Part played a significant role in his own conversion. After having fallen away from the faith in his teens, Vost rediscovered his faith in his forties, in large part due to his research on the treatise on prudence (q. 47-56). Thus, for Vost (as he explains in a delightful footnote), the morals section was his entrée into what became a veritable odyssey into the thought of St. Thomas. Subsequently he read in the First Part (God, creation, angels, and man) and the Third Part (Christ and the sacraments) and discovered therein a whole vision of God and man: "So although it took me twenty-five years, regaining my faith, with the grace of God and the *Summa Theologica*, was as easy as II, I, III!" Modeling the book on his own path of discovery, Vost arranges *The One-Minute Aquinas* in just that order, beginning with the Second Part and only subsequently moving to the First and Third Parts.

While I understand his reasons for doing so, this gives occasion to one of my only criticisms of the book. St. Thomas was deliberate in arranging the *Summa* as he did and for that reason, the order should be treated as on par with content in its genius. In the prologue, St. Thomas states that one of his reasons for writing was to arrange sacred doctrine in the "order of the subject matter" and not simply according to the somewhat haphazard plan of the theological manuals that preceded him. For this reason, St. Thomas situates the study of morals in between his treatises on God/creation and Christ/sacraments. With this framing, man's return to God is strategically positioned between, on the one hand, the nature of the Godhead in whose image we share by our intellect and will; and, on the other hand, the nature and life of Christ, in whose humanity and grace (disbursed in the sacraments) we are redeemed and reconciled to the Father. Thus, the treatment of the virtues in the Second Part only attains to its full dignity in light of its cause and end. It also appears that Vost has employed some confused language in his description of the intra-Trinitarian life

(170-1) and of the coordination of the divine and human intellects and wills in Christ (205-6). And yet, these criticisms are minor and do not detract from the overwhelming merit of the book as an apologetic tool and helpful entry into the contemplative wisdom of St. Thomas Aquinas.

And with that, I commend to your reading this excellent book. For those who have “despaired of comprehending the most brilliant theologian who ever lived,” *The One-Minute Aquinas* extends its hand as a companion in the dark wood. For in an age in which the way of faith and reason has most certainly been lost to us, we stand in greatest need of one who has traced with artful intelligence the lineaments of the divine wisdom and who offers to us a holy teaching fit for the refutation of error and the contemplation of the most high God.

Gregory Pine entered the Order of Preachers in 2010. He is a graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville, where he studied humanities and mathematics.

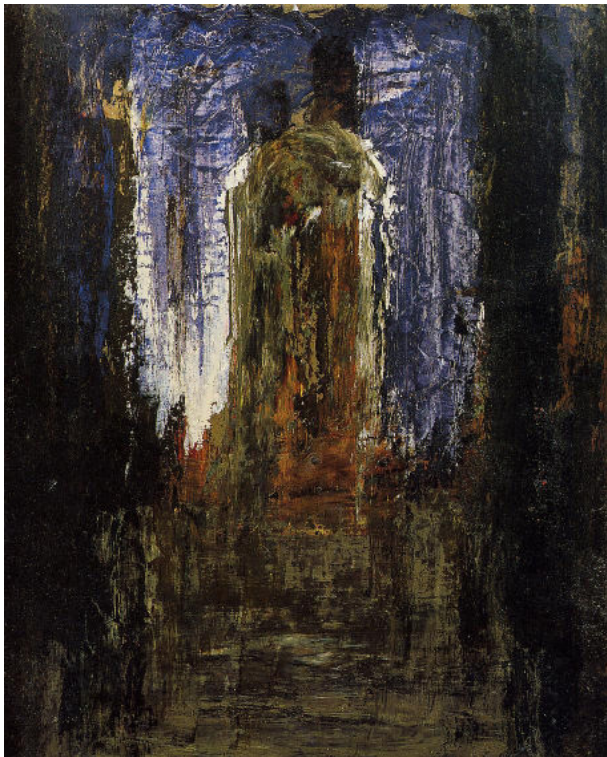
DISTILLING CHARLES TAYLOR

James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.

Why in 1500 was unbelief in God all but unthinkable, whereas today unbelief is not only possible but inevitable for many people? This is the central question explored by Charles Taylor in his monumental work *A Secular Age*. Taylor traces the historical origins of secularism with a penetrating, though often impressionistic, existential diagnosis of the changing conditions of belief—from an enchanted, meaningful cosmos to a disenchanted, impersonal universe. Taylor invites the reader to “feel” the tensions of each age, the precarious beauty of medieval hierarchical complementarity, the mournful nostalgia of the Romantics, the flatness of homogenized time, the malaise of a world closed to transcendence. This combined intellectual and impressionistic approach reflects Taylor’s most significant contribution to secularization theory: secularization is not a subtraction story—the stripping away of superstition and irrational beliefs to reveal a pure scientific account of reality—but rather it entails the success of what Taylor terms an “agape-replacement,” an alternative moral order, a vision of human dignity stripped of any transcendent cause, leaving us in a “cross-pressured” and malaise inducing “immanent frame.” Taylor’s ability to narrate the origins of our secular age by immersing the reader in a shifting field of social and cosmic “imaginaries” is what makes his 900-page work so compelling and yet so difficult to condense, distill, and make accessible to the average reader.

Enter James K.A. Smith’s *How (Not) to Be Secular*. In 140 engaging pages, the professor of philosophy at Calvin College has accomplished this near impossible task. Smith distills the essence of Taylor’s thesis, presenting the full scope of Taylor’s project without sacrificing the literary quality of Taylor’s work, which resonates

with deep and widely shared intuitions about our present age. In Smith's words, his book is first "a commentary on a book that provides a commentary on postmodern culture," but importantly it is also "a kind of how-to manual—guidance on how (not) to live in a secular age. It is ultimately an adventure in self-understanding, a way to get our bearings in a 'secular age'—whoever 'we' might be: believers or skeptics, devout or doubting." (ix).



ABSTRACT (STUDY) — GUSTAVE MOREAU

As a commentary on *A Secular Age*, Smith's book is divided into five chapters which mirror the five major parts of Taylor's work and further into sections which closely reflect Taylor's chapters. In his introduction, Smith uses the writings of Flannery O'Connor and Julian Barnes to great effect in illustrating the

condition of secularity as considered by Taylor. For Taylor, the secular which defines our age is not an absence of belief but rather a condition of belief, namely the condition of holding beliefs, not naively, but reflectively as beliefs chosen among many plausible and attractive options. The first three chapters trace Taylor's account of the historical development of these conditions: First, exclusive humanism becomes possible only after the bulwarks of belief are leveled as an incarnational (or sacramental) imaginary of nature, social relations, and the self gives way to a mechanized, individualistic, and excarnated social imaginary. Second, with the bulwarks of belief razed, exclusive humanism becomes a live option as the impersonal orders of Deism clear the way for a new moral order of this-worldly flourishing, eclipsing the need for the transcendent. Third, the eclipse of the transcendent gives rise to various "axes of malaise," causing the immanent counter-enlightenment, an explosion of Romantic attempts to recover something felt to be lost, an explosion of options which Taylor calls the "nova effect."

In the fourth chapter, Smith presents Taylor's critique of standard accounts of secularization, as well as Taylor's account of how elite unbelief became a mass movement of expressive individualism through the cultural revolution of the 1960's, facilitated especially by post-war affluence, new methods of marketing, and the consumer revolution. In the fifth chapter, Smith outlines the most apologetic part of Taylor's work, in which Taylor argues that whether one takes the "immanent frame" to be open or closed to transcendence depends upon one's prior construal of transcendence itself, and that believer and unbelievers alike face similar dilemmas surrounding a realistic account of human nature, its dignity, and its transformability, as well as perennial questions surrounding man's drive toward sex and violence. Here Taylor modestly suggests that Christianity may provide a better response to these inescapable dilemmas. Finally in his conclusion, Smith comments on Taylor's concluding chapter on converts, noting that there are many cracks in the secular through which

the transcendent breaks through and transforms those open to such transformation.

As Smith sees it, and here I agree, Taylor's work is important today, for it offers us "an existential relief map," an atlas of our age which can aid us in our existential orientation and help us minister to those suffocating under the malaise of immanence. Smith's *How (Not) to Be Secular* unfurls Taylor's map for any and all who live in this secular age "who feel the cross-pressures and malaise and 'fragilization' that [Taylor] identifies" (x).

With a glossary of Taylor's many neologisms (and they are legion) and several simple illustrations, Smith brings Taylor's tome within reach of the non-specialist. But as "a kind of how-to manual — guidance on how (not) to live in a secular age," Smith leaves the reader hungry for more. To be fair, such practical guidance is secondary to the book's primary purpose, and Smith does utilize call boxes and footnotes to highlight practical implications of Taylor's narrative. But a concluding chapter summarizing and synthesizing these practical implications would have been a welcome addition to an excellent text. *How (Not) to Be Secular* succeeds notably as an accessible, entertaining, and lively exposition of and reading guide to *A Secular Age*. Smith has a remarkable talent for getting at the heart of an argument and tracing the essential thread of a sometimes meandering narrative. Using contemporary literary and musical examples to supplement those provided by Taylor, Smith is able to retell Taylor's story in a convincing and dynamic manner. I would readily recommend the book as a helpful resource for anyone interested in studying *A Secular Age*.

Dominic Verner entered the Order of Preachers in 2010. He is a graduate of Purdue University, where he studied electrical engineering, and Mount St. Mary's University, Emmitsburg, Maryland, where he received an M.A. in philosophical studies.

ANALYZING THE SHIFT

Robert R. Reilly, *Making Gay Okay: How Rationalizing Homosexual Behavior Is Changing Everything*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2014.

Same-sex marriage, the latest front in our nation's culture wars, is often framed as a just struggle for equal rights. To guarantee homosexual men and women the same privileges society affords to married couples, proponents of same-sex marriage argue that the legal definition of marriage should be enlarged to include homosexual pairings. There also exists a "conservative" argument for gay marriage: since marriage has a civilizing effect on men and women, allowing gays and lesbians to marry each other might domesticate certain untoward aspects of the gay lifestyle. In his history of society's gradual acceptance of same-sex relations, *Making Gay Okay: How Rationalizing Homosexual Behavior Is Changing Everything* (Ignatius: 2014), Robert Reilly argues that gay marriage is actually the latest step in a long process of legitimizing homosexual activity.

Although he includes a summary of the natural law arguments that favor a traditional understanding of marriage and that discourage homosexual acts, Reilly's book is not exactly meant to persuade the unsympathetic (his repeated use of "sodomy" and "sodomite," for example, would certainly prompt anyone with sympathy for the gay rights movement to put his book down forthwith). Instead, *Making Gay Okay* provides those caught off-guard by the recent challenge to marriage with a history of this societal evolution and an analysis of its deeper consequences.

Rationalization, the process of justifying our habitual actions, is how Reilly describes the cultural shift in attitude with regard to homosexual activity. Everyone acts for the perceived good, and this axiomatic truth identified by Aristotle is echoed in the modern psychological concept of cognitive dissonance. When our habitual

actions do not align with what we believe to be good, human beings have a tendency to either change their behavior or change their beliefs. The latter is usually the easier and more travelled path. Our personal rationalizations are subject to challenge by those outside ourselves. Through legislation, the state can give external approval of our new belief or act as a check on it. According to Reilly, affirming homosexual persons in their rationalizations is the purpose of same-sex marriage.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau plays the part of the villain in Reilly's account, with one chapter dedicated to his political philosophy and ample references to him elsewhere in the book. Reilly traces the intellectual roots for the primacy of the state and the political order over the family back to the French philosopher. If all of the relations that form society are merely the result of historical circumstances and are capable of man-made evolution, then the natural family has no special standing above the other institutions in society. From this conception of reality, marriage is a creation of the state, which serves as the primary intermediary between isolated individuals.

Displacing the family is not Reilly's only complaint against Rousseau. Reilly calls his work the inversion of Aristotle. For Aristotle things find their perfection in their proper act, which for human beings is reason. Therefore bodily goods are at the service of reason. Rousseau instead put reason at the service of satisfying the passions. "Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions and may never pretend to any office other than to serve and obey them" (Rousseau, as quoted on pg. 32). This anthropological inversion leads to replacing the natural law with the language of rights. For Rousseau, rights are how we negotiate our various individual, passionate self-determinations.

For Reilly, the acceptability of same-sex activity is integrally connected to this view of reality. He argues that acceptance of Rousseau's view of nature leads one to a relativistic view of rights that is bound to accept eventually the legal protection of a variety

of modes of sexual expression. To illustrate this point, Reilly cites the example of President Obama's evolution on gay marriage. Common evolutions like this one traffic, of course, in a privatized view of morality. The idea of moral and social standards that preexist the state is inherently incompatible with the sort of self-definition and rights at play here.



ALLEGORY OF GOOD GOVERNMENT — AMBROGIO LORENZETTI

The second half of the book is a segment-by-segment examination of the infiltration of homosexual acceptance and its attendant philosophical commitments into various elements of society. By far, the strongest chapter is on the sciences, in which Reilly looks at the psychiatric community's lowering of scientific standards in changing its view of homosexuality. Reilly presents evidence that strong pressure within the field discourages fundamental questions such as whether a homosexual orientation is healthy and whether it can be altered by therapy.

Ultimately, while the book is fairly strong overall, Reilly relies too heavily on emotional responses to buttress his arguments. It is to elicit revulsion in the reader that he frequently mentions the sodomitic act itself. The argument from the unnaturalness of sodomy is so important to Reilly's work that he bothers to mention

that Greek pederasty almost never involved anal sex (pg. 22). Of course, a good rhetorician engages the emotions of his audience. However, Reilly's overuse of this technique undermines the strength of his argument. While it may be useful to point out that the sodomitic act—by which a form of same-sex sexual expression most clearly imitates heterosexual intercourse—fails to fulfill the purpose of the conjugal act, this point cannot be the lynchpin of an effective and compelling argument against same-sex marriage. Unlike what Reilly claims, the sodomitic act in a same-sex marriage is not the equivalent of a true conjugal act (pg. 95). Reilly's argument misses the broader problem with society's contemporary understanding, which has disconnected sexual acts, marriage, and the formation of families. With the diversity of impulses within what is now called homosexual, it seems imprudent to lay so heavy a rhetorical stress on one obviously unnatural act when there are many activities that are problematic.

M*aking Gay Okay* is the kind of book you could never bring up at most office watercoolers. Still less is it a guide for the unconvinced. Nevertheless, it provides an important service to those in the crosshairs of the culture wars. To those inclined to agree that natural marriage is the bulwark of civil society but who are tempted to give ground for the sake of peace, Reilly offers a word of encouragement. What is more, he outlines the untenable consequences that he sees following upon any compromise on this issue. Men and women on both sides of the same-sex marriage debate should take seriously Reilly's glimpse of the future. The book gives a glimpse of how society has changed in surprising ways seemingly overnight.

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A RESPONSE TO SCIENCE

Dennis Bonnette, *Origin of the Human Species*. Ave Maria, Florida: Sapientia Press, 2014.

Catholics in the 21st century are constantly bombarded with scientific research that seems to question the validity of Christian belief. This is particularly true in the case of evolutionary research where it seems we must accept either creation or evolution. Need this be the case? Can we not have both? And if we try to hold to the Church's teaching, how are we to respond to those who think that science proves the contrary? This is precisely the task that Bonnette boldly takes up in *Origin of the Human Species*.

There are two ways to approach the debate. The first, more popular approach presents a solution to other philosophers on how to reconcile evolution and creation. Bonnette, however, takes the less-traveled path. In his book, he lays out the various scientific claims pertaining to the evolution-creation debate, then responds to each and, thus, actually engages the scientific community. At the end of the book, the reader comes away with a strong sense of Bonnette's own position. But what is even more valuable is a better sense of how to engage, analyze, and respond to the various claims of modern research.

Bonnette first discusses the sheer possibility of evolution and where, if anywhere, God fits in. He sets the question of man aside temporarily and looks at the origin of life in general. Can a non-living thing evolve into a living organism? Evolutionary biology immediately answers in the affirmative. However, at first glance, philosophy might argue that direct divine intervention is necessary. "Miraculous divine intervention [is required] to enable a creature

to produce an effect exceeding its natural limits.” For instance, it would be a miracle if I started speaking Chinese without having studied it before. Likewise a non-living thing needs a miracle to turn itself into a living thing.

Bonnette offers a solution by introducing the philosophical notion of chance whereby an event occurs that is outside the agent’s intention. For instance, two people decide to go to the store but are unaware that the other is going. They do not intend to meet and so it is by chance that they see each other. Likewise, in non-life becoming life, the interaction of various molecules is such that by their nature they cannot produce life by themselves. However, by acting according to their nature and through a series of chance-events in their interactions with other molecules and the environment, matter is re-organized such that life emerges.

While this is possible without a miraculous divine intervention, it does not remove God from the process. On the contrary, God preordains the event as he stands outside of time, and “foresees the natural effects of creatures and creates a world where created [non-living] natures naturally give rise to life.” From this notion of what he calls natural extrinsic bioteleologism, Bonnette writes, “What appears as chance to some and molecular determinism to others would be, from God’s perspective, the eternally foreknown process of generating a world of living things.”

Bonnette proceeds to discuss the evolution of man from non-rational animals. He produces the standard argument for the necessity of divine intervention. Since evolution deals only with matter and man’s soul is incorporeal, man’s body may evolve from lower animals but his soul cannot evolve. Therefore, God intervened and infused a rational soul into a properly disposed body.

Bonnette contributes to this topic with a much needed analysis of ape-language studies. Scholars argue for the presence of rationality in apes based on the ability to form sentences, lie to others, and correct one another’s mistakes. However, after a careful

analysis of the data Bonnette illustrates that some scientists fall into the fallacy of anthropomorphism, attributing undue human characteristics to behaviors observed in apes. For Bonnette, only when apes begin the process of self-reflection, correct their own mistakes, and communicate universal ideas can scientists rightly conclude the presence of rationality.



SCENE FROM THE QUATERNARY UPPER PALEOLITHIC PERIOD
JOSÉ MARÍA VELASCO

The final major section analyzes the attempts of the scientific community to find the first human being(s). Bonnette's approach is to conclude that mankind must have been present when rationality was present. Based on aesthetics, he places the origin of man and thus Adam and Eve as late as 500,000 BC in the population of homo erectus. He makes this claim based on aesthetics. At this time, Acheulean tools arose that illustrate a concern for aesthetics and in particular for artistic symmetry. Bonnette concludes that this demonstrates a universal understanding of shapes indicative of rationality. However, while he spends over thirty pages debunking the claims of ape-language studies, he dedicates only a few pages to the argument of rationality from aesthetics. Ultimately, he fails to articulate why those tool makers could not have simply found pleasure in this particular symmetrical shape as opposed to pleasure in universal shapes. Non-rational animals can experience pleasure in individual things like the sound of a master's voice or the shape of a dog bone. Rationality, however, allows a person to think about and enjoy abstract ideas. Experiencing pleasure because of the shape of a particular tool does not necessitate thinking about the idea of symmetry and concentric circles. The latter is required to prove the presence of rationality.

This is the one section that leaves the reader with something to be desired. On the one hand, we can look to whom he is responding. While a sizeable portion of his audience are Christians who desire to reconcile science and faith from a philosophical perspective, the content is a response to scientists. These scientists would largely agree that artistic symmetry is indicative of rationality, and, so, he has minimal convincing to do. However, for the reader who is inclined to place the origin of man later rather than earlier, a more thorough defense of the aesthetic argument is necessary.

This single issue is, however, no reason to dismiss the book's achievements. No single book could adequately resolve every issue in the debate over the origins of man. Instead of claiming

such an attempt, Bonnette simply begins a philosophical analysis of the scientific claims. For this reason we must applaud the book. Instead of dialoguing with other philosophers, he does what is so desperately needed. He responds to the scientists themselves and, in so doing, teaches the reader how to continue the dialogue.

Mannes Matous entered the Order of Preachers in 2011. He is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, where he studied biology. He worked as a researcher at The Ohio State University College of Medicine before entering the Order.

CLOISTER CHRONICLE

On August 9, in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, twelve brothers made solemn profession. They are: Br. Bonaventure Chapman, Br. Humbert Kilanowski, Br. Dominic Mary Verner, Br. Raymund Snyder, Br. Jacob Bertrand Janczyk, Br. Joseph-Anthony Kress, Br. Michael Mary Weibley, Br. Patrick Mary Briscoe, Br. Louis Bertrand Mary Lemoine, Br. John Sica, Br. Gregory Maria Pine, and Br. Athanasius Murphy.

Father Brian Daley, S.J., winner of the 2012 Ratzinger Prize for Theology, joined the community of the Priory of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., on the first Sunday of Advent for a holy hour to inaugurate the Year of Consecrated Life. Fr. Daley preached a marvelous reflection on St. Andrew, whose feast is observed on November 30. The holy hour also featured the music of the schola cantorum of the Dominican House of Studies.

A year after the release of its first album, *In Medio Ecclesiae*, the Schola of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC, presents *Ave Maria: Dominican Chant for the Immaculate Conception*. Produced by Dominicana Records and recorded in the beautiful acoustic of Washington's Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land, *Ave Maria* features chants for the Mass of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and for Compline on Marian feasts. Proceeds from the sale of this album support the Dominican students in Washington, DC. The album can be purchased at www.DominicanaBlog.com/records.