

Man is not a divinity, then Man is a disease. Either he is the image of God, or else he is the one animal which has gone mad." If in the beginning were words, as deconstructionism sees it, then it is marked out by indeterminacies. But if John's Gospel is correct, and "the Word is God," then we are spared the abyss of psychopathy, and we can retrieve our

selfhood as an enduring existence and meaning *beyond* as well as through our individual selves. And then the dynamic and vital process of experience mirrors the novel in literature, a sublime "text" in which the pattern of life contains not only an abundance of characters but reflects the transcendent Author as well. ■

---

## THE RISE & FALL OF THE THOMISTIC RENEWAL — PART I

---

D.Q. McINERNY

### THE REVIVIFICATION OF SOUND CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

In 1879, the second year of his pontificate, Pope Leo XIII issued *Aeterni Patris*, an encyclical that launched what was to become a singularly important event in the modern history of the Catholic Church: the Thomistic renewal, also known as the Neo-Scholastic revival. A renewal, or revival, was very much in order, because at the time Pope Leo wrote his encyclical Thomistic philosophy was, by and large, in a rather sickly condition, and had been for a good many years. Though there had been periods in the past when Thomism had the status of a philosophy whose influence was both potent and

pervasive, this was not the case in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. But that state of affairs was to change dramatically with the publication of *Aeterni Patris*. The encyclical had the salutary effect of restoring some sorely needed vitality to Thomism, and within the span of two decades the philosophy became the animating core of a movement whose repercussions were felt throughout the Church. Few encyclicals have elicited the kind of immediate, positive response from the faithful that *Aeterni Patris* did.

The Thomistic renewal spread like a prairie fire, igniting new and enthusiastic interest in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas among a wide range of Catholic philosophers and theologians, while at the same time giving encouraging support to a small but dedicated number of individuals who were already laboring to restore a vigorous Thomism to the Church. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, and continuing through the first half of the twentieth century, Thomistic philosophy once again became a prominent and authoritative presence within the Church. The rise and rapid growth of a revived Thomism would easily have given

---

D.Q. McInerny is a Professor of Philosophy at Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in Denton, Nebraska. He holds B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in philosophy from the National University of Ireland, University College Cork. Among his latest published books are *Natural Theology* (2005), *Epistemology* (2007), *An Introduction to Foundational Logic* (2012), and *The Philosophy of Nature* (2014).

loquial usages of everyday speech, the literary and philosophical dialects in which men do their thinking about the problems of morals, politics, religion and psychology — these have been strangely neglected. We talk about “mere matter of words” in a tone which implies that we regard words as things beneath the notice of a serious-minded person. This is a most unfortunate attitude. For the fact is that words play an enormous part in our lives and are therefore deserving of the closest study. The old idea that words possess magical powers is false; but its falsity is the distortion of a very important truth. Words do have a magical effect — but not in the way that magicians supposed, and not the way they affect the minds of those who use them. “A mere matter of words” we say contemptuously, forgetting that words have power to mold men’s thinking, to banalize their feeling, to direct their willing and acting. Conduct and character are largely determined by the nature of the words we currently use to discuss ourselves and the world around us. (quoted in *The Use and Misuse of Language*, S.I. Hayakawa, 1978)

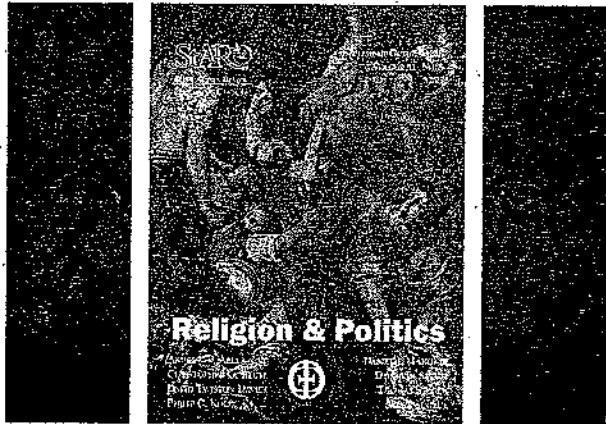
All of our institutions — marriage, family, school, government, military, even the Church — have been infested with this dark and obfuscating force of deconstructionism, this malevolent corruption of language, whose impetus is to tear down all present realities and replace them with those of our vain and avaricious desires. Edmund Burke, the acclaimed eighteenth-century thinker, said that we all have one intellectual choice in this life, and the choice is between two paradoxical ideas: Either we conform our minds to reality, or we shape reality to conform to our thinking. St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that we must choose the first.

So, where does this leave us as far as gaining a better understanding of the current cultural morass? For one, we must reflect more deeply on what we *do* know. And we know more than Hegel, who believed that God was a “process” of differentiating spirit and love, or Derrida, who called the notion of God “wholly other” and “indeterminable.” Indeed, ancient philosophy as far back as the second century viewed language in light of a detailed structure of all things, and as a manifestation of divine reason. We

know that language *refers*; it involves a meaningful association between signs or symbols — either spoken words, written symbols, gestures, or the play-work sequences of a child. We also know that we are “transcended,” and we know by whom; we know, too, who our “transcendent” is, and that He had a Son, *the Word*, who died for us so that the “truth” of eternal life could be ours, forever, without changing. We know, from Aristotle and Aquinas and many, many other illustrious scholars and saints, that reality is objective and does not depend on the human mind’s knowledge of it for its existence. *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II’s “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” reminds us that we have been, from the beginning of time and until the last day, in a monumental battle against the powers of darkness, and if we are to remain in Him, we must wrestle valiantly, “struggle constantly,” and the grace of God will be with us (no. 37). This we also know.

G.K. Chesterton asserted that if we sever our link with God, the result is a state of madness: “If

*St. Austin Review*



**Religion & Politics**

Celebrating 2,000 Years  
of Catholic Culture

*Literature—Art—Music—  
Architecture—History*

**Subscribe Today!**  
[www.staustinreview.com](http://www.staustinreview.com)

a thoughtful observer at the time good reason to believe that the Thomistic renewal was in every respect a sterling success. It is amazing, as we look back at it now, to see how quickly and surely everything seemed to come together, but our amazement becomes perfect astonishment when we reflect on how quickly everything fell apart. The collapse of the Thomistic renewal took place with eye-blinking suddenness in the immediate aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. How is this singular happening to be explained? Before attempting to provide an answer to that question, it is well to look more closely at the Thomistic renewal itself.

Even otherwise well-informed Catholics can be excused for being surprised by the assertion that Thomism was, in the late nineteenth century, in a rather sorry state, and that there was thus a real need for a renewal. Has not Thomistic philosophy been, since the death of St. Thomas in 1274, more or less steadily in place as a large, universally accepted, and widely influential fact of Catholic thought and life? No. As a matter of fact, the history of Thomism — considered in terms of its influence within the Church over time — has been, since the fourteenth century, pretty much an up-and-down affair. By the eighteenth century, Thomism had arguably reached its nadir, having been adversely affected by the phenomenon called Decadent Scholasticism, the name given by historians to the culmination of the steady deterioration of Scholastic philosophy, a process whose origins can be traced back to the fourteenth century and the ascendancy of nominalism. Thomism — one should really write “Thomism” — had reached an embarrassingly unbecoming condition; it had lost its focus and was no longer properly centered on the thought of St. Thomas himself.

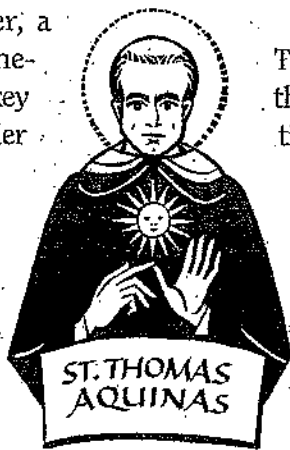
In the nineteenth century, however, a genuine Thomism began to make a comeback, and though *Aeterni Patris* was the key factor, the renewal had its harbingers. Earlier in the century, before the publication of the encyclical, important work done by men such as Sanseverino, Signorelli, Cornoldi, and Zigliara in Italy, and by Kleutgen in Germany — all learned and dedicated scholars — prepared the way for the renewal.

Let's pause here to define the term

*Thomism*. What, precisely, is Thomism? We could start by saying it is simply the name given to the thought of St. Thomas, as set forth in his many and impressive works, principally in his two great “summaries,” the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae*. The term has broader application, however, in that it also refers to the vast body of literature that has built up around the thought of St. Thomas over the course of centuries. The works of St. Thomas have inspired a richly variegated array of responses, in the form of explications, interpretations, embellishments, and proposed developments of the saint's thought, written for the most part by philosophers and theologians who would identify themselves as Thomists, whose numbers have grown to such an extent as to constitute today a veritable army.

Earlier I referred to “genuine Thomism,” which was the only kind of Thomism Leo XIII was interested in and intent upon reviving. Genuine Thomism is the philosophy that is *secundum mentem Sancti Thomae* (“according to the mind of St. Thomas”) in the sense that, in every respect, it faithfully reflects the actual substance of Thomas's thought, as well as the methodology he employed in developing that thought. A genuine Thomism is not merely reiteration; it incorporates creative extensions of the saint's thought. A genuine Thomist, then, would be a philosopher who, among other virtues, has an operative awareness of the central importance of the argumentative spirit that animates the whole of Thomas's thought. Seldom does the saint simply tell us *that* such and such is the case; invariably he tells us *why* it is the case. He argues, in other words, and the conclusions of his arguments are illuminating precisely because of the brilliance of the reasoning that undergirds them.

In *Aeterni Patris*, Pope Leo proposes St. Thomas as the appropriate guiding light for the successful re-establishment of a Christian philosophy, the one philosophy that would be capable of effectively confronting the various philosophies that had gained ascendancy in modern times, systems of thought which, by distorting or denying so many fundamental truths, contributed substantially to the gradual de-Christianizing of European society. St. Thomas, for Pope Leo, is



to be recognized as "the special bulwark and glory of the Catholic faith"; among philosophers he is "the chief and master of all." The Pope points to his numerous predecessors who have taken pains to single out Thomas for special praise, and who have cited his thought as a standard to be followed by all. Recognizing it to be still quite timely, Leo gives his endorsement to a decree promulgated by Bl. Pope Urban V (1362-1370), in which that pontiff wrote, "It is our will, which we hereby enjoin upon you, that you follow the teaching of Blessed Thomas as the true and Catholic doctrine, and that you labor with all your force to profit by the same." Pope Leo notes that a number of ecumenical councils have held Thomas "in singular honor," and he calls attention to the striking fact that "the Fathers of Trent made it part of the order of the conclave to lay upon the altar, together with the code of Sacred Scripture and the decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs, the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas, whence to seek counsel, reason and inspiration."

Leo XIII assigns a special importance to philosophy as it relates to faith in general, and specifically as it relates to theology. He sees philosophy as representing a foundational role with respect to theology, and he argues that "a perpetual and varied service is further required of philosophy, in order that sacred theology may receive and assume the nature, form, and genius of a science." If sacred theology is to live up to its critically important tasks within the Church — indeed, if it is to qualify as an authentic science — it must be supported and informed by a sound philosophy. What Leo is telling us, quite plainly, is that it is not possible to have a sound theology without a sound philosophy.

The English title of *Aeterni Patris* is "The Restoration of Christian Philosophy." A genuinely Christian philosophy would of course be just that philosophy which would support and inform a sound theology, and the thought of St. Thomas, Pope Leo makes clear, should serve as its centerpiece or core. But it is well to note that, for all the emphasis he gives to St. Thomas, the Pope is not advocating a narrow or exclusive Thomism. He makes no simple equation between Christian philosophy and Thomistic philosophy. If Thomism can be said to function as the core of a Christian philosophy, that core should be thought of as packaged within a larger and more comprehensive philosophical sys-

tem — Scholasticism — by which it is nourished, and divorced from which its very intelligibility becomes problematic. By the time St. Thomas arrived on the scene in the thirteenth century, a rich philosophical tradition was already in place, and Leo XIII clearly wanted to see the effective reconstitution of everything that was best in Scholasticism, especially because of its foundational realist orientation. But the pontiff's vision included yet more; it was, so to speak, philosophically all-embracing. He was calling for a Christian philosophy that would be reflective of, and integral to, what he refers to as the perennial philosophy. What might that be? The perennial philosophy can be generally described as the most comprehensive of sound philosophies, the sound philosophy that takes into account, preserves, and transmits every intellectually sound proposition that has ever been formulated by any particular thinker or any particular philosophical system. Put another way, the perennial philosophy is simply the sum total, the treasury, of those foundational and timeless truths at which man has arrived, in the East and the West, over the entire course of human history. In his regard for the perennial philosophy, Leo reflects an attitude toward truth typical of Thomas himself. Friar Thomas, guided by the conviction that all truth has its ultimate source in God, believed therefore that the truth should be gratefully garnered wherever it might be found.

Apropos his advocacy of a philosophy that must be unqualifiedly inclusive with respect to the truth, Pope Leo, after acknowledging advances the pagan philosophers had made toward an understanding of the one, true God (Plato and Aristotle readily come to mind), then cites an array of Christian philosophers who have contributed substantially to the perennial philosophy, beginning with St. Justin Martyr, the first Christian philosopher. Among others, he mentions St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Augustine, St. John Damascene, Boethius, St. Anselm, and St. Bonaventure.

Pope Leo did not content himself with simply writing an encyclical for the purpose of generating a movement that would restore a Christian philosophy with Thomism as its animating nucleus. Leo XIII was a devoted Thomist long before he became pope. Twenty years prior to his election to the papacy, Joachim Pecci, as bishop of Peru-

gia, had founded in that city the Academy of St. Thomas. After his election to the pontificate, he quickly took steps to ensure that the serious study of the works of St. Thomas would be carried out in Rome. Further, he founded the Higher Institute of Philosophy at Louvain University in Belgium in 1891, which historian Joseph Perrier described as "the glory of neo-Thomism." The Pope hand-picked Désiré Mercier, a young Belgian priest-philosopher, to be the first head of the institute. Fr. Mercier, later cardinal primate of Belgium, was to become a major figure in the Thomistic renewal, and the institute at Louvain served as something like the flagship institution for the movement. Over the years, it turned out a great number of Thomist philosophers of the first rank, a large percentage of whom were clerics. Among the many American priests trained at Louvain was a young man from the Diocese of Peoria by the name of Fulton J. Sheen, who earned his Ph.D. *summa cum laude*. A particularly fruitful act taken by Leo XIII, for the express purpose of ensuring the ongoing and seriously productive study of Thomistic thought, was the inauguration of what has come to be known as the Leonine Edition of the complete works of St. Thomas Aquinas. The goal of this monumental scholarly project, which continues to this day, is to provide for posterity a uniform set of all of the writings of the Angelic Doctor, as definitive as it is humanly possible to make it, based on meticulous examination of all available manuscripts. Fittingly enough, the Dominicans were given charge of the project.

Perrier published a well-balanced and informative volume entitled *The Renewal of Scholastic Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (1908) that provides a thoroughgoing account of the early stages of the Thomistic renewal, covering the two decades following the publication of *Aeterni Patris*. "The influence of the pope's encyclical was simply immense," Perrier writes. "The revival of Thomism, which had been limited to some isolated efforts, was then taken seriously by most of the Catholic thinkers." Perrier offers an abundance of pertinent details regarding the beginning stages of the Thomistic renewal as they took shape in various countries throughout the world, and he introduces us to the principal figures of the movement in each locale.

The movement continued to grow and become increasingly influential over the course of

the first half of the twentieth century, with Louvain as the major international center for Thomistic studies. Several other universities, in Europe and North America, also had distinguished programs in Thomistic philosophy, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Special mention might be made of Laval University in Quebec, which had an excellent philosophy department, staffed by men like Fr. Maurice Dionne, Fr. Jasmin Boulay, and Prof. Charles De Koninck, dean of the faculty of philosophy. De Koninck, one of the luminaries of the Thomistic renewal, was an extraordinary individual in many ways. He held two doctoral degrees, one in philosophy (from Louvain), the other in theology, was the father of twelve children, and was a *peritus*

## Scholarship Fund

The Lord commanded: "Feed my sheep" (Jn. 21:17).

Many are the souls who would benefit from the forceful and compelling presentation of the Catholic faith found in the NOR, but who, for various reasons, do not possess the means to do so.

In response to the Lord's call to witness to the faith among those in need of spiritual sustenance, the NOR has established a Scholarship Fund, through which one-year subscriptions to the NOR are sent *free of charge* to those who cannot afford to pay for one. These subscriptions, a large part of which go to prisoners who are seeking to straighten out their lives, are made possible by the generosity of our readers.

If you are interested in furthering the cause of orthodox Catholicism among those in less fortunate and often trying circumstances, please consider contributing to the NOR's Scholarship Fund.

Make checks or money orders payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW, and mail to NOR, Scholarship Fund, 1069 Kains Ave., Berkeley CA 94706. VISA, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards are also accepted. Please indicate that your donation is for the continuation of the Scholarship Fund. The NOR is a nonprofit organization and has 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service. Donations are therefore tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

at the Second Vatican Council, assisting Maurice Cardinal Roy of Montreal. Though Laval's influence was limited for the most part to North America, for years it enjoyed a status and influence in many ways comparable to Louvain's.

By the mid-twentieth century, Thomism could be said to be the defining philosophy — the “official” philosophy, if you will — of well-nigh all the major Catholic seminaries and Catholic colleges and universities in the U.S. While the quality of the Thomism being taught varied, sometimes widely, from institution to institution, every institution, even the smaller ones with limited resources and sparse philosophical talent, could be said to be making earnest efforts to respond productively to *Aeterni Patris*. On an autobiographical note, the college in this country where I did my undergraduate work — an all-male institution named after St. Thomas Aquinas with some two thousand students — had a philosophy department that was unambiguously Thomistic in orientation and commitment, a goodly portion of whose members had received their doctorates from Laval. Students who majored in philosophy there received a good grounding in Thomistic thought and were well prepared for graduate studies, should they choose to pursue them. But all students at the college, whatever their major field, got a significant taste of Thomism, for they were required to take at least four courses in philosophy: logic, philosophical psychology, metaphysics, and ethics. By comparison, students at most of the country's twenty-eight Jesuit institutions, no matter what their major field, had as part of their academic credentials what was effectively a minor in philosophy,

The Jesuits, it should be recognized, played a major role in the Thomistic renewal, and some of the best Thomists of the twentieth century were members of the Society of Jesus. This is to take nothing away from the Dominicans, who, needless to say, also made large contributions to the cause. In addition, there were a number of individuals from various other orders and congregations who figured prominently in the movement, such as Fr. Joseph Owens, a Redemptorist, Fr. Henry Koren of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, and Br. Benignus of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Lay philosophers, however, arguably made the greatest contribution to the Thomistic renewal, perhaps in good part simply on account of their numbers. Well-schooled and dedicated scholars, many of them were also outstanding teachers. And there were also many accomplished writers among them, to whom we credit many books of lasting quality; they published articles in reputable journals like *The Thomist*, *The New Scholasticism*, and *The Modern Schoolman*. A plethora of good to very good textbooks in Scholastic philosophy were readily available when the renewal was at its height, and many were published by major houses such as Macmillan, Prentice-Hall, and Harper & Brothers. This was also the heyday of Catholic publishing, led by houses like Herder in St. Louis and The Bruce Publishing Company in Milwaukee, both of which had impressive lists. Among the happier “problems” for philosophy teachers in those days was settling on a textbook for a particular course, say in ethics or metaphysics, when there were a half dozen, if not more, inviting titles from which to choose. Authors like Msgr. Paul J. Glenn and Fr. Celestine Bittle, O.F.M. Cap., produced entire series of textbooks in Scholastic philosophy. In all, it was an exciting time. Thomism seemed to be vibrantly alive, and the future looked quite bright.

And then the Thomistic renewal collapsed. To speak of a *collapse* is not to indulge in hyperbole, for the term is just the one needed to convey the sense of what actually happened — the astonishing suddenness with which Thomism ceased to be the governing and guiding philosophy in Catholic higher education. It was as if, overnight, the bottom had dropped out. So, we return to the question posed earlier: How to explain this extraordinary event of recent Church history? I offer the following: First, the collapse was a particular expression of a larger

### Thinking Long-Term

To remember the NEW OXFORD REVIEW in your will is to show a serious commitment to strengthening what the NOR stands for.

The following language is suggested for making a bequest: “I give to New Oxford Review Inc., a California not-for-profit corporation whose address is 1069 Kains Ave., Berkeley CA 94706-2260, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_, to be used for the benefit of the NEW OXFORD REVIEW.”

phenomenon of which it was but a part; second, it was the result of a pervasive mania for change; third, it was the targeted victim of a resurgent modernism. While I would not claim that these items provide a complete explanation for the event, they do go some

distance, I believe, toward providing at least an adequate one, to which we will attend in Part II. ■

Ed. Note: *The second and final installment of this two-part series will appear in our June issue.*

---

# books in review

---

CHRISTOPHER BEITING

## WHAT A CHRISTIAN FATHER IS SUPPOSED TO BE

**The Father of the Family: A Christian Perspective.** By Clayton C. Barbeau. *Sophia Institute Press*. 160 pages. \$11.95.

**Joseph's Way: The Call to Fatherly Greatness — Prayer of Faith.** By Devin Schadt. *Ignatius Press*. 343 pages. \$16.95.

Social-science data show that if a non-religious mother in a non-religious family converts to Christianity, there's a seventeen percent chance the rest of the family will convert as well. But if a non-religious father converts, there's a ninety-three percent chance the rest of the family will follow. Here the importance and centrality of the father to the family and to Christianity become obvious. "If you wish to change the world, change the father," notes author Devin Schadt,

and that is true — for better or for worse. It's fair to wonder if the current wretched state of the family is not due entirely to our own failings but is part of a hellish plot to defy God the Father by destroying human fatherhood. Recall Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio's "Letter to the Carmelite Nuns of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires" (June 2010), in which he describes political efforts to "redefine" the family as "a 'move' of the father of lies." In any case, it is one thing to curse the darkness and another thing to light a candle. A pair of recently published works attempts the latter, providing good advice for men who wish to be better and holier fathers.

*The Father of the Family* is the new edition of a work originally published in 1961. Author Clayton Barbeau, a California-

based family therapist, author, novelist, speaker, and television host, is in a good position to give advice: Now in his eighties, he is a Korean War veteran and Bronze Star recipient, a widower, the father of eight children, and the grandfather of many more. Thus, the current edition is the work of an experienced and successful husband and father.

Barbeau reminds us that fatherhood is important because the core Christian conception of God is *God as Father*. This is found in the Old Testament and more so in the New Testament, when Jesus

---

Christopher Beiting is Chair of the Department of History at Holy Cross College in South Bend, Indiana.



addresses God as a *loving* Father. From this basic premise, Barbeau considers seven different images of fatherhood as seen through the lens of Scripture. Fathers are *creators*, makers of their families through acts of love and sexuality, with the father-mother-child dynamic as an earthly mirroring of the heavenly Trinity. Fathers are *lovers*, called to love their wives and children as persons. Barbeau reminds the reader that even as modernity understands love as an uncontrollable product of emotions, Christian love is an act of the will that desires the best for the beloved. Fathers are *Christ-like*, and Barbeau stresses not just the matrimonial image of the love of Christ and His Church, or the fatherly role Christ played as teacher, but also the fact that Christ was a union of soul *and* body, and marriage should reflect this. Fathers are *priests*, with the family serving as the smallest form of the domestic Church. Barbeau reminds fathers of their duty as religious leaders of their families, and presses for the restoration of some quasi-sacerdotal fatherly practices like the paternal blessing. Fathers are *teachers* and, in direct com-



petition with many false images of masculinity and heroism, need to raise their children right and set counter-examples to those of the world. Fathers are *bread-winners* and must manage the task of providing for their families without falling into the trap of defining themselves by their jobs to the neglect of the family, or succumbing to greed and consumerism. Since it is not by bread alone — or “stuff” alone — by which we live, fathers must strive for a poverty of spirit that provides for legitimate needs but also seeks detachment from the world. Finally, fathers are potential *saints*, and must face the challenge of attaining sanctity while remaining in the midst of the world. This involves suffering and sacrifice, undergoing the cross before the resurrection. On the subject of sacrifice, Barbeau reminds fathers that marital relations with their wives must at times involve both periods of abstinence and cultivated lovemaking.

*Joseph's Way* by Devin Schadt is a reflection on the role of Christian fatherhood as seen through the lens of St. Joseph. Given that St. Joseph never actually *says* anything anywhere in the Gospels, this might seem a difficult task, but *Joseph's Way* manages it by examining the Patriarchs of the Old Testament, comparing and contrasting them with St. Joseph. The result is delightfully old-fashioned in its exegesis; the typological approach to Scripture and deep, meditative tone led one reviewer to liken the work to Thomas à Kempis's, which isn't a bad comparison. Schadt addresses the reader

throughout as “my brother” or “my brother in Christ,” and his book has an iconic element, an invitation to contemplate Joseph and the Patriarchs, that gives it an Eastern feel. At the same time, Schadt unifies this traditional approach to Scripture with the very modern spirit of Pope St. John Paul II, particularly the Holy Father's theology of the body and his exhortations on St. Joseph.

*Joseph's Way* gives the impression of being the product of an experienced, learned, older man, possibly a monastic of some sort. So it's a little surprising to discover that the Fathers of St. Joseph movement, associated with the author and the book, is actually a *lay* movement of ordinary fathers that meets biweekly at a parish in Illinois for meditation, prayer, and Mass in a quest to become better Christians and better fathers. Schadt himself is a young father of five and co-founder of the movement. A former youth minister, Schadt discovered to his chagrin that, in the process of serving God, he was neglecting his own family. His model for Christian life was the active evangelization of St. Paul. After a “road to Damascus” experience, he felt challenged to change his model of emulation from St. Paul to St. Joseph. *Joseph's Way* is the fruit of Schadt's realization that the model of the silent, homebound St. Joseph is just as valid for Christian male sanctity as the evangelical, traveling St. Paul.

While there are many books on parenting, and many on St. Joseph, there aren't many that effectively fuse the two topics. *Joseph's Way* does. It's worth noting that typological analysis



---

## THE RISE & FALL OF THE THOMISTIC RENEWAL — PART II

---

**D.Q. McINERNY**

### A REVIVAL CUT SHORT

*Ed. Note: The first installment of this two-part series appeared in our May issue.*

**W**e return to the question posed in Part I: How to explain the extraordinary collapse of the Thomistic renewal? I submit the following: First, the collapse was a particular expression of a larger phenomenon of which it was but a part; second, it was the result of a pervasive mania for change; third, it was the targeted victim of a resurgent modernism. While these items do not provide a complete explanation, they do go some distance toward providing at least an adequate one.

The profound disruption suffered by the Thomistic renewal was a particular instance, a specific manifestation, of the widespread consequences of the disruptive forces at play within the Church at large in the period immediately following the Second Vatican Council — a period of prolonged disorientation and disorder, which at certain times and regarding certain matters, was quite severe. We might think of the situation in metaphorical terms, as if the Church experienced a massive spiritual and cultural earthquake. The edifice that was the Thomistic renewal was unable to withstand the violent tremors, and its walls came tumbling down.

The Thomistic renewal was not alone in this regard; there were other edifices that suffered damage extensive enough to warrant the word *collapse*: the ancient Latin liturgy, catechesis, religious orders, and, to one degree or another, Catholic education at every level. As to the broader picture, the Church before and after Vatican II is a study in dramatic contrasts. It is as if we were viewing two entirely dif-

ferent Churches. For someone for whom the “after” picture does not represent an improvement over the “before” picture, the question naturally arises: How is it possible that an institution that on one day appeared to be in a robust state of health was, on the very next day, in need of immediate therapeutic attention? A possible answer to this question, and one that is perhaps more obvious than we are prepared to admit, is that appearances can be deceptive. What looked like robust health was only seemingly so. Now, might it be that a comparable response could be made with regard to the state of the Thomistic renewal before its collapse? As it happens, a response of precisely that sort has been made, a point to which we will return presently.

In the wake of Vatican II, a veritable mania for change roared through the Church, and many Catholics were swept off their feet and lost a balanced perspective. It was as if change had become the supreme imperative for the Church, as if her principal mission in the world were to change, simply change, otherwise she would somehow not be

---

*D.Q. McInerny is a professor of philosophy at Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in Denton, Nebraska. He holds B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in philosophy from the National University of Ireland, University College Cork. Among his latest published books are *Natural Theology* (2005), *Epistemology* (2007), *An Introduction to Foundational Logic* (2012), and *The Philosophy of Nature* (2014).*

acting according to a correct reading of "the signs of the times." What was especially peculiar about this near obsessive concern with change is that it was, in many cases, indiscriminate to the point of mindlessness. It became a matter of change for the sake of change, as if virtue lay in pure process, never mind where the process might be leading us. Although there was little reasoned specificity as to what would be put in place by change, there was remarkable clarity of vision as to what had to be replaced by it: just about anything that had to do with the pre-Vatican II Church.

The "improper appeal to authority" fallacy was a prominent feature of this mania for change. The standard example of this fallacy is when we cling tenaciously to something only because it is customary, firmly set in place by habit, and on that account alone has commanding "authority," regardless of its intrinsic value. But we likewise succumb to this fallacy when we *reject* something simply because it has a history behind it, taking the attitude that, if it is old it has to be discarded, regardless of its intrinsic value. When a people get caught up in a frenzy of indiscriminate change, tradition necessarily suffers; and when tradition suffers, the present becomes drained of a vivifying consciousness. A today cut off from yesterday is one whose sun still shines, but upon lands whose population is made up mainly of "hollow men."

Philosophers, as a type, are usually not apt to be swept off their feet by a mania for change. But in this case, not a few Catholic philosophers, who would have identified as Thomists, showed that they too were not immune to the influence of this phenomenon. For many of them, the infection took the form of something like a philosophical identity crisis, a serious bout of professional embarrassment over the fact that they were Thomists, as if by being such they were awkwardly out of step with the rest of the philosophical world. They saw themselves as dully distant from the cutting edge. Was not Thomism, after all, a *medieval* philosophy, and therefore passé, obsolete, dissonantly out of tune with the main melodic line of modern thought? Distracted by such second thoughts about their intellectual commitments, not a few of them decided, for the sake of bringing themselves up to date with the brave new world of the 1960s, that they had better put Thomism on the shelf and turn their attention

to what were supposedly more vital movements. Some drifted into analytical philosophy, which was then ruling the academic roost in English-speaking countries; others decided to take up one or another of the several versions of phenomenology; still others became engaged in attempts to forge a marriage between Thomism and a second philosophical system of one kind or another. Apropos this last option, Archbishop Hélder Câmara of Brazil, in an address at the University of Chicago in 1974 marking the seven-hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Thomas, effectively called for a combining of Thomism and Marxism! Just how many philosophers sitting in that distinguished audience had pass through their minds the thought that oil and water do not mix is impossible to say.

Another explanation for the collapse of the Thomistic renewal has to do with the resurgence of modernism within the Church, which occurred in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Pope St. Pius X famously described modernism as "the synthesis of all heresies"; he gave it a detailed exposition in his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907), and an embellished treatment three years later in his *motu proprio*, *Sacrorum Antistitum*. These documents had the beneficial effect of alerting Catholics to the fact that modernism was a clear and present danger to the Church, but although the documents put a damper on the movement, they did not succeed in suppressing it. Modernists' response was to take the practical expedient of going underground, and for four decades they functioned as something like a fifth column within the Church. Their *modus operandi* was to work behind the scenes.

That Rome recognized the movement as a continuing, operative presence within the Church well after the publication of *Pascendi* is attested to by Pope Pius XII's promulgation of *Humani Generis* (1950), an encyclical in which he echoes the various warnings against the movement that had been sounded by his saintly predecessor in the first decade of the century. Reading *Humani Generis* today is a sobering experience; it makes one aware that just about all the problems that plagued the Church in 1950 are still with us, and are still to be contended with, sixty-five years later.

Modernism, as is true of most "isms," is a complex phenomenon with any number of facets,

as *Pascendi* makes clear, but the particular feature of the movement that has direct application to our discussion is the fact, pointed out and given special emphasis by both Pius X and Pius XII, that modernists have shown themselves to have a deep-seated and abiding antipathy toward Scholasticism in general and Thomism in particular. When modernists emerged from their underground bunkers right after the adjournment of Vatican II, as vigorous and feisty as ever, they reasserted their two-pronged philosophic prejudice in a bold and open way. Their uninhibited expression of antipathy toward Scholasticism/Thomism was an important factor in the collapse of the Thomistic renewal. Of this and the previous two explanations given for the collapse, we can say that, from an historical point of view, they all played a part, each in a peculiar way, in bringing it about.

Returning to a point brought up earlier: Conjecture has it that an additional (and possibly the best) explanation for the collapse of the Thomistic renewal is that it was due not so much to external factors as to internal ones. The basic idea is that the renewal was not what it seemed to be, with regard to its perceived vitality and strength, that it was beset by any number of in-house problems, and these eventually caught up with it and account for its eventual dissolution. In other words, the peculiar circumstances that prevailed in the Church after Vatican II brought about an event that would have happened even had there not been a Council.

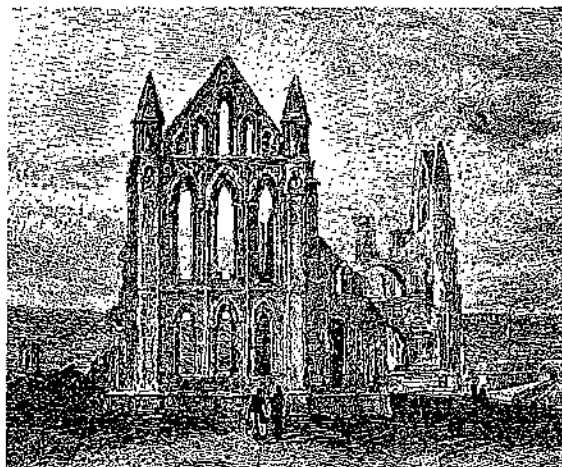
In 1966, one year after the close of Vatican II, Doubleday published *Thomism in an Age of Renewal* by the Thomist philosopher Ralph McInerny, in which he assumes an attitude toward the Thomistic renewal that, in part at least, reflects this latter explanation for its demise. What his book reveals, given that it is a response to what was already a clearly detectable spirit of anti-Thomism, is how quickly that spirit had made itself known and was demanding attention.

McInerny, who earned his licentiate and doctoral degrees at Laval University in Quebec under the direction of Charles De Koninck, was a professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, the philosophy department of which was, at the time, thoroughly Thomistic. The principal task McInerny set out for himself in his book was to lay out the particulars of what could qualify as a genuinely Christian philosophy — a task he accomplished with his

typical clarity, cogency, and stylistic verve. Following closely the thought of Pope Leo XIII as articulated in *Aeterni Patris* (1879; the encyclical that launched the Thomistic renewal), McInerny argues that a genuine Christian philosophy would be one based on the thought and methods of St. Thomas Aquinas. But he takes the position that the restoration called for by Pope Leo was less than successful because the Thomism that had gained ascendancy in the Church after the publication of the encyclical was not the *real thing*. Therefore, he did not regard the negative criticisms leveled against the kind of Thomism produced by the renewal to be entirely unjustified.

McInerny quotes a pointed statement made by the eminent Dominican philosopher and biographer of St. Thomas, Fr. James Weisheipl, in his book *Thomism as a Perennial Philosophy* (1956): "It is a social historical fact that the hope of Leo XIII has never been universally realized in Catholic colleges, universities and seminaries. Not even the ardent efforts of St. Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI, or Pius XII were able to effect anything more than a closed, safe, and sterile Thomism, imposed by legislative authority. Legislation did not stimulate a return to the true thought and spirit of St. Thomas relevant to our day." A bit further on, Fr. Weisheipl writes, "Until the program of Leo XIII is seriously attempted in a thorough and spontaneous manner, there will always be zealous priests and laymen who react to what they only half understand. Reactions against Thomism in the past half-century have been, in fact, to a pseudo-Thomism, a half-understood Thomism."

Though he does not endorse this rather harsh



after the earthquake

assessment without qualification, McInerny, in the main, agrees with it. Referring to the brand of philosophy he saw as the all-too-typical outcome of the renewal, which he describes as a "rigid, catechetical Thomism" and a "sterile Thomism," he remarks, "It is not meaningless to say, therefore, that a rejection of such Thomism has little or nothing to do with the teaching of Thomas Aquinas." Given his view that the restoration of a genuine Christian philosophy had not taken place, due to the quality of the Thomism sustaining it, McInerny ends his book by calling for a renewal based on and animated by an authentic Thomism, a philosophy that faithfully reflects the mind and the manner of the Universal Doctor.

Perhaps at the time, such a proposal seemed a real possibility rather than mere wishful thinking, but subsequent events proved otherwise. In retrospect, we can see that *Thomism in an Age of Renewal* was a response to what were only the first relatively mild rumblings that would develop into a major quake, in the wake of which Thomism, whatever might be said of its quality, no longer held a governing role in Catholic higher education.

Three pertinent questions remain: (1) How thorough was the devastation wrought by the anti-Thomistic upheaval? (2) Was the Thomistic renewal as complete a flop as Fr. Weisheipl would have us believe? (3) What is the status of Thomism today?

Without question, the anti-Thomistic movement that followed hard upon the Second Vatican Council had generally calamitous consequences. In virtually all U.S. Catholic colleges, universities, and seminaries, Thomism ceased to be a significant presence. Philosophy departments, once plainly identifiable as Thomistic, became indeterminate and amorphous, lacking integrating ideological centers; a smorgasbord approach to the discipline of philosophy was commonly adverted to. Although Thomism was widely abandoned at the institutional level, there nonetheless remained, within just about every Catholic institution, at least for a time, individual philosophers who retained their loyalty to Thomism and who continued to fight the good fight on its behalf. And that circumstance isn't entirely a thing of the past. Today one can find Thomists of the first rank at certain institutions, such as at the University of Notre Dame, for example, the faculty of which includes David Solomon, Alfred Fredosso, and Alasdair MacIntyre. And while most colleges and

universities have abandoned an institutional commitment to Thomism, a few have managed to keep their philosophic wits about them. One can point to the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America, which maintained a steady, sane course through troubled times under the able leadership of its dean, Prof. Jude Dougherty. Two Texas schools also come to mind: the University of St. Thomas in Houston and the University of Dallas. Mention should also be made of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C., under the aegis of the Province of St. Joseph.

It would be careless to reject out of hand the general assessment of the Thomistic renewal as found in books like *Thomism in an Age of Renewal*. One may concede the point that the movement was not the sparkling success it appeared, on the surface, to be. However, it is possible to denigrate the movement to the point where one does not sufficiently credit its distinctly positive aspects. It was, after all, a complex and highly variegated phenomenon, with a lifespan of better than eight decades. Bearing this in mind, it would not do to contend that it was an unrelieved failure, or to argue that it represented a uniform betrayal of the thought of St. Thomas.

While granting that the movement was not in every respect what it could and should have been, and that it did not evolve into the transforming force for philosophic good within the Church that Pope Leo had envisioned, we should nonetheless recognize, with wonder, that something extraordinary happened in the Church between the publication of *Aeterni Patris* and the close of Vatican II. The Church today is better for its having happened, and worse for its having suffered cessation.

While some Catholics (those, doubtless, infected by modernism) might have regarded the effort to restore a vibrant Thomism as unfortunate, the eminent American philosopher Josiah Royce thought otherwise, and even expressed fears that the effort might not succeed. On the occasion of the death of Pope Leo XIII in 1903, he wrote, "Many students of philosophy, of theology, and even of the natural sciences — students, I mean, who have no direct concern with any of the internal affairs of Leo's own religious body — are still forced, although outsiders, to recognize how important, for the general intellectual progress of our time, the future outcome of the whole Neo-Scholastic movement

in the Catholic Church may prove." He goes on to remark, "But what an admirable opportunity for a genuine spiritual growth will be lost if Leo's revival of Catholic philosophy has even its first fruits cut off, and is not permitted to bear the still richer fruit that, in case it is unhindered, it will some day surely bring forth."

Alas, "Leo's revival of Catholic philosophy" did not go unhindered, and the production of the still richer fruit that the "outsider" Royce had hoped for from the movement did not materialize. Royce showed uncanny perspicacity in seeing the Thomistic renewal, still in its incipient stages when he wrote, as an important contribution to "the general intellectual progress of our time," and as providing "an admirable opportunity for a genuine spiritual growth." He saw Scholasticism for what it essentially is: a philosophy totally dedicated to truth and consistently concentrated on "the deepest deep down things."

The Thomistic philosophy being taught in some institutions in the first half of the twentieth century might have been less than completely desirable, but the fact is that a number of U.S. Catholic colleges and universities had philosophy faculties whose quality was pronouncedly superior, and the students in those institutions were very well served in their philosophical education. Even in those institutions (very likely the major portion of the total) in which the overall quality of the Thomism being taught was wanting, all those students who took the required philosophy courses, typically at least four, need not be classified as victims; they were not on the receiving end of an experience entirely devoid of positive effects for their intellectual and moral development. An imperfect exposure to a sound philosophy is better than a full exposure to an unsound one.

Among the teachers of those students, the philosophers themselves, of whatever Thomistic stripe, there were surely some who, for a variety of reasons, were not what they should have been, as philosophers or as teachers; but just as surely there were philosophers and teachers who were not meanly possessed of talent, whose dedication was not in the least bit flaccid.

And let us not forget those truly exceptional philosophers, men of gigantic intellectual stature, who were part and parcel of the movement. It is

impossible to imagine that, had there never been a Thomistic renewal, we would now have available to us the priceless works of such luminaries as Jacques Maritain, Étienne Gilson, Charles De Koninck, Cornelio Fabro, and Josef Pieper.

What is the status of Thomism today? We can begin by noting the obvious, that Thomistic philosophy, whatever the particulars of its form, is not a large and pervasively influential fact of Catholic intellectual life as it was, say, in 1955. The tempest has taken its toll; the landscape has been rudely roughed up, but — here is the heartening news — what we gaze out upon now is not a picture of complete and irremediable desolation. Something is astir; there are hopeful signs of new growth. I subtitled this article series "The Rise & Fall of the Thomistic Renewal," but perhaps it would have been more apt, in light of what I am about to note, to have called it "The Ascent & Descent of the Thomistic Renewal." The term *fall* has too final a ring to it, suggesting a state that is not only unhappy but permanent, and therefore beyond repair. *Descent*, on the other hand, has more generously open-ended connotations and does not preclude the possibility of subsequent ascent — a rising again, a regaining of lost altitude, and perhaps even the attainment of yet higher altitudes than those hitherto gained. That imagery better describes what I take to be the current state of affairs. It may be overly optimistic to think that we are on the verge of witnessing a brilliant resurrection of the renewal that was so rudely interrupted a half century ago, but there is reason for being cautiously optimistic about the possibility of such an eventuality. Why? Because Thomism is in fact beginning to show signs of recovery, and it may indeed be moving

### Thinking Long-Term

To remember the NEW OXFORD REVIEW in your will is to show a serious commitment to strengthening what the NOR stands for.

The following language is suggested for making a bequest: "I give to New Oxford Review Inc., a California not-for-profit corporation whose address is 1069 Kains Ave., Berkeley CA 94706-2260, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_, to be used for the benefit of the NEW OXFORD REVIEW."

toward re-establishing itself as a significant presence in the life of the Church.

If Thomism is ever to be re-established as a vibrant philosophical force within the Church, what will be required are the dedicated labors of philosophers themselves — philosophers who have a principled and whole-hearted commitment to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. There are promising indications that this requirement is beginning to be met. There is today a growing number of philosophers, definitely Thomistic in direction, most of them quite young, who hold influential faculty positions in premier academic institutions on both sides of the Atlantic. A new wave of Thomists has washed upon our desiccated shores, and they are showing themselves to be formidable scholars, as attested to by the number of weighty publications they have turned out in recent years. A brief sample includes: *Holy Teaching: Introducing the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas* (2005) by Frederick Bauerschmidt, *Understanding Our Being* (2008) by John W. Carlson, *God and the Natural Law: A Rereading of Thomas Aquinas* (2006) by Fulvio Di Blasi, *Trinity in Aquinas* (2003) and *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (2007) by Gilles Emery, O.P., *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (2011) by Nicholas E. Lombardo, O.P., *Discovering Aquinas* (2002) by Aidan Nichols, O.P., *The Ethics of Aquinas* (2002; Stephen J. Pope, ed.), *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (2005) by Jean Porter, *The Perspective of the Acting Person: Essays in the Renewal of Thomistic Moral Philosophy* (2008) by Martin Rhonheimer, *By Knowledge and By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (2011) by Michael S. Sherwin, O.P.

As an instance of the proverbial truth that good can be born of evil, not long after most Catholic institutions of higher learning turned their backs on Thomism, a number of entirely new colleges sprung up across the land. To be sure, these new colleges were established principally in reaction to the fact that so many of the long-established institutions had embarked upon vigorous projects that involved a wholesale watering down, not to say effective obliteration, of their Catholic identity. However, the establishment of these new institutions was also a response to what had happened to Thomism, and their founders were motivated by the desire to re-

store it to its proper place in Catholic higher education. And this is precisely what is taking place right now at schools like Christendom College in Virginia, Thomas Aquinas College in California, Thomas More College in New Hampshire, and Wyoming Catholic College, where young men and women are receiving an education which is structured according to those principles that serve as the pillars of our Catholic philosophical heritage. The graduates of these institutions will not be ignorant of the Thomistic tradition, and it would not be unreasonable to expect that some of them will be numbered among the Thomistic philosophers of the future.

Another reason to think that we are witnessing what appears to be a resurgence of Thomism relates to a recent reminder the Church has given us of the special esteem in which she has consistently held the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. In 2011 the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education released its "Decree on the Reform of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy." After noting that the Church "has always cared deeply about philosophy," the decree echoes what Pope Leo XIII pointed out in *Aeterni Patris*, that "philosophy is indispensable for theological formation." The decree acknowledges the "crisis of postconciliar theology," which it rightly identifies as "in large part, the crisis of philosophical foundations." Unsound theology follows upon unsound philosophy. And the remedy for an unsound philosophy is the eminently sound philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, a philosophy that is "important both for the acquisition of intellectual 'habitus' and for the mature assimilation of the philosophical heritage." St. Thomas, the decree asserts, is to be recognized as the "apostle of truth," and though the Church's preference for his method is not exclusive, his method is to be regarded as exemplary — that is, it should serve as a guiding model. The philosophy that is to be taught to young men studying for the priesthood, the decree mandates, "must be rooted in the 'philosophical patrimony which is perennially valid,' which has been developed throughout history, with special attention being given to the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas."

This recent Vatican decree, emphasizing the unique place the thought of St. Thomas is to have in philosophical studies, is but the latest in a long list of such documents, dating back to the fourteenth century. "Rome has spoken" on this particular sub-



ject, again and again, and with the utmost clarity. We would be seriously remiss if we were to assume a cavalier attitude toward what the Church's highest authorities have so often reiterated. Pope Leo XIII, having a particularly keen sense of the array of negative ramifications of modern philosophy, knew that, for the sake of the Church and the world, modern philosophy had to be opposed, and he saw, in a Scholastic philosophy centered on the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, the one philosophy that could effectively stand up to it. Only a decisively Christian philosophy can counter an essentially godless philosophy. Unfortunately, his grand plan for the restoration of such a philosophy, though impressively launched, was not to see its proper culmination.

It is imperative that what Pope Leo began be

begun anew — for the simple reason that there is a pressing need for the restoration of Christian philosophy. That need was admittedly great in the late nineteenth century; it is appreciably greater in the early twenty-first century. The steady failing of the light, since Pope Leo's day, has reached the point where it is positively alarming. We must take up again this critically important task, with renewed earnestness of purpose. If it was gotten wrong the first time, or at least only imperfectly right, this time around it must be gotten unqualifiedly right. That we can do with confidence if we heed the very precise advice given us by Pope Leo in *Aeterni Patris: Ite ad Thomam*, "Go to Thomas!" In the philosophy of the Common Doctor we have the kind of luminous guidance that will not fail us. ■

# QUEST COLUMN

## THE DARWINISTS & THE ALBIGENSES

In Ecclesiastes 1:9 Qoheleth says, "There is nothing new under the sun." Darwinist Michael Ruse (not to be confused with NOR Associate Editor Michael S. Rose) recently called evolutionism a "faith," but is it altogether new? Or, to quote the Preacher again, has it existed "already in the ages before us"? One might well ask if evolutionism is a distant relative of the Albigensian heresy, a radical form of Catharism that prevailed in southern France for about four hundred years, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. For when one examines the two "faiths" side by side, one finds striking parallels between them.

The Albigenses believed that the creator of this

world is Satan. They regarded him as evil, but also as a god co-eternal and perfectly equal to the good God. They believed that Satan, the source of disorder and destruction, lies behind the beautiful order we see in the physical world, including in our own bodies. But they thought that this order was only an illusion. Moreover, they believed that Satan had not only created this world but is still in charge of it as its Dark Prince, giving out wealth, pleasure, power, and status to whomever he chooses. God's providence is not even remotely involved with earthly success or happiness.

Likewise, for Darwinists, the creator of this world is not God but *chance*. For them, evolution is a blind, heartless, purposeless, unguided process. All that exists — including the human mind — is said to have come about randomly as a result of material forces operating over the course of billions of years. As Christopher Hitchens put it, "our maker" is not a "who," but a process of mutation." And so, like the Albigenses, Darwinists believe that the order we see in the world around us is, in Richard Dawkins's phrase, only an "illusion of design." Human nature itself, far from being created directly by God in His divine image, is the casual product of a meaningless evolution in which the struggle for survival has left behind mountains of corpses. Thus, chance operates for Darwinists as the demiurge (Satan) operates for the Albigenses: It banishes God from any role in the creation and governance of this world. From the

megastar down to the quantum particle, they see blind, irreducible indeterminacy. God's providence is not even remotely involved.

The Albigenses believed that evil comes from our bodies, which are part of the material world created and ruled by Satan. They saw our bodies, by their very nature, as opposed to the good God, but they believed that our "divine" souls are trapped within our bodies.

Likewise, Darwinists believe that the violence to which people are prone comes entirely from their bodies, which have evolved physically and mentally from animals. From their viewpoint, free will has nothing to do with human morality because morality emerged from the social instincts of animals. So the violent acts we deplore are merely the result of the human race having spent long ages in the struggle for survival using aggression or predatory behavior. Since violence has a materialist source, it can best be handled by material means. Is it any wonder that Darwinists support the aborting of children of certain violence-prone groups and the distribution of therapeutic drugs like they were candy?

The Albigenses' goal was the reduction of human life on the largest scale possible. To that end, they deplored the propagation of children, condemned sexual intercourse within marriage (preferring cohabitation), and thought the abandonment of a spouse to be lawful. They were divided into the superior few ("the perfect") and the inferior many ("the believers"). The "perfect" among them never married, were vegetarians and pacifists, and undertook long, rigorous fasts. On the other hand, the "believers" merely renounced marriage on their deathbeds. No salvation, no escape for the soul from transmigration, was possible without the renunciation of marriage.

Likewise, Darwinists have been zealously engaged in eugenics and population control for well over a century and a half (Darwin's own family was deeply involved in eugenics). To that end, they have promoted contraception, abortion, and homosexuality. Moreover, for the past half-century, they have conducted an assault on marriage in order to achieve a substantial reduction of the human population by promoting, among other things, no-fault divorce and, more recently, same-sex marriage. The "perfect" few among the Darwinists could be the deep ecologists, who are usually vegetarians and

who want our human numbers to decline even to the level of the Neolithic Age. Like Marc Felenz, they wish to replace nearly all of us with wild animals. Or like James Lovelock, they wish to herd us into cities, feed us artificial food, and let "Gaia" thrive happily without us.

The Albigenses approved of suicide by poison and starvation. Likewise, the Darwinist James Rachels promoted euthanasia and suicide by lethal injection, and Garrett Hardin urged that millions of people be allowed to starve if they multiplied beyond the capacity of their ecosystem. As he put it, mass starvation was a "corrective feedback."

The Albigenses believed that Satan was the creator and ruler of this world, so it followed that those who crave illicit power or money would be tempted to invoke him. It is not surprising that radical Cathari like the Albigenses were sometimes accused of sorcery. Likewise, since Darwinists believe that matter produces thought, it follows that, for some of them, evolutionism leads to pantheism. We see it in the case of Fr. Thomas Berry, a disciple of Teilhard de Chardin. An evolutionist and pantheist, Fr. Berry called himself a "shaman," and sought spiritual "union" with the earth.

Only a minority of believers who have entered into communion with the Albigenses and the Darwinists have ever managed to escape their labyrinths. The reason is that most of them were devoured by pride — the Minotaur that lies at the center of their winding way. How could they repent and turn back when they gloried so much in their supposedly superior knowledge and dismissed as stupid all those who believe in the one beneficent Creator of this world and in His rule by divine providence?

God's providence is whole in the whole, and whole in every part, governing the galaxies and yet aware of the fall of every hair from our heads and every leaf from the trees. What a dark age is coming upon us when providence is banished from the classrooms and chance put in its place!

*Anne Barbeau Gardiner*

*Anne Barbeau Gardiner, a Contributing Editor of the NOR, is Professor Emerita of English at John Jay College of the City University of New York. She has published on Dryden, Milton, and Swift, as well as on Catholics of the seventeenth century.*