

Book Reviews

Faith, Reason and the Existence of God by Denys Turner (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004*), 292 pp.

FOR THOMAS AQUINAS, the limitations of ancient philosophy—limitations to its views on, say, the eternity of the world, the state and activity of the intellectual soul apart from the body, the nature of divine life and God's relationship to the created order, and the account of human happiness—are most evident in the greatest achievements of pagan philosophy. To see the limits clearly, we must see the successes. Although he does not speak in detail about the role of ancient philosophy in Aquinas's writings, Denys Turner, in his book *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God*, aims to explicate and defend Aquinas's account of natural reason, particularly his assertion that natural reason can reach the existence of God.

Not one to shy away from controversy, Turner wants to defend not just Aquinas but the precise teaching of Vatican I on the demonstrability of the existence of God by natural reason. In the opening, Turner apologizes for what he calls the “intentionally narrow” focus of the book (ix), but the book is in fact remarkably, at times frustratingly, diffuse in its treatment of topics. The breadth of treatment is at once a vice and virtue of the book. It makes it difficult at times to discern the continuing thread in the argument, but it also allows the reader to make connections between the underlying issue of faith and reason and a number of other discussions, for example, concerning language in contemporary continental thought and the nature of musical expression. Turner's book thus offers more than simply a persuasive case for the significance of proofs for the existence of God; it points us in the direction of a rehabilitation of the role of philosophy in Aquinas's life and thought that contemporary theology, as Turner amply demonstrates, is in danger of forgetting.

From the beginning, Turner wants to be clear about precisely what the teaching of Vatican I is and what it is not. The Church does not claim that we currently possess a valid proof from natural reason for the existence of

God. It does not advocate on behalf of a particular proof. (Turner himself does not offer a fully worked out proof, although he devotes a good bit of time to clearing a path for such a proof.) One might wonder: If we cannot point to a precise proof, what is the point of the teaching? On Turner's reading, the teaching itself is a deliverance of faith, not reason: The possibility of such a proof is not to be denied on the grounds of faith. Turner's most succinct way of putting the issue is this. The proof is something of which "reason must be capable of in its terms if it is to serve its purpose within faith's self-exploration as *quaerens intellectum*" (5).

What is striking and instructive about Turner's approach is the way it meets the opponents of natural theology on their own terms. There is not even the slightest suggestion in Turner that defending natural theology entails abandoning or bracketing faith or adopting a neutral standpoint of pure reason. Of course, that description of the practice of natural theology owes as much to the postmedieval conception of natural theology as it does to the Barthian critique of rational proof. At various points in the book, Turner is preoccupied with the Barthian critique and with the recent revival of neo-Barthianism in the popular theological movement known as Radical Orthodoxy. With the Barthian objection that natural theology involves adopting the standpoint of creation in utter independence from our election in Christ, Turner teases out the key issue—whether the approach to God through natural reason must in every case entail a normalization of the relation between creature and Creator. Turner argues that, in the case of the approach of Aquinas at least, it does not.

Aquinas's ways to God underscore the poverty of human reason in the face of the divine. But human reason is, as Plato puts it in the *Symposium*, the offspring not just of poverty, but of plenty. Thus, the claim, universally affirmed by Aquinas, that we do not know what God is does not entail that we know no truths about God or that we have no way of removing falsehoods from our understanding of God. One of the most significant philosophical and theological consequences of the proofs is that they make palpable the distance that separates our intellect from the divine.

Under the influence of Derrida, a certain trend in contemporary theology celebrates otherness and detects idolatry in any attempt to reach God by reason. One of the unusual features of Turner's defense of natural theology is the way it engages this trend. Turner dismisses as nonsense Derrida's statement that "every other is totally other"—a claim that would undercut not just metaphysics but ethics as well, unless ethics is to be founded on "blank anonymity." Yet Turner's discussion here is not just critical or simply negative. He finds grounds for engagement with continental thought on the topic of music, a topic he takes up as a basis for an analy-

sis of absence and presence in Eucharistic theology. Music signifies the "body in the condition of ecstasy" (115) and is symbolic of the limits of reason. The sadness that typically attends great music, Turner thinks, arises from our experience in it of "what one has caught some glimpse of but cannot yet possess" (116). In this and other contexts, reason itself points to an otherness that it cannot know. Here Turner identifies both the key insight concerning the limits of reason and the potential self-destruction of reason in the post-Nietzschean epoch. On this view, there is nothing to guarantee that beyond reason there is anything but a "vacuous, empty nothingness, an endless prolongation of postponements" (119). The only way out of this nihilism is for reason to be able to "name the otherness," to justify the existence of God as that to which it points (see 119).

The way natural reason points beyond itself and the way we are to distinguish the pointing toward God in philosophy from the pointing done in theology are important issues for Turner's project. Setting aside as a later accretion to the reading of Thomas the contrast between the formal and material objects of knowledge, Turner holds that Aquinas's way of distinguishing the philosophical from the theological knowledge of God is to speak, in Aristotelian terms, of the same object less and more distinctively known. Seen from afar, we might discern only that what is approaching is a human being; as we come closer, we realize that the human being is Peter. Turner here touches upon, but does not develop, a pervasive principle of method in Aquinas, both in philosophy and in theology: dialectical engagement of received opinions. How is that germane to the debate over natural theology?

From Aristotle, Aquinas inherits a conception of dialectic as providing a path to the principles, a sorting through of received opinions and salient examples from ordinary experience in order to reach insights about the nature of things. The dialectical method involves, in part, the appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses, the truth and falsity, of various opinions. Without being naïvely irenic, the approach involves crediting, wherever possible, one's interlocutors with a partial apprehension of truth. Aquinas, of course, stresses that the philosophers reached these truths about God only after much effort and with an admixture of error. But Aquinas is characteristically modest in his assessment both of the achievement and of the limitations or failures. "Admixture of error" does not mean utterly riddled with falsehood. Indeed, the critics of natural theology replace Aquinas's sense of degree and scale with an all-or-nothing dichotomy more characteristic of later Christian thinkers such as Pascal or Kierkegaard, who, it is important to add, were reacting to a very different and much more audacious conception of the power and scope of natural reason.

Here is another way of putting this point. Without a commendation or affirmation of the achievements of pagan philosophy, it is hard to see how theology could have the status, which Aquinas attributes to it, of architectonic science. The notion of an architectonic science or art that rules over and directs other, subordinate sciences and arts is not a Christian invention. It comes from Aristotle. If there is no real learning, let alone wisdom in ancient philosophy, then theology's architectonic status is earned by default. As theologian, Aquinas maintains a positive, ongoing dialogue with reason and philosophy precisely because, as Turner nicely puts it, "reason, in the exercise of its own native powers, in some way 'replicates' or 'anticipates' this shape of faith" (75).

Thomas calls the truths proffered by faith but available to reason preambles of the faith. These truths can be found in both the speculative and the practical orders. In the former, the preambles inform us about the existence of God and other truths immediately derived from God's existence as unmoved mover. In the latter, the natural law partially overlaps with the Decalogue and gives human beings access to the starting points of the ethical life. Since Aquinas says explicitly that sin has a greater effect on the will than on the intellect and he holds that sin has not made us completely oblivious to the principles of the practical order, it would seem odd for him to hold that we are utterly deprived of access through natural reason to the great truths of the speculative order, such as God's existence. Of course, the latter truth is not a self-evident precept as are the founding principles of the natural law. But the seeds of the knowledge of the existence of God are, according to Aquinas, latent within ordinary experience, in our desire for happiness and in our apprehension of order in the universe.

Of course, the comparison of the speculative and practical orders raises an important question about natural knowledge of God, namely, whether the knowledge is efficacious for a good life or for salvation. Sometimes the objection to natural theology is that such knowledge is impossible apart from faith; or that, even if such knowledge is available, it is not efficacious for salvation; or that such knowledge does not reach the trinity of persons. Aquinas would certainly concur with the last two, and, for the case of most human beings, with the first as well. But this does not mean that, where it is held as a valid argument, a proof for the existence of God provides no knowledge. Indeed, on some versions of the objection, it would seem that the Jews did not, and do not have, knowledge of God. Of course, Aquinas's account of the preambles reposes in part on the claim of a partial overlap between what the philosophers were able to achieve and what God revealed to the Jews in *Exodus*, concerning both our naming of God and our conduct toward God and others in the commandments. The extreme

anti natural theology position, which holds that there is no knowledge of God apart from faith in Christ and the Trinity, would for Aquinas create difficulties in our understanding of the Jewish faith.

That is one way of stating the problem for faith of the critique of natural reason. Another way, one explicitly articulated by Turner, is this. If we stress the apophatic to the exclusion of the cataphatic, silence to speech, one wonders how we can give “due weight . . . [to] the positive revelation of God in Jesus Christ” (50). The Word is speech, after all, not silence. In contemporary theology, Turner worries, the “delicately constructed tension between the apophatic and the cataphatic within both reason and faith has been readjusted into a polarity between the negative possibilities of reason and the positive possibilities of faith” (75).

Turner’s defense of reason on behalf, or from the perspective, of faith does not mean that reason is simply instrumentalized. Indeed, that is one of the dangers with the hasty and wholesale repudiation of natural theology; nothing is left of reason but to play an instrumental role. Turner objects to the growing popularity in theology of a “generalized skeptical negativity concerning reason, combined with a theological positivism concerning faith” (75). Reason loses the rich, ample significance that it had in antiquity and takes on a strikingly modern sense. In his concluding comments, Turner captures Aquinas’s sense of reason both as partly constitutive of the human and as crucial for faith: “The believer who . . . refuses to stand on the ground of the atheists’ denials and to challenge them on shared rules of contest concedes the territory of reason, and so of the human, at a price which in the end will be paid in the quality of faith itself” (262). **N V**

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Reason, Community and Religious Tradition: Anselm’s Argument and the Friars by Scott Matthews (*Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2001*), ix + 238 pp.

Simon Tugwell nicely defined the difference between the early Franciscan and Dominican ideals. Dominicans sought to recover the *apostolic* life; Franciscans the *apostolic life*. The Friars Preachers emphasized apostolic mission; the Friars Minor, personal renewal.

Scott Matthews explores the difference in how the Friars approach Anselm’s argument for the existence of God in the *Proslogion*. He begins with Anselm’s monastic context. Anselm writes for monks and for his female patrons, his purpose private and devotional, not evangelistic.

Summarizing the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* chapter by chapter, Matthews emphasizes a focus not on definition, but on the divine ineffability. The reader is to recognize, as Anselm says, that “I was made for the purpose of seeing you, and I have not yet been able to do that for which I was made.” When Gaunilo translates the negative “that than which nothing greater” to “a being greater than everything,” he exactly misses the point: Anselm emphasizes that we do *not* know God. His aim is not philosophical proof, but *compunctio cordis*, an upward spiral of knowledge and love. Following Anton Pegis, Matthews emphasizes the role of participation, hierarchy, and presence—rather than definition—in Anselm’s argument.

Matthews next reviews the history that separates Anselm from the friars. The rise of wandering religious movements challenged Christendom to establish a greater unity *ad intra*: New schools provided literary tools for centralized government, and the friars gave papal access to the provinces. *Ad extra*, Christendom was challenged to show its vitality vis-à-vis Judaism and Islam, and above all vis-à-vis the Philosophy those religions had assimilated. These challenges fostered a theology “judicial rather than contemplative, professional rather than aristocratic” (31). No longer a text to be pondered in one’s cell, Anselm’s argument became a weapon for debate. Thus Alexander Nequam used it to prove to the Jews that God *could* become man, and William of Auxerre, teacher of the first great scholastic friars, Alexander of Hales, and Hugh of St. Cher used it to prove the necessity of faith for true philosophy.

The four central chapters of the book consider the transposition of Anselm’s argument, first by the early Franciscan and Dominican schools, and then by their greatest flowers, Bonaventure and Thomas. Summarizing manuscripts from Oxford, Paris, Bologna, and Assisi, Matthews details the development of the two schools.

Again, he puts the Franciscan school in the context of challenges from within and from without: the question of studies in the *poverello*’s order, and the question of beggars in the schools. In Alexander of Hales, Odo Rigaud, three disciples of Odo, and the *Summa Minorum (fratris Alexandri)*, Matthews finds a consistent theology. St. Francis rediscovered the primacy of conversion from sensual love to the love of Christ. For the early Franciscan theologians, this conversion expressed itself intellectually in the turn from contemplating creatures to contemplating the ground of their existence. Anselm’s argument served to show that true thought necessarily sees through creatures to their most perfect exemplar—only the fool says there is no God. Reread in a new context, Anselm’s argument now showed both that theology is a part of Franciscan conversion and that Franciscan conversion is necessary for theology.

While Francis's friars cultivated an experience of God's presence, Dominic's battled heresy, emphasizing authority over interiority. Among the early Dominicans, then, the first emphasis was on the authority of Scripture, as with Hugh of St. Cher. Their first *Summa*, Roland of Cremona's, arose in the missionary battles of Toulouse. By the time of Albert the Great, says Matthews, reason was clearly set out, not as a tool within faith, but as a means of discourse with the infidel. Albert focused on solid proofs of God's existence and his unity. Anselm is significant precisely for his absence: Though aware of his argument, the Dominicans replaced this interior way with concrete arguments from causality.

The two orders toyed with various approaches, but it became clear that there were distinctly Franciscan and Dominican ways of doing theology. Before turning to the central characters of his book, Matthews devotes half a chapter to the vicissitudes of Oxford. Here, Robert Grosseteste, friend of the Franciscans, filled out their theory of illumination with a greater emphasis on the senses, while the Dominican Richard Fishacre gave greater space to an illuminationist reading of Anselm. In contrasting the order of causality and the order of knowledge, the Franciscan Richard Rufus sounds distinctly like a Dominican. But—and this seems to be the point—Rufus's confreres drove him from Oxford in shame. Experimentation with opposing viewpoints only proved the deepening commitments of each school.

Early Franciscan thought culminates in Bonaventure's exemplarism. Matthews summarizes parts of Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentary, the *De Trinitate*, and the *Itinerarium*. Because God causes everything that is, nothing is understood properly apart from him. Moreover, because God causes knowledge itself, the mind can find him without venturing beyond itself. Thus for Bonaventure, only willful malice, never ignorance, prevents one from knowing God. Again, Anselm's argument shows that all thought is false and illogical unless it acknowledges God. The argument need not pass as a proof; it shows that God's existence is self-evident, beyond proof. For Bonaventure, only Franciscan conversion reveals the existence and presence of God. Theological argument is a way of ascent, not proof.

In contrast, for the great Dominican, Thomas Aquinas, theology works not to edify, but to defend the faith. Matthews reviews Thomas's commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate* and the *De ente et essentia*, but his primary focus is on the *Summa contra Gentiles*. Thomas's primary goal, he says, is to establish an account of God's unity that is totally acceptable to his primary opponents, the Muslims, so that he can teach them the truth of the Trinity. The mission of preaching to the unconverted requires equal access to the sources of knowledge; if only the converted can understand, then there

is no reason to preach. Thus Thomas uses an Aristotelian proof for God's existence and discards the Franciscan reading of Anselm. In so doing, Thomas has no interest in the historical Anselm and his monastic world. His concern is to find a more accessible argument for preaching—and to reject the Franciscan priority of the will over the intellect. Matthews shows Thomas's affinity with his confreres Peter of Tarentaise, Annibald d'Anni-bald, and the obscure and totally unconnected Bombolognous of Bologna.

In his final substantive chapter, Matthews reviews later intellectual developments within the two orders. The Dominicans Robert Kilwardby, Thomas Sutton, Robert D'Orford, and Bernard of Trilla continued to discuss and debate the principles of Thomas and Dominican spirituality. Ulrich of Strasbourg is particularly interesting for his German variations on the Dominican theme—far from the missions and from scholastic debate. Among the Friars Minor, John Peckham and Matthew of Acquasparta developed Bonaventure's argument in response to Thomist critiques. Richard of Middleton, William of Ware, and Duns Scotus, however, gradually shifted the Franciscan argument away from Bonaventure's vulnerable illuminationism toward a greater emphasis on the will—a significant move because it shows their commitment not to Bonaventure's theology but to a spirituality of conversion. Matthews draws two conclusions. First, Thomas and Bonaventure are not the last word in Dominican and Franciscan theology. Second, the theological schools of thought that developed within the two orders reflect not parochialism, but the fundamental religious interests of the two communities.

Matthews calls his book *Reason, Community and Religious Tradition: Anselm's Argument and the Friars*, and the title reveals the two levels on which the book operates. On one level, the book is an essay in historical theology: Anselm's argument and the friars. On another level, it argues that reason is necessarily contextualized in community and religious tradition—a critique of modernity's penchant for objectivity. This critique seems to be Matthews's primary concern.

To Matthews, the transformation of Anselm's devotional argument in the scholastic world of the friars, and the further opposition between Franciscan and Dominican, reveals the importance of philosophical context. The supposed rational objectivity of Anselm's argument breaks down under the weight of different presuppositions. Thus reason can never be purely objective.

This argument addresses an important concern for students of scholastic theology. Lovers of Anselm know the significance of his monastic context. They will appreciate Matthews's critique of modern anthologies. Those who read Bonaventure and Thomas appreciate certain irreducible

contradictions: among others, the primacy of will versus intellect and illumination versus knowledge of the senses. Matthews helps to clarify these contradictions and their roots in religious commitments.

But Matthews does not seem to have theologians in mind. His opening remarks are about the philosophy of religion. Locke looms large in the first few pages. In the wake of the wars of religion, says Matthews, the seventeenth century strove to establish the “common core of religions” through the pure objectivity of reason. “It is assumed [among Enlightenment thinkers] that rationality is everywhere the same, and that the issues discussed by philosophers are ‘eternal questions’”; philosophy is “the disinterested pursuit of truth separable from context.” (*Aeterni Patris*, he says, falls into this camp.) Set in this context by its opening and concluding remarks, Matthews’s book is not about medieval theology at all. It is rather a case study, “to illustrate the ways in which reason constructs itself in the course of its operations.” Matthews believes he has proved that “enquiry does not begin by removing difference and particularity, but proceeds upon and creates it.” The goal of philosophy, he shows, is not only rational consensus but also a greater understanding of difference.

Such an argument betrays, perhaps, the fundamental irony of post-modernism. Matthews is at pains to disprove the rational objectivity of the Enlightenment, yet his enquiry retains the Enlightenment’s critical distance. He contradicts Enlightenment hope, but wholeheartedly accepts its sense of detached superiority.

The problem, perhaps, consists in putting ultimate questions at the service of secondary ones. Matthews’s historical erudition can illuminate vital questions of conversion, knowledge, and God. Theologians of the last century have gained much from a deeper appreciation of the fundamental assumptions of great thinkers—*das Ungesagte*, says Josef Pieper. Seeing these presuppositions helps us to appreciate the full value of a theology, and even of contradicting theologies, like those of Bonaventure and Thomas.

The modern project, however, has often reduced ultimate questions to historical curiosities, putting the master at the servant’s service. Thus Matthews’s introduction and conclusion strive not to understand the truth of things, but to prove reason’s inability to transcend commitments. Significantly, this reversal clouds his full appreciation of the historical. Arguing that religious commitments are prior to rational inquiry, Matthews sides with the Franciscans, but relativizes their search for the true God. He correctly shows the missionary impulse of the Dominicans, but his eagerness to set them against the Franciscans neglects their contemplative piety. Bernard Gui’s official *Legenda* remembers Thomas, the great theologian of the missions, not for his missionary zeal, but for

his prayer and simple charity. Fra Angelico shows his founder lost in prayer beneath the cross. The preachers were first of all pious friars.

And so perhaps we best return to Tugwell's distinction between the *apostolic* life and the apostolic *life*, a distinction that recognizes unity in difference—unity of friars caught up in the love of Christ. Only at the service of this fundamental commitment does history truly come to life. **N V**

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Sexual Ethics: The Meaning and Foundations of Sexual Morality

by Aurel Kolnai, translated and edited by Francis Dunlop (*Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2005*), xviii + 316 pp.

IN RECENT YEARS some theologians have promoted the image of the exile as a model of Christian life. The image is meant to convey that the Christian has no home save in Christ. This aspect of the image is wonderful, biblical, and true. Less positively, the image would have us separate ourselves from earthly loyalties, perhaps even to condemn the world, but certainly to nourish low expectations of the world. The world and its secular polities are only the Bible's "principalities," and the order and forms of life offered there are little better than thralldom. Defenders of the Christian-as-exile idea believe the Church is better served by this than the older (but not really old) idea of the Christian of national loyalties who has made accommodations with a particular ordering of secular life. The personal story of Kolnai is a refutation of this claim.

Aurel Kolnai, later Aurel Thomas Kolnai upon his conversion to Catholicism, was an exile much of his life. Born Aurel Stein (1900–73) to a banking family of liberal Jews, Kolnai, a truly cosmopolitan man and eccentric of the first order, fled Europe in his late thirties to live in poverty for the rest of his life, landing occasional academic grants and university positions. After living in America and Canada, he settled in England, a country he loved. There he remained for the rest of his life teaching as an adjunct at Bedford College, one of the colleges of the University of London.

Kolnai was not just brilliant, he was probably one of the greatest Catholic minds of the last century. Any reader of his *Sexual Ethics* will agree with this statement. Readers should not fear that a book on sexual ethics written seventy-odd years ago will be laughably naïve. Kolnai lived in the pluralistic Austro-Hungarian Empire before and after its cataclysmic end in World War I. His book has philosophical explorations not merely of marriage but a host of perversions and sexual pathologies. True, there is

no mention of gay marriage nor had abortion yet been woven into European sex lives; but otherwise the sexual landscape is little different now than when Kolnai wrote. Found in the book are fascinating analyses of fetish, prostitution, masochism, homosexuality, and other perversions of sex values. Yet why has the Church been deprived of the ideas of this book for more than seventy years? As a personalist belonging to the school of Scheler, Kolnai's book ought to have earned a readership because of the huge interest in John Paul II's work. But it is only now, some thirty years after his death, that Kolnai's works are being edited and published: For the first time Kolnai is gaining the readership he deserved all along. I suggest that his living an impoverished exile not only forced constant disruptions in his work,¹ but robbed him of a stable national academic community that could claim his work for itself. It is quite easy to be an intellectual whose books are read when one has produced graduate students who enter the academy and when one is able to build a network of colleagues who ensure your books are published and promoted. And thank goodness this is true! If the Church needs ideas then she also needs a stable secular order with its academies and economic production and distribution networks to disseminate those ideas.

The Church has not been well served by Kolnai's exile. Let us rejoice, however, that now his contributions can start to be felt. Enormous praise must be given to Francis Dunlop who has been tireless in editing and translating Kolnai's largest works. The Church must also be grateful to intellectuals who have no especial connection with her. Thinkers like David Wiggins, Roger Scruton, and Bernard Williams, doyens of the English philosophical world, have all supported or expressed great admiration for Kolnai's work. It is easy to see why despite the unfashionable quality of his ideas. There is an "ethical precariousness" to sex, says Kolnai. Every civilization recognizes that there is an inherent tendency in sex toward evil, and this because sexual pleasure destroys personal values. Sex is a depersonalizing power (49). Hence Kolnai's comment, "the idea that the 'infamous' forms of sex should be treated as 'imperfect' forms of an ideally perfected and ennobled form of Eros, is utterly mistaken" (90). Persons are spiritual bearers of intrinsic value and will. As each person has intrinsic value so each person is separate one from another, and the structure of value reality is a protection of this distinctive distance.

However, whilst the intentionality of sexual pleasure, a topic handily ignored by those who would valorize sex, is always an intending of the

¹ Kolnai's *magnum opus*, a work on phenomenological ethics, was delivered in manuscript form to the German publisher around the time he fled Europe and was probably destroyed in a bombing raid. The manuscript is lost at any rate.

other sex, it is also an abandonment of the persons involved. Sex is an abandonment of the person because in orgasm the person becomes “all sex,” and every sex act is structurally directed to orgasm. Stepping back into human appetite is also removing oneself from the moral order, and John Paul II’s later reflection on the strange intermingling of sex and homicide is here structurally announced with great phenomenological precision. The morally problematic center of sexual pleasure is not only that it opens and then closes off access to the other but that there is a diminishment of the self as well as the self is absorbed into the “matter” of sex. This “matter” is voluptuousness, and its antipersonalist feature is its subjection of the person to the homogeneity of vital bodiliness (45 & 65). Voluptuousness trivializes the person: There is no engagement with a person but merely the use of a person as an instrument of “diversion” (44).

Those familiar with Kolnai’s seminal essays in political theory from the late 1940s will recognize the theme of privilege. The person is a site of privilege ever threatened in sex by a tendency of appetite toward collectivism. Announced here are the lineaments of John Paul the Great’s shocking claim in *Evangelium Vitae* (no. 20) that the sexual politics of contemporary liberal democracy is a “form of totalitarianism,”

However, sex is also a good for “conjugal love is already anticipated in all sexual love” (131). The intentionality of sexual pleasure might be inherently problematic but it is subtended by the intentionality of sexual love, which aims at an overcoming of its own voluptuousness. Sexual love imposes a limit on itself, for it has a peculiar devotional structure “radically exalting” the beloved over others (131). That is, sexual love is selective and privilege generating. There is thus a continuity—albeit problematic—between sexual love and conjugal love. Moreover, voluptuousness interiorly ordered to orgasm is also interiorly ordered to the affirmation of persons: persons created by sex. Marriage is the form of life that does “justice to both nature and the person” (92). Marriage transforms the human devotion of sexual love into “a principled conception of the partner as an ‘equal’ possessor of value and will” (123). Thus sex inside marriage is taken up into a form of life that privileges *persons*: spouses and children. If sexual pleasure is morally precarious because of its depersonalizing power marriage fosters the “more real presence” of persons (125).

Kolnai was not a moral theologian nor even a Thomist in any strict sense. His work is a largely phenomenological reflection on sexuality and so in a language of public reason. To Kolnai’s mind, the language we use to describe the moral world closely tracks the natural order, or what he liked to call “ordinary moral consciousness.” What might strike some as a philosophical populism was, for Kolnai, an anchor for an exile and all his

cosmopolitan credentials and many fluent languages (he wrote *philosophy* in Hungarian, German, French, Spanish, and English!) never sundered his conviction that a broad moral consensus existed; one that had to be protected from ideological perversion.

Kolnai must, of course, be read for his intrinsic worth but it should be obvious by now that his *Sexual Ethics* is essential reading alongside Wojtyła's work on the same subject. I have touched upon only a few of the riches of this book. Even with the themes addressed here, I have not conveyed the subtleties of the analyses nor their thoroughness. (The book's 300 pages do not convey just how long the book is: The typeface is very small.) There is every reason to expect that this translation of Kolnai's brilliant 1930 book will help return the school of Scheler to some prominence in Catholic ethical reflection. And perhaps there are grounds for a deeper hope. Could a claim made in Roger Scruton's preface to the text yet come true? Scruton says something rather remarkable. He speculates that had Kolnai's work been common currency in humanities departments around the time of the *Kinsey Report* that document would have been rejected for the obvious nonsense it is. Given the pernicious consequences that report helped generate in American life we must hope that Kolnai may yet have decisive influence. It is very frustrating that the book is so expensive, making it impossible for classroom use! Still, this book should be read by every serious Catholic intellectual. The Church and her mission would be well served were this to happen. N.V

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The Nuptial Mystery by Angelo Cardinal Scola, translated by Michelle K. Borras (*Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005*), xi + 405 pp.

THE ENCYCLICAL of Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* has something in common with Angelo Cardinal Scola's book, *The Nuptial Mystery*. They both draw on the pioneering work of John Paul II, who was in turn inspired by Vatican Council II (especially, *Gaudium et Spes*) to illuminate human, especially spousal, love as a path to divine love and the fulfillment of the commandment to love. The encyclical emphasizes the importance of incarnating love in all aspects of the Church's charitable activity. Scola proposes the nuptial mystery of love, sexual difference, and procreation as the *analogatum princeps* of all reality, both ascending and descending, and a legitimate "key to the *intellectus fidei* of revelation" (393). It provides, in his view, a basis for the renewal of philosophical and theological studies in

seminaries (345), as well as a new, much needed perspective in systematic theology. Such a bold claim alone from a papabile, currently patriarch of Venice, merits a careful reading of this book.

Like the future Pope Benedict XVI, Scola collaborated in the founding of the journal *Communio*, in the English edition of which several chapters of this book originally appeared. He was educated in the Venegono seminary, where he came under the influence of Luigi Giussani, founder of the ecclesial movement Communion and Liberation. Scola's work is stamped with the emphasis on foundations and experience that mark the Venegono school of theology. His subsequent career combined pastoral work with two periods teaching at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Rome, becoming president in the 1990s. His most formative work flowed from this teaching. Scola's background as a teacher, in fact, dictates the style of *The Nuptial Mystery*. Several chapters were originally given as lectures or papers at conferences.

"Fundamental human experiences" are for Scola the inescapable ground for exploring the nuptial mystery, which includes the inseparable and intertwining factors of sexual difference, love (a relation to the other as gift), and fruitfulness. The dual unity of man and woman constitutes the starting point and also the nuptial mystery's horizontal dimension. Analogy allows one to pass from the horizontal to the vertical dimension reaching ultimately to God himself in the Trinity. From this starting point the nuptial mystery can find new depths in the Christian mysteries of Jesus Christ, the Church, and the sacraments. Why this new articulation now? The culture, from rejecting *Humanae Vitae* and the perennial doctrine of the inseparability of the unitive and procreative dimensions of conjugal intercourse, has progressed to endorsing a form of androgyny that brings about a veritable "anthropological mutation." Scola posits that a return to the fundamental human experience of marriage and family, which contains within itself the original structure of being, can reinstate reasoned argument on the human being and at the same time show how nuptiality is a constitutive part of God's plan revealed in Scripture.

Scola presents his argument in four parts with the first given to the dual unity of man and woman and the meaning of sexual difference. The second fleshes out the nuptial mystery from a theological perspective, and the third looks at its implications in family and society. With the accent on the word "mystery," section four considers sacramental theology in light of the nuptial mystery. The three chapters devoted to fatherhood and motherhood in relation to God the Father, Christ as Bridegroom of the Church, and the Holy Spirit as the "principle of nuptiality," are particularly rich in new insights on both consecrated celibacy and the sacrament

of marriage. The seven articles included in the appendices are by no means marginal. In fact it is here in numbers 4 and 7 that Scola proposes that all that has gone before constitutes a new perspective for systematic theology.

From the outset Scola makes clear that pontifical teaching is his point of departure, not studies in theology, philosophy, or the human sciences. To discover the meaning of identity and difference his primary texts are John Paul II's apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* and the Wednesday catecheses on the theology of the body, both of which draw heavily on Scripture. In the Genesis texts John Paul II identifies four essential features, Man exists always as either masculine or feminine; sexual difference must be understood ontologically, and their union is asymmetrical, not two halves of a whole; sexual difference belongs to the image so that sexuality is neither purely animal nor spiritual. Finally "spousal love is the *analogatum princeps* of every kind of love" (9).

The foundation of their dual unity is the mystery of Christ (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22) whose incarnation is a spousal relation of his divine and human natures and issues from the heart of the Trinity. Briefly, difference is for the sake of unity, which is realized in reciprocity. The unity of Christ and the Church is the fulfillment of the mystery and the origin of the original man–woman pair, Adam and Eve. The union must be fruitful; Mary's motherhood corresponds to Eve's with motherhood itself tied to the woman's very nature. The important innovation in all this, proposed by the magisterium, is the raising of sexuality to the level of the *imago Dei* (34). It means that either the gender difference has its ultimate foundation in the Trinitarian, Christological, and ecclesial mysteries of Revelation or it simply has reference to human reproduction and its moral requirements.

Chapter four takes up the way sexual love in marriage, far from being debased by passion is the paradigmatic form of love. Scola draws on Aquinas to show how *amor naturalis*, which depends on *voluntas ut ratio*, is a constituent of all love, even the highest mystical union. The human being's potential for choosing does not take place from a *tabula rasa* but from a specific inclination to the good. Love then is the fruit of a choice arising from a desire already within the person. "If the love of desire is an affective *passio*, the love of election is an effective choice." In summary the way lies open for *eros* to be assumed into *agape*, which John Paul II describes in the theology of the body as *eros* and *ethos* meeting in the human heart. With the redemption of the body the conjugal love of the human spouses, instead of being a barrier to holiness in a Manichaean interpretation of sexuality, is on a continuum with consecrated virginal and divine love. Benedict XVI says in *Deus caritas est*, "*eros* and *agape*—

ascending and descending love—can never be completely separated” (*Deus caritas est*, no. 7). He takes this to its logical conclusion by positing erotic love in God himself. “God loves, and his love may certainly be called *eros* but it is also totally *agape*” (*Deus caritas est*, no. 9). Chapter five then draws all these threads together to describe the nuptial mystery at all its different levels analogically.

Even though modern man, as Scola says, takes a utilitarian approach to sexual pleasure, it is easier to welcome the new emphasis on the goodness of conjugal union than the Church’s insistence on the openness to procreation. Fruitfulness is central to the nuptial mystery. Procreation essentially belongs to the conjugal act. “Sexual difference as difference (duality) in unity, inscribing difference in the ‘I’ itself, shows that *fruitfulness is the full ‘face’ of asymmetrical reciprocity*.” Conjugal union is not and can never be a search for an androgynous union of two halves. That is to deny the internal difference of the masculine and feminine “I.” The other always remains other, and it is only out of dual unity that a third “I” issues, in an analogy of the perfect *communio personarum*, in the Trinity. The Son is begotten by the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The conjugal act is a spiritual act because it brings forth a child who is an *imago Dei*.

Having outlined the nuptial mystery, Scola proceeds to engage the culture. Here he finds a crisis of freedom and value. Freedom of choice has become the whole of freedom detached from any relation to the natural law. Modern man has lost the capacity for truth as *adaequatio intellectus et rei*. Scola shows brilliantly how freedom unhinged from the real and from God ends in nihilism and relativism with disastrous consequences for the family, especially fatherhood and motherhood.

While theology and philosophy are not the point of departure for Scola’s study, he states in chapter twelve, that the various aspects of the nuptial mystery need to be explored with the criteria of the human sciences, philosophy, and theology. He proceeds to critique contemporary philosophical views, particularly “scientific universalism,” which subscribes to an absolute subjectivism and at the same time claims to explain all human reality from an empirically measurable perspective. No room remains for the domain of “mystery,” which Scola defines not as something unknowable but rather as a place where the infinite somehow makes itself present (85). In this sense sexual difference is a privileged place for the domain of mystery. This section of the text is important for understanding Scola’s methodology. In explicating the insuperable sexual difference, he refers both to the Heideggerian theme of *ontological difference* and Aquinas’s *distinctio realis*, which Scola shows overcomes the deficiency in Heidegger. From this and other comments it is clear that Scola’s meta-

physics are firmly based on Thomism (he wrote his doctoral dissertation on Aquinas), although he does coin a new category, “symbolic ontology,” to account for what he calls the dramatic nature of reality.

Truth has a “symbolic character.” Being itself cannot be encompassed by man so that technically it is indeducible but it communicates itself in a sign, which Scola calls an “e-vent.” Being discloses itself to the subject so that the subject can cleave to it. In order for man to adhere to the being that is disclosed in the sign, man must choose it in freedom. Yet he cannot resolve the difference that lies at the heart of the being disclosed. The other always remains a mystery. It is that difference that allows relationship. In the ontological difference there is a continuous interplay between the gift and freedom. Sexual difference always presents itself to the other as an invitation to form its identity, and it is always fruitful (226–27).

On the theological plane “the logic of the Incarnation,” says Scola, “allows us to experience Jesus Christ as an event and not as an abstract idea” (262). The ontological difference appears most fully in the God-man relation. The difference allows for the gratuitous nature of the gift and man’s freedom in responding. The Sacrament of the Eucharist underlines both this difference and man’s response. The unity of body and soul, indeed, calls for the logic of the sacrament, since the body is the “sacrament of the person.” The relation between Christ and the Church is *the* form of spousal love and possesses within it the ultimate significance of the relation between man and woman. The Christ–Church union is actualized in a unique way in marriage as an indissoluble communion of persons, which becomes an efficacious sign and sacrament. At the same time consecrated virginity is the summit of nuptiality in loving the other exclusively in Christ (270). Through the concept of analogy Scola concludes that the spousal analogy of sexual difference functions as a privileged path to explore the nuptial mystery and the whole of reality as ordered to communion on the basis of a prior gift.

Scola recognizes that the whole concept of analogy since St. Thomas has undergone criticism as well as evolution. He holds that Von Balthasar’s notion of the *analogia libertatis* is able to overcome the critical objections. For those who read this book, the centrality of analogy as both a theological and a philosophical method is likely to influence their judgment on its conclusions. For Scola every encounter with the nuptial mystery both vertical and horizontal “must always pass through a new act of testimony on the part of the individual” calling to his freedom (403). Thought must always become experience. He believes the very openness of the perspective of the nuptial mystery as a foundation “offers a systematic perspective—but one never to be taken for granted or possessed—for the

intellectus fidei." Whether one accepts the methodological premises or not, Scola in *The Nuptial Mystery* has presented a compelling synthesis of the truths of the faith and a Christian anthropology both inspiring and necessary to meet the challenges to the *humanum* today. N V

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The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, SJ, edited by Michael G. Shields and Frederick E. Crowe, SJ (*Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002*), 350 pp.

EVEN THOUGH the shiny white cover with gold and black type invites one to open Bernard Lonergan's *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, one might wonder what his 1964 Latin text and new English translation by Michael Shields has to say for today. Plenty. First, as we seek to construct a theological view of Christ that highlights the human and the personal, we need to see the value of those first 600 years of tradition, when the faithful, theologians, and emperors, each with his own agenda, battled over how to speak about Christ. Lonergan does. He sees this tradition as a given of faith. Nonetheless he is aware that unless he shows the possibility of Christ being human as well as divine, and of being a single subject capable of growth and personality, he will likely hear the Athenians saying, "We'll speak of this some other time"! To meet this challenge Lonergan closely adheres to the methodological requirements of theology and of philosophy to come to a creative understanding of Christ. He was known to be human but one person with God. He had a consciousness of himself and knowledge of God, yet lived an experiential life like our own. In order to see how this is possible, it is necessary to trace Lonergan's thought as he moves between subjective and objective points of view, between a theological and a scientific methodology, and between the "what is" of consciousness and the "what is" of knowledge.

While Lonergan's book is divided into six parts, his actual frame of reference is twofold. Because psychological operations arise from a person's being, he first discusses the ontological constitution of Christ in parts I to IV, before examining Jesus' consciousness in parts V and VI.

Of Christ's constitution Lonergan asks, "Why is the assumed nature of Christ not a human person?" And, if he is not a human person, how then can "Christ as God and as man" be "one and the same, divided only in reflective thought, but one supposit, one being, one reality?(5)"

Lonergan reveals his approach to this question in Part I. Holding that knowing is by identity, he addresses the subject seeking to know before addressing the object to be known. Anticipating his functional specialty “foundations,” he examines the notion of “existenz,” that is, the subject knowing (19ff). He holds that in order to know the being of Christ, who as man is known by reason and as God known by faith, one’s own being must have the same configuration. One must be conscious, knowing, and committed in faith (31).

As for the object to be known, Christ is a person, the highest form of being. Not only is “person” one, subsistent, and distinct, but it is intelligent, that is, capable of performing the highest of operations (31ff).

So, in Part II, before dealing with the person of Christ Lonergan examines what constitutes a finite person. However, since “constitution” refers to causality, Lonergan first discusses that which exerts “an influence on the existence of something” (47). Using the principle that “things that differ in intelligibility differ in reality,” Lonergan establishes that a thing has distinct causes, extrinsic and intrinsic (53). If one said that “extrinsic cause” is a mental construct, one would have to say that contingent beings have no extrinsic cause, which is absurd. Also, just as to understand what a thing is is distinct from judging that it is, that is, a reality born of evidence and not a fantasy of the mind, so the being that is known is constituted by distinct causes. One accounts for its essence and the other for its existence! A finite being is that which has an essence that is not its act of existence and has its existence from a self-existing extrinsic cause.

Lonergan then moves to discuss what constitutes a finite person. As it is, a “distinct subsistent in an intellectual nature,” it needs the essence of an intellectual nature, otherwise it would not be a being that is intelligent. It needs an act of existence, otherwise it would not be a subsistent being. Its existence must be received by the human essence, otherwise one is dealing with God whose essence is its existence. The act of existence must be proper to that essence, otherwise it would be another’s act of existence, and thus not a human person (59–61).

In Part IV, Lonergan considers Christ. First he lays out what is of faith, “the Dogma of the Incarnation” (107ff). Then to understand Christ, he uses philosophical methodology to resolve his being as human into its “causes,” and theological methodology to resolve his being as divine into its “reasons.”

Since the Incarnation refers to God, one’s deeper understanding of it cannot be attained through resolving a thing into its causes, for God has no causes. One must use reason to take what God reveals and formulate principles of reason by which one can better understand it. Thus, of the revelation that Christ is God, one can reason that as he has every power

he is able to assume a contingent reality to himself, namely human nature (83, 87).

As man, however, Christ has causes. To better understand him, therefore, one resolves his being into its causes. These are two: One is the essential human nature and the other is its act of existence. As essential human nature is in potency for an act of existence, it can be either proportionate to that nature or exceeding it. But as being God Christ's act of existence exceeds what is proportionate to human nature. He is, then, not a finite person, as having a proportionate existence, but a human nature whose act of existence belongs to another, God (113).

The problem is to explain how these truths of faith and reason come together into a unity. Working with the notion that one can know the being of God only analogously, Lonergan judiciously rejects "what we naturally know about the composition of a finite being" and turns to what "we naturally know about God" (131). We know that the being of God is not "some kind of material principle that always acts the same way by blind necessity" (133ff). Rather God's existence acts the way God's understanding does. Just as God can think and will, that is, terminate in, what is contingent as well as in what is necessary, so also can God's act of existence. First one can say that Christ's human nature, known and willed by God, can be related to God as term of God's act of existence. Second one can say that since God can think and will that this contingent reality of Christ's human nature be related only to the Son, so it is related to the Son and not to the Father and/or Holy Spirit.

Next, Lonergan discusses Christ's consciousness. In Part VI, he considers human consciousness. Consciousness is of one's self, the "subject," and of one's acts. It is not introspection or knowledge about one's self, as these refer to the "object." Consciousness is presence to one's being and one's acts, but not the being of one's self as it is an object of knowledge (157–65).

To get this knowledge one must go beyond experience to acts of understanding and judgment. Thus to come to a knowledge of one's self as sentient, one would have to experience one's self as sensing, understand what sensing is, and then judge whether one's experience matches one's understanding. If there is a match, one knows one's self as sentient. One would have to go through a similar process regarding acts of understanding and judgment.

Lonergan's theorem is that the way one understands consciousness seriously affects the way one understands Christ. On the one hand, if one understands consciousness as experience, one can say that Christ was humanly conscious of his divine person, when he was seeing, under-

standing, and willing various things. On the other hand, if one understands consciousness as perception, then one has to make the very odd statement that when Christ did not have himself as an object of perception he was not humanly conscious of himself!

In Part VI, Lonergan examines the consciousness of Christ. First, how is Christ, as God, conscious? To answer this question, Lonergan leads the reader from understanding that God is conscious of himself through his acts, to seeing that these acts can be shared in common by the persons of the Trinity and then to seeing that there are notional acts that are proper to each person (195ff).

Then Lonergan asks, "Are they conscious not just of their notional acts but of themselves as distinct subjects?" More specifically, "Is the person of Christ as person . . . conscious?" Yes. As the notional acts of each of the three persons are different, so is the consciousness of these acts. As these notional acts give rise to relations that are given subsistence through God's act of existence, then what is constitutive of person is present. So the Son, though his notional act of being begotten, is conscious of his own person (201–3).

As to the human consciousness of Christ, Lonergan recalls that consciousness is awareness of both one's being and one's acts. Since Christ the man is constituted by his human nature and the act of existence of his divine person, Christ is conscious of both his human nature and his person, since his person is identified with his act of existence. He becomes conscious of his person when he performs his human operations.

Consequently Christ, like us, was able to experience life in its complexity, seeking to understand that experience, checking that understanding with further evidence, and making decisions. Should he stay in his Father's house talking and asking questions or leave in obedience to his mother and father. Such operations are the basis for forming one's personality.

Lonergan makes another assertion. Christ knows himself as the natural Son of God and true God. For this to happen, two things are required, consciousness of self and beatific vision. One can only judge who one is by grasping the match between what is known and what one is conscious of. To know what God is in himself and to know what others are in God, beatific vision of the divine essence is required. To be humanly conscious of his divine person, Christ has to perform his human operations. When these two requirements are met, Christ can match them and thus conclude that he is natural Son of God and true God (215–19).

In such an analysis, it is possible to see that just as a concept of some thing does not preclude a concept of another thing, so the concept of God's essence, which is beatific vision, does not preclude other self-concepts,

those that Christ gained from his own reading of the Scriptures and his own self-reflection. When the gift of vision was given, it gave a higher unity to these other concepts, analogous to how the concepts of the Christological councils gave a higher unity to the scriptural designations of Christ.

Lonergan concludes his work by linking what is of faith with what one says philosophically and theologically. One's belief that the Son of God became man and really experienced what it was to be a human being must be connected with what one says theologically. If one understands consciousness as experience, "this truth of the Catholic faith follows immediately." However, if consciousness is understood as perception, this same truth that Christ experienced what it is to be a human being "is overlooked by those who . . . take for granted that consciousness is perception" (287).

From this, Lonergan draws two philosophical conclusions which show how Christian faith can help philosophy. First, for faith reasons about Christ, the notion of consciousness-as-perception must be abandoned. Second, knowledge as some form of duality must be abandoned as well. If one does not do this, then when one says God knows himself, one would be saying there are two Gods!

Rather than Church teaching being a straightjacket for theology, Lonergan shows that by a close attention to the methodologies proper to what is of reason and what is of faith one's Christology can be creative and offer much to human thought. Whether one agrees with his Christology or not, one has a fine example to follow. N V

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Aquinas's Summa: Background, Structure, and Reception by Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP, translated by Benedict M. Guevin, OSB (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005*), vii + 156 pp.

THE WORK of Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP, displays a renewed understanding of St. Thomas Aquinas that goes well beyond arguments for God's existence or the atheological natural law theory that are all too often packaged as Thomism. In the concluding salvo, Torrell describes the "most common and damaging error" in approaching the great *Summa* is to "have considered Thomas first of all as a philosopher and to have believed it possible to isolate certain parts of the *Summa* as 'philosophical'" (133). To overcome this defect in appreciating St. Thomas and his greatest work, Torrell insists that his reader "give all of his attention to Thomas as a theologian, a disciple of the Fathers of the Church and an interpreter of

the Bible" (133). Torrell is a master at accentuating the theological impetus and structure of Aquinas's greatest work—the *Summa theologiae*. This book is dedicated to that task.

The book is structured around six chapters that present the biographical details of Thomas's life, the structure, content, genre, and sources of the *Summa*, and the history of its reception.

Torrell begins *Aquinas's Summa* with a sketch of Aquinas's life. He uses this first chapter to unearth important elements of Thomas's formation that help one to better understand the various influences to which Aquinas was exposed during his early education and Dominican formation. Torrell even delightfully attempts to reconstruct "with a minimum of certainty" (6) what a normal day at St. Jacques would have been like for a *magister in sacra pagina* during Aquinas's first teaching tenure in Paris from 1252–59. Perhaps the most important contribution in this biographical section is the way Torrell interweaves the major periods of Aquinas's life with his teaching assignments and the writings that he produced at each stage. One can use this chapter as a reference point for discovering what Aquinas wrote and when he wrote it, thus leaving a genealogical means for situating any particular work of Aquinas within his whole *corpus*.

In the second and third chapters, Torrell offers an analysis of the structure and content of the *Summa*. It is here that he is at his best. Torrell reads the *Summa* and explains its content by adhering to the internal structure or *ordo* established by Aquinas. "Thomas is clear on this," Torrell explains, "he will speak of God (I), then of the movement of the rational creature to God (II), and finally, of Christ who, in his humanity, is the way that leads to God" (18). Failing to recognize Thomas's plan in organizing his great work contributes, Torrell contends, to the difficulty that contemporary readers have in understanding the *Summa*. For those of us who marvel at the so-called "novices" for whom Thomas is writing the text, Torrell assures us:

No doubt he [Thomas] was thinking less about the level of difficulty of the material taught than about its organization into a body of doctrine that would offer them not simply a series of questions juxtaposed haphazardly, but rather an organic synthesis in which the internal connections and coherence of these questions might be grasped. (19)

Crucial to understanding this internal coherence is Torrell's attentive reading of the first question of the *Summa*, "a kind of discourse on method" (19), in which Aquinas lays forth his theological intention. In this first question Aquinas defines the discipline of the *Summa* as *sacra doctrina*, which is

broader than the modern understanding of theology because “the term [*sacra doctrina*] includes all forms of Christian teaching, beginning with what God says to us in Sacred Scripture” (19). The discipline of *sacra doctrina* is thus affirmed by Aquinas to be a science insofar as it advances “the reasoned knowledge that we have of God by placing in relation the diverse truths that we believe” (20). However, Torrell significantly adds that *sacra doctrina* is not simply one discipline or science among many. Rather, Aquinas sees this discipline in terms of its sapiential dimension: “[M]ore than ‘science,’” Torrell clarifies, “sacred doctrine is ‘wisdom,’ that is, knowledge by the supreme cause” (20). Consequently, “God presents himself as the first subject of theology, and it is with respect to him that all of the rest is situated, not in the sense of being juxtaposed to him, but rather dependent on him and explained by him” (20). Torrell remains consistently mindful of the parameters that Thomas establishes in this first question, and he draws on the concept of *sacra doctrina* in his explanation of each part of the *Summa*, and in showing the contribution that each part makes to the project of *sacra doctrina* as a whole.

In *Prima pars* of the *Summa*, Aquinas presents God and the procession of creatures from God. St. Thomas divides his treatment of God into two parts: first, a consideration of the divine essence (qq. 2–26), and second, a consideration of the distinction of persons (qq. 27–43). Torrell notes that the first division is often referred to as a philosophical treatment of God, but he quickly adds that the reduction of Aquinas’s treatment of the divine essence to philosophy

is not in keeping with the intentions of the author. He is writing a *Summa of theology* and the God about whom he speaks has nothing in common with that spoken of by the deist philosophers but is instead the living God of the Bible, who has revealed himself in salvation history. Knowledge of him is not attained until he has been understood as a trinity of persons. . . . The break between the two sections serves only a pedagogical function; it should not be understood as a separation. (21)

As a segue between his treatment of the *Prima* and *Secunda partes* and in his introduction to the third part, Torrell weighs in on the long debated issue of the place of Christ within the plan of the *Summa*. St. Thomas’s placement of the moral life between the Treatise on God in the *Prima pars* and the Treatise on Christ in the *Tertia pars* has left thinkers pondering the importance of Christ within the *Summa*’s overall structure. Following a vast body of literature on this issue, Torrell identifies a circular plan that governs the whole of the *Summa*. With this in mind, the reader is not tempted to treat the *Secunda pars* independent of God or Christ, because

the circular plan, starting from and returning to God, “is like a subterranean current that unifies, by tying together the three parts and their multiple treatises” (27). Torrell, therefore, summarizes Aquinas’s exposition of the moral life in terms of the end—beatitude—and the means for attaining beatitude, which include the vast content found in the whole of the second part. Directly addressing the debate about the place of Christ in the *Summa*, Torrell explains:

[T]he end will not be achieved without grace and without following Christ who came to show us, in his humanity, the way to happiness. . . . Between the study of human action described in the Second Part and that of the happy life which concludes the *Summa*, Thomas will insert, in the Third Part, a study of Christ—“the unique mediator between God and humanity” (1 Tim 2.5)—and the sacraments which are part of the “means” left to his followers to assist them in reaching their end. (29)

When Torrell begins his presentation of the Treatise on Christ in the *Tertia pars*, he insightfully argues that the tripartite structure announced by Aquinas at the beginning of the *Summa* “corresponds to real internal necessities” (48–49). However, standing above the three parts of the *Summa*: God, Moral Theology, and Christology, is a “superimposed” “bipartite” vision which “retrieves a distinction that is familiar to the Fathers of the Church between ‘theology’—the consideration of God in himself. . . .—and ‘economy’—the work of God as it is accomplished in time, that is, salvation history” (49). This superimposed bipartite reading of the *Summa*’s narrative brings to full relief the organic and irreplaceable role that Christ has in Aquinas’s moral vision and in the ordering of the work as a whole. For Aquinas, the rational creature returns to God only under the headship of Christ, who “takes the lead in this movement for he alone is able to bring it to completion” (49).

Torrell carries this theologico-Christological reading of the moral life throughout his exposition of Aquinas’s position on human action and the life of virtue, pointing out that since the happiness of beatitude cannot be achieved through actions “on a purely human level” (33), God infuses into man a means of acting proportionate to the end for which he was created—namely, the gift of supernatural grace. Torrell gently reminds the modern reader of Aquinas that the various branches of theological specialization that we use to label the parts of the *Summa*: dogma for the first and third parts; morals and spirituality for the second part, are not labels that Aquinas would have recognized. “All of his theology,” Torrell explains, “is, at one and the same time, concrete and speculative, dogmatic and moral and, we might add, spiritual as well” (36).

The study of Christ, therefore, taken up after the moral life in the third part, is not some afterthought for Aquinas. "Christ," Torrell points out, "is the one who allows access to beatitude. Thomas cannot be more clear: the study of Christ is *necessary* to achieve the goal of his theological enterprise" (50). After a detailed examination of the mysteries of Christ's life Thomas offers a general treatment of the sacraments and a specific examination of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Penance. Torrell keenly points out that the sacraments are strategically placed by Aquinas immediately following his treatment of Christ. The sacraments are part of God's salvific economy, and "their efficacy comes from the efficacy of the God-man. Thomas's study of the sacraments does not come, therefore, until after he has dealt with Christ in his being and action as the ultimate form under which comes to us the salvation begun by the earthly acts of Christ" (59).

Following his rich presentation of the *Summa's* theological structure, Torrell again draws upon his historical skills to offer a presentation of the "literary and doctrinal milieu" in which the *Summa* was born. Torrell begins the fourth chapter by noting that among the four primary literary genres of medieval theological literature (biblical and other commentaries, commentaries on the *Sentences*, disputed questions and *quodlibets*, and the *Summa*), the *Summa* was the only genre not tied directly to oral teaching. As a result, the *Summa* allowed the author to forge a synthesis of various topics and sources that the other literary genres could not support. Drawing on quantitative research to support his theological reading of the *Summa*, Torrell provides a summary of the major sources in Aquinas's work. Torrell points out that of the "38,000 explicit citations in the *Summa theologiae* and the *Summa contra Gentiles* . . . 25,000 come from the Bible, almost two-thirds" (72). Another "8,000 come from Christian authors" while "4,300 are from the Philosopher, namely, Aristotle" (74). Torrell does not downplay the importance of Aquinas's use of Aristotle. He simply wishes to "not overemphasize Aristotle's contribution to such an extent as to push into the background other sources that, statistically and doctrinally, are even more important" (74). Torrell then summarizes each of Aquinas's major non-Christian sources: Aristotle, Medieval Platonism, the Stoics, Avicenna, Averroës, and Maimonides. This section does not do full justice to each source, but Torrell does a balanced job of highlighting both what Aquinas retained from each thinker and what he saw fit to correct. He also briefly sketches how Aquinas's use of each thinker evolved as his life went on.

In the final two chapters, Torrell offers an analysis of the "*Summa through History*," treating the reception and polemics surrounding the *Summa* as well as the history of Thomism vis-à-vis the vast tradition of

commentators and the renewal associated with Leo XIII's encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris*. Those who wish to study specific thinkers, works, and phases in the history of Thomism will find this rapid account a helpful appetizer. Torrell's balanced presentation of Cajetan, Vitoria and the School of Salamanca, John of St. Thomas, the Jesuits and Carmelites, while brief, pinpoints several areas of interest and needed research. The reader will also find interesting Torrell's identification of the various journals, publications—including the English edition of *Nova et Vetera*—and institutions dedicated to the study of St. Thomas Aquinas.

However familiar one is with the work of Fr. Jean-Pierre Torrell, it is certain that his warm contemplative approach to theology and to his elder Dominican confrere will leave the reader with both an appreciation for his continued contribution to Thomistic studies and a desire to read or reread Aquinas—prayerfully and theologically. N-V

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Mary, “Mediatress of Grace.” Mary’s Universal Mediation of Grace in the Theological and Pastoral Works of Cardinal Mercier. Supplement of “Mary at the Foot of the Cross” IV by Manfred Hauke (*New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2004*), 183 pp.

MANFRED HAUKE has produced a well-researched study of the Mariological thought and initiatives of the “Great Cardinal” of Malines, Belgium, Désiré Joseph Cardinal Mercier (1851–1926). Cardinal Mercier is known for his philosophical acumen and for his pastoral zeal, having hosted ecumenical dialogues long before the Vatican encouraged them (the “Malines Conversations”). Further, he founded an institute for experimental psychology. Surprisingly, he is almost unrecognized—in the general scholarship—for what he took to be the very heart of his pastoral mission, to promote a dogmatic definition of Mary as “Mediatrix (or Mediatress) of all Graces.” In a letter to fellow prelate Cardinal Vico, he confides, “The proclamation of the dogma must remain the goal of all our efforts” (76). Despite both his theological and pastoral efforts in this regard, Mercier’s thought has been much neglected. The entry for the latest edition of the ODCC does not even mention his passion for Mary. Long overdue, then, is this fine study of the Great Cardinal’s Mariological work.

The book is historical in approach, though the author brings his well-known excellence in systematic theology to the task. Copiously documented in the notes while easily understood in the main text, it is available

to educated readers and well-suited for historians, who, if enkindled with Mercier's love of Mary, may wish to follow up with studies of their own. Such studies are needed, as the author himself attests, since not all materials are yet available, especially the archives of the so-called "Roman Commission," one of three commissions established to examine the theological background, systematic content, and practicality of a definition on Mary as Mediatrix of all graces. Here, Hauke lays groundwork upon which others can build. The book closes with an exhortation: One of the more important virtues needed for those supportive of a dogmatic definition is—patience. That, prayer, and hard theological work. A dogmatic definition requires much painstaking discussion and clarification.

Any reader of *Mary, Mediatress* will benefit by learning about a number of the major players, theological and hierarchical, in the early twentieth-century debates, including such theologians in favor of a definition as Garrigou-Lagrange and Lebon, as well as such theologians opposed to a definition (for various reasons) as De la Taille and Billot. The careful reader will encounter some of the subtleties of the issues at stake. There is no demonizing at play here.

Further, readers unfamiliar with this issue will witness the wide palette of Mercier's approaches. For one, Mercier almost single-handedly obtained permission for the celebration of the Feast of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces (May 31) in his diocese. Over 400 other dioceses soon joined in this annual celebration. About the same number of bishops (coincidence?) joined Mercier's efforts to petition Rome on behalf of a definition. Perhaps no small number of readers will be surprised to discover that there was, in the early 1900s, a general consensus that Mary was in fact the Mediatrix of all actual graces after her Assumption (a doctrine, now defined, also universally held at the time). There were, of course, numerous disputes: Was this physical dispensation or moral intercession; does her intercession include also habitual grace? Still, few theologians disputed the basic kernel of what Mercier wanted defined: Mary's universal mediation. The *sensus fidei* was clear on this point.

Of great significance in this book, also, is the important role of Mary's cooperation with Jesus' redemptive work. Hauke underlines Mercier's emphasis on the canonical unity between Jn 19:26 (Mary at the foot of the Cross) and Gen 3:15, the Proto-Evangelium (the first "good news" after the fall). In assenting to the Incarnation, Mary assented at least implicitly to the crucifixion of her Son (later, for certain, explicitly). Her assent gained merit congruously (fittingly, that is, not condignly or according to strict right) *for the redemption* of the whole human race. Garrigou-Lagrange, some of whose reflections Hauke translates here,

underscores the effective character of Mary's "congruous" merit, for God is no exacting tyrant but a Father of "Gentle Providence." There is a tantalizingly passing reference to the opinion of Lebon (one of Mercier's theological collaborators) that Mary, having a right to prevent her Son's death, cooperated in giving him over to sinful men—hence the title, Co-Redemptrix (feminine for Co-Redeemer). If shocked by this claim, the reader might recall the words of Irenaeus, who said of Mary that she became the "cause of salvation to herself and to the whole world." Often given to misunderstanding, the title "Co-Redemptrix" does not situate Mary and Jesus on the same plane, as though she were "making up" for what was essentially lacking in Christ's sufferings. Rather, the title is grounded in the participatory character of Mary's sufferings *in and with* her Son. She but participated (yet effectively!) in her Son's sufferings, being utterly without sin and, thus, rightfully exempt from any suffering. In short, Mary became a genuine instrument within the mediation of the one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5). Lebon's opinion seems to me tenable at least, though as Hauke rightly notes, Lebon's excesses in some of his other opinions prevented fruition of Mercier's desire. Sharing this perspective on the Christo-centric character of Mary's role but critical of a definition at the time, Grabmann cautioned that the Church must first clarify and define Christ's role in mediation, particularly, his universal vicarious satisfaction.

A background theme, rhythmically coming to the fore as the book progresses, is that of total consecration to Mary. By total consecration is meant a complete surrender to Mary's will for oneself, now and forever. It rests on absolute trust in this humble woman who by grace was made Mother of God and of all the Church. The Catholic practice of total consecration, especially promoted by John Paul II, hinges on Mary's universal mediation of all graces. Mercier and his supporters understood that. Does not the continued growth of this practice, indebted not only to St. Louis-Marie de Montfort but also to St. Maximilian Kolbe (a contemporary of Mercier) bode well for some future definition? Yet, will sufficient theological labor and pastoral zeal prepare the way? Hauke salutarily closes, *Deus providebit*.

This book is also available in the original German (2004) and, with a small supplement, in Italian (2005). Finally, readers can look forward to the completion of Fr. Hauke's work in progress: a systematic text on Mary's maternal mediation of grace. N V

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St. Thomas Aquinas and the Natural Law Tradition edited by John Goyette, Mark S. Latkovic, and Richard Myers (*Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004*), xxiii + 307 pp.

THIS COLLECTION provides perhaps the best introduction to contemporary discussions of natural law available. Its essays treat virtually all major topics and areas of discussion in contemporary natural law scholarship, including the relationship of natural law to theology and specifically Christian belief, the philosophical debates about the exact sense in which natural law is “natural” and the derivation of natural law, and the plausibility and applicability of natural law to contemporary political and philosophical debates. The book developed out of a conference by the same name sponsored by Sacred Heart Major Seminary and Ave Maria Law School in June of 2000, at which many of the most influential and prominent advocates of natural law were participants.

The editors have divided the book into four parts. The first addresses the philosophical foundations of natural law, in particular the meaning of “nature” in natural law as explored in essays by Benedict Ashley, OP, Janet Smith, and Ralph McInerny. The next section contains essays by David Novak, Martin D. Yaffe, John Goyette, Romanus Cessario, OP, Robert Fastiggi, and Earl Muller, SJ, and focuses on the theological context of St. Thomas’s natural law teaching. The third part, in essays by William E. May, Mark S. Latkovic, and Steven A. Long, discusses the new natural law theory espoused by Germain Grisez and John Finnis and the hotly debated question as to whether the “new natural law” theory is genuinely Thomistic. Finally, Christopher Wolfe, William Mathie, Robert P. George, and Russell Hittinger discuss natural law and contemporary legal/political issues.

This volume will be useful for those seeking a snapshot of the ongoing discussion of numerous crucial issues among experts within the natural law tradition. A number of the essays explore the relationship of theoretical and practical reasoning, of revelation (as interpreted in Christian and Jewish tradition) and ethical first principles, and of politics and natural law. Although at times the various contributors appear to misunderstand one another, or confusing historical questions about fidelity to the thought of St. Thomas with philosophical ones about the truth of the matter, the discussion for the most part succeeds in a fruitful engagement.

Most essays tackle matters of inter-Thomistic interpretational dispute. However, some essays (such as Ashley’s and George’s) tackle objections and misunderstandings that a non-expert might have, objections against the Thomistic project itself. Those who do not specialize in natural law might also benefit especially from essays like that of Christopher Wolfe.

In his contribution, “Thomistic Natural Law and the American Natural Law Tradition,” Wolfe summarizes natural law in way that, with perhaps a few quibbles, would be acceptable to all major parties in the disputes over natural law. He then compares and contrasts this understanding with the views of the American founding fathers as well as adding a section on natural law in contemporary American life.

It is of course not possible, within the limits of a short review, to give an overview of these 16 essays and responses, but most contributions are of high quality. For both those well-schooled in natural law as well as the curious beginner, *St. Thomas Aquinas and the Natural Law Tradition* provides a valuable take on the contemporary debates on this subject. **N V**

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