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Foreword

ARISTOTLE WAS RIGHT: the deepest friendship is a shared quest for the good, the true, and the beautiful motivated by something higher than the sum of the parties themselves. The Röpke-Wojtyła Fellowship is an effort on the part of the Arthur and Carlyse Ciocca Center for Principled Entrepreneurship at the Catholic University of America to build such friendships by bringing future Catholic intellectuals and business leaders into conversation with important thinkers and with each other. The Fellowship is a year-long dialogue among students and scholars to address important questions of social philosophy, such as the makings of a good society, the civilizing aspects of commerce, and the tensions between markets and community.

Throughout the year, the Fellows read and discussed texts in philosophy, history, political economy, and politics. The volume in your hands is the first-fruits of this conversation among our second cohort of Fellows. It gives me deep satisfaction to sense that over the course of the year, as with the inaugural cohort, participants genuinely became not simply scholars working together, but friends. No doubt this experience was intensified and enhanced by the addition of a week spent together in Rome. We had the opportunity to worship together, to admire Rome's beauties together, and to discuss and debate with the leisure that is required for the deepest connections.

These essays are the thoughts of young minds who are still discerning their paths. Yet one can already sense their talents and their dedication to the world of ideas. The essays are divided into two sections: (a) theoretical considerations, and (b) applied Catholic social thought. Readers will find many topics to whet their intellectual appetites.

Jean-Paul Juge defends the existence of natural rights contra Alasdair McIntyre's assertion that no such rights exist. A bold position for a young scholar!

Is virtue *passé*? **Phillip Pinell** addresses the question of whether virtue among citizens is necessary to a political society. Many of my libertarian friends claim that rules (that is, political institutions) are sufficient and more important than virtue, so the question is relevant.

Church attendance and religious convictions have been declining in the U.S. for some time. **Sammy Roberts** uses Montesquieu and Tocqueville to look at the influence of religion (particularly Catholicism) on the American Republic.

No society can last whose citizens are merely selfish. But is self-interest only selfish? Revisiting an old debate, **Sean Haefner** examines the seeming paradox of being able to act in one's own interest while also transcending oneself.

"Adam Smith" may not be the first name that comes to mind when thinking of the foundations of marriage, but in a thought-provoking essay **Tobias Hoonhout** shows us why Smith's moral philosophy and Jane Austen's authentic communication are keys to a happy marriage.

Theresa Ryland seeks to address the moral and spiritual apathy of our age by offering the reader a "response to value," to quote Dietrich von Hildebrand. The world is a gift, she argues, and we should rediscover the world with children's eyes, adopting an attitude of reverence toward it.

Patrick Ambrogio, a student of Eastern European politics, argues that the Church played a role not only as an institution in the demise of communism but also, and especially, as a source of spiritual and moral guidance. It is the *ideas* of the Church about the human person and its dignity that eventually led to the revolts against a profoundly inhumane system.

What are the theological implications of the Incarnation for hospitality? Did Christianity help us go beyond mere reciprocity in the treatment of others? In her fascinating essay, **Ellen Friesen** looks at the influence of Christianity on the welcoming of strangers and

neighbors, and argues that the exercise of hospitality always contains a moral dimension. If it is true that “social capital” has been eroded, as Robert Putnam argues in *Bowling Alone*, rediscovering the moral dimension of hospitality may be sorely needed.

Since John Paul II warned against the effects of consumerism, many have wondered if the West may someday collapse under the weight of its own materialistic tendencies. **Hannah Steiner** examines that issue and doesn’t like what she sees!

Should medical doctors follow the Hippocratic oath, or should economic and other issues help them decide who to treat? This is a tough question that **Rosemary Pynes** addresses in an excellent essay on moral obligation in medicine. The answer is complex and requires the reader to reflect on the notion of the medical calling, and its limits.

Natalie Moulton is an engineer. In a provocative essay, she draws a parallel between physical laws, as they assert themselves to the engineer, and moral laws in the social context. She argues that in both cases, it is only by respecting laws that one may flourish.

Millennials seem more affected by burnout than other generations. **Anne LoCoco** argues that they need to rediscover genuine leisure – as Josef Pieper presents it – which includes proper worship, contemplation, and rest.

Entrepreneur **Grant Suddarth** shares with the reader his dilemma regarding whether or not to hire foreign freelancers to work remotely for his business. Should he, as a Catholic businessman, weight financial impact to his business above all else in making hiring choices? In his answer to that question and others, Suddarth offers a Catholic view of business and globalization.

Discussing these papers together at the closing session of our fellowship was a delight. I thank all the Fellows for making another great cohort of the Röpke-Wojtyła Fellowship, and for their dedication, joy, and love. My profound thanks as well to Dr. Elizabeth Shaw for supervising the Fellows in the production of this volume, and to the indefatigable Candace Mottice, our Fellowship manager, without whom the program would not exist. I am immensely grateful as well

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to my other colleagues at the Busch School and at the Ciocca Center
for their participation and help.

Dr. Frederic Sautet
Röpke-Wojtyła Fellowship Director
The Busch School of Business
The Catholic University of America

Do Natural Rights Have a Place in Thomistic Ethics?

*Jean-Paul Juge**

I

IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY, the most vigorous political and ethical debates often center on appeals to the inalienable natural rights identified in the Declaration of Independence. As the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) demonstrates, even beyond the U.S. there is an assumed common language of human or natural rights relevant to discussions of moral issues. Alasdair MacIntyre's monumental *After Virtue* (1981), however, challenged both the notion of human rights and the entirety of modern moral philosophy. According to MacIntyre, natural rights "are alleged to belong to human beings as such and . . . are cited as a reason for holding that people ought not to be interfered with in their pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness."¹ Yet these rights, MacIntyre argues, are nonexistent: "There are no such rights, and belief in them is one with belief in witches and in unicorns."² He supports this provocative claim with the assertions that "every attempt to give good reasons for believing that there are such rights has failed," and that appeals to "self-evident truths" or "intuition" are merely excuses for lack of evidence.³ As Catholic philosopher Ralph McInerny acknowledged, MacIntyre is

* Jean-Paul Juge is a 2019 graduate of the University of Dallas, where he majored in philosophy. He is currently completing an M.A. in theology at the University of Dallas and plans to continue with doctoral studies elsewhere.

¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 68.

² *Ibid.*, 69.

³ *Ibid.*

“one of the most authoritative questioners of natural or human rights”;⁴ thus, if rights language is to remain at the heart of rational discourse on morality, philosophers would do well to address MacIntyre’s objection that natural rights are a fiction.

While MacIntyre’s Aristotelian tendencies led him to Thomism in the years that followed the publication of *After Virtue*, his denouncement of rights language called into question not only the foundations of post-Enlightenment moral philosophy but also certain elements of traditional Catholic ethics. For example, Thomist thinker Jacques Maritain was a central figure in the drafting of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, and St. Thomas Aquinas himself devoted a question of his *Summa theologiae* to natural rights, which he treated as integral to moral philosophy. In this essay I not only argue that natural rights are real, contrary to MacIntyre’s assertion, but also that they are compatible with, even essential to, the Thomistic theory of natural law. From a Thomistic perspective, natural rights exist only as the counterpart to obligations, and both rights and obligations are mere fantasies, as MacIntyre would maintain, unless they are grounded in our rational nature as human beings.

II

Before commenting on the place of rights in natural law theory, I will explain the latter in order to dispel some possible misconceptions. This requires, first of all, a careful examination of what premodern philosophers meant by “nature.” For Aquinas, a thing’s nature or essence is *what* that thing is, how it is classified and defined – such as a dog, a Tyrannosaurus rex, or an oak tree. Moreover, a thing’s nature is the source of its proper actions. For example, a plant has by its nature the ability to grow, while a man has by his nature the ability to exercise

⁴ Ralph McInerny, “Natural Law and Human Rights,” *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 36 (1991), available at <http://www.thomasinternational.org/ralphmc/readings/mcinerney000.htm>.

rationality. Furthermore, natures may denote varying levels of perfection, as, for example, the nature of a lion is more perfect – a richer mode of existence – than that of a plant, and the nature of a man is more perfect than that of a lion.

Each creature naturally desires flourishing as its *telos* or end, and the way it achieves this *telos* depends on its nature. If this were not so, we would have no criteria to distinguish a healthy animal from one that is malnourished or mutilated. As Maritain writes, “Any kind of thing existing in nature, a plant, a dog, a horse, has its own natural law, that is, the normality of its functioning, the proper way in which, by reason of its specific structure and ends, it should achieve fullness of being either in its growth or in its behaviour.”⁵

Through this “normality of functioning,” every natural entity participates in the natural law, a participation that varies for each nature depending on the specific environment, capacities, and ends that condition its existence. The metaphysical structuring or determination of a thing’s existence is what Maritain calls the “ontological” element of natural law.⁶ Note that, up to this point, we have not touched upon morality, rights, or obligations. The uniqueness of the natural law with respect to rational creatures is due to their freedom of will, which introduces the element of moral obligation: how one *ought* to achieve the flourishing necessarily desired by nature.⁷ The nature of man, the ends that are intrinsic to him, are both the objective criteria by which man’s actions can be judged as well as the source of his duties or obligations. The actions that a human consciously wills can fall short of his ultimate purpose for existing, his *telos*. According to Aquinas, the *telos* of man is transcendent: union with God, the very foundation of the natural law.

⁵ Jacques Maritain, *Natural Law: Reflections on Theory and Practice*, ed. William Sweet (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2001), 28.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷ *Ibid.*

God is the cause of each creature's moment-to-moment existence as well as the creator of all natures; by creating these natures and the ends intrinsic to them, God is at the same time the source of the natural law. St. Thomas defines law as "a dictate of practical reason emanating from the ruler who governs a perfect community"; and so the highest law, which St. Thomas calls the eternal law, is that which emanates from God as ruler and governor of all creation.⁸ Eternal law, the preeminent source and exemplar of all laws, is identical with God's reason and thus God himself. Just as all created natures depend on God for their existence, the natural law participates in the eternal law. More specifically, Aquinas says that rational natures, such as that of humans, participate in the eternal law in "the most excellent way, in so far as [the rational creature] partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others."⁹ Aquinas clarifies that this special "participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law."¹⁰

Only rational creatures have concern for the moral demands of the natural law; Maritain refers to the natural law as known by humans as its so-called gnoseological element. The question arises, however, whether the natural law is something self-evident to man or whether it is something progressively discovered. Aquinas explains that just as there are several indemonstrable principles of reason – such as the principle of noncontradiction – so too the indemonstrable first precept of the natural law is that "good[, 'that which all things seek after,'] is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided."¹¹ Maritain clarifies, "This is the preamble and the principle of the natural law; it is not the law itself."¹² All other precepts of the natural law are virtually contained in this first precept, but, as man does not have an angelic intellect, the

⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 91, a. 1.

⁹ Ibid. I-II, q. 91, a. 2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

¹² Maritain, *Natural Law*, 32.

implications that follow from this first precept are not self-evident from the human perspective. Maritain writes, “[A]mong certain peoples, incest and thievery were considered virtuous . . . [but] this proves nothing against natural law, any more than a mistake in addition proves anything against arithmetic.”¹³ Thus, since early man was equipped with only a rudimentary vision of natural law, we should not be surprised that different cultures have affirmed different standards of morality.

Given that man’s knowledge of the natural law is at times nebulous, how is it that he learns of it? According to Aquinas, because “good” is by definition the *telos* of a nature, that is, “what all things seek,” man’s natural inclinations indicate the human good. More specifically, Aquinas says that man’s principal three inclinations are (1) the preservation of life, (2) sexual reproduction and the rearing of offspring, and (3) the desire for truth.¹⁴ The immediate ethical demands of these three inclinations may be basically apparent to us, yet the precepts that follow from them are often obscure.

Interpreting Aquinas, Maritain avers that humans do not learn about the natural law via rational deductions, as if one were to consider “a series of geometrical theorems”; rather, he notes, “[w]hen [Aquinas] says that human reason discovers the regulations of natural law through the guidance of the inclinations of human nature, he means that the very mode or manner in which human reason knows natural law is . . . knowledge through inclinations.”¹⁵ He continues, “Knowledge by inclination . . . is obscure, unsystematic, vital knowledge, by means of instinct or sympathy. . . . All this leads to a judgment . . . which expresses simply the conformity of reason to tendencies to which it is inclined.”¹⁶ Even noted theologian John Milbank, who at times starkly opposes Maritain, agrees with him on

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

¹⁵ Maritain, *Natural Law*, 33.

¹⁶ Ibid.

this point: “In no sense does Aquinas think, unlike later theorists . . . that divine commands can be ‘read off nature’ . . . [The natural law’s] perception by human beings is confined to its inspiring rudimentary seminalia and does not extend to details.”¹⁷

As a Christian theologian, Aquinas believed that postlapsarian man had a dimmed perception of the human good; divine revelation, however, supplements man’s defective knowledge of the natural law and informs him of the ethical precepts that are specially commanded by God.¹⁸ Maritain argues that throughout the course of history man has followed the blurred sight of his natural inclinations, and, as time passed, behavior that was determined to correspond with human flourishing gained approval. Human history, then, reveals a gradual unfolding of the natural law’s implications, all of which derive from the initial knowledge of its first precept.

Whereas medieval natural law theory emphasized obligations more than rights, Maritain contends that “[t]he proper achievement of the [eighteenth] Century has been to bring out in full light the rights of man as also required by natural law.”¹⁹ This positive development is an instance of man’s expanding knowledge of the natural law, that is, the gnoseological aspect. The invocation of rights is far more common today than it was in the past. Maritain notes that, unfortunately, modernity’s heightened awareness of “rights” came at the expense of its sense of “obligations,” without which rights are indeed baseless. He writes, “A genuine comprehensive view would pay attention *both* to the obligations and the rights involved in the requirements of natural law.”²⁰ With the above outline of natural law as a foundation, I will

¹⁷ John Milbank, “The History of Natural Law,” *Church Life Journal* (December 14, 2018), available at <https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/the-history-of-natural-law/>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Maritain, *Natural Law*, 38.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

next consider the place that rights have within the wider framework of the natural law.

III

In Thomistic philosophy, discussion of rights (*ius*) is properly situated in relation to the virtue of justice (*iustitia*). Aquinas reiterates Aristotle's definition of justice as rendering to another what is due to him.²¹ Yet, Aquinas affirms, "since the act of justice consists in rendering to each that which is his own, the act by which a thing becomes one's own property is prior to the act of justice."²² In other words, the act of giving what is due presupposes that something is in fact due, and this is what is meant by a person's *right*. As Josef Pieper points out, the reason the treatment of rights precedes that of justice in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* is because, as a matter of logical priority, "right comes before justice."²³

According to Aquinas, what makes something due – that is, causes a right – is nothing less than God's act of creation: "[B]y the act of creation, a created thing first possesses something of its own."²⁴ But, Pieper writes, "stones, plants, and animals have been created, yet we cannot say that they have their due. . . . For 'being due' means something like belonging to or being the property of someone. A nonspiritual being, however, cannot properly have anything belonging to it."²⁵ Thus, the reason why rights are possessed only by rational creatures is precisely the uniqueness of their nature in contrast to

²¹ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 58, a. 1; cited in Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 44.

²² Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 2, 28; cited in Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 45.

²³ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 45.

²⁴ Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 2, 28; cited in Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 46.

²⁵ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 47.

nonrational creatures. A further indication that rights are conditioned by nature lies in Aquinas's distinction between two kinds of rights: natural (those we possess by virtue of being human) and positive (those that stem from mutual agreement, as matters of convention). Aquinas clarifies that even positive rights, which originate in human decision, cannot contradict natural law.²⁶ Human nature, as well as its intrinsic *telos*, both grounds natural rights and contains the criteria for possible positive rights. In short, natural rights, along with obligations, are subordinate to and dependent on the underlying nature of a substance.

Though rights are fundamentally rooted in human nature, it is important to note that rights are not, properly speaking, attributes of isolated individuals; rather, rights exist only in the context of the relation of one rational creature to another.²⁷ While appeals to the inalienable rights to life and liberty are common, no one would accuse a man-eating lion of violating a safari-explorer's right to life. A man's rights can be soundly invoked only when the moral obligations of another rational being are involved.

Were an individual to act unjustly toward another by violating his rights – whether by the commission of an unjust action or the omission of an action that is due – the perpetrator would suffer also, though in a very different way than the victim.²⁸ Pieper writes, “[T]he man who does not give a person what belongs to him, withholds it or deprives him of it, is really doing harm to himself; he is the one who actually loses something – indeed, in the most extreme case, he even destroys himself.”²⁹ In other words, the demands of one's own flourishing generate the obligation to acknowledge and promote of the rights of other humans, those rights being none other than what other humans

²⁶ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 57, a. 2, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, available at <https://dhspriority.org/thomas/summa/SS/SS057.html#SSQ57A2THEP1>.

²⁷ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 52.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

naturally require to flourish. To obstruct the flourishing of another human is to frustrate one's own nature, and therefore a man harms himself by ignoring the rights of those to whom he is related. In the final analysis, the rights of another are concomitant with one's own obligations, rights and obligations being two aspects of the same reality that is the social nature of man.

The above analysis is far from comprehensive since, as Pieper admits, "[rights] can at best be described but not defined."³⁰ Any attempt to explain the human ability to claim something as due will inevitably face the limits of language, which is what happens when "we try to make a primordial and therefore self-evident concept more intelligible."³¹ Contemporary Catholic philosopher David Walsh, echoing Pieper's conclusion, argues that our apprehension of human rights is "the primordial intuition of what is appropriate to persons as such," and that rights language expresses "what cannot be said because it can only be pointed [to]."³² Walsh also writes, "The language of rights may have originated in nature, the concept of natural rights, but in such reflections we see how far above nature its trajectory soars."³³ Prescinding from questions of the relation of rights to human nature and vice versa, one can still appreciate the approach of Walsh, which fits well with Pieper's recognition that rights, like persons, will always elude our full comprehension because they are products of God's creative act.³⁴ The infinite mystery of this creative act is one aspect of each person's infinite dignity that Walsh highlights: "[Rights] are the essential means by which what cannot be grasped is grasped, precisely because rights pronounce the ungraspability of the person."³⁵

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 49.

³² David Walsh, *Politics of the Person as the Politics of Being* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 247, 253.

³³ Ibid., 254–55.

³⁴ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 51.

³⁵ Walsh, *Politics of the Person*, 251.

IV

While my primary aim has been to dispel doubt regarding the place of human rights in Thomistic ethics, it is increasingly apparent that these rights would be tenuous apart from the reality of human nature and, thus, of natural law theory. Given the perspective of Thomistic philosophy, the exposition of rights and natural law advanced thus far suggests that denying the reality of human nature logically implies the annihilation of all moral obligations and rights.³⁶ Perhaps, in this way, MacIntyre was justified in his assessment of human rights insofar as the nominalism of modern philosophy – which indiscriminately rejected natures or essences – precludes their possibility. Yet it would be folly to deny the reality of something so clearly perceived – in this case, human rights – simply because one’s attempts to explain it have thus far failed. Recognition of rights is coextensive with recognition of personhood, and disavowal of one means denial of the other. As Walsh states, “Rights and dignity . . . are glimpsed simultaneously with the glimpse of the person by which we know one another more deeply than we can say.”³⁷

³⁶ Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 49-50.

³⁷ Walsh, *Politics of the Person*, 250.

Cicero, Rousseau, and Jefferson on Citizenship, Virtue, and Civic Education

*Phillip Pinell**

IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY, as well as in other Western nations, the public assumes that people enter into political society not to live well but simply to live, and that any notion of cultivating virtue among citizens is necessarily outside the scope of politics. This vision of politics diverges from a millennia-long tradition of political theorists¹ who conceive of political society as the organization of people who gather to live well, where the means to living well can be found in living virtuously. This essay focuses on that tension and asks the central question: Should political society aim to cultivate virtue within citizens? I will argue that it should.

In support of this claim, I will examine three thinkers in the history of political thought, Cicero, Rousseau, and Jefferson, who were deeply concerned with cultivating virtue among citizens. They suggested that virtuous citizens are more inclined to serve the commonwealth, and that a state with virtuous citizens will endure longer than a state without virtuous citizens. These thinkers' respective concepts of virtue are based on what they perceive to be the most pressing needs of their regimes and the characteristics of citizens that best satisfy those needs.

* Phillip Pinell is a 2019 graduate of the University of Houston, where he majored in political science and philosophy. He is currently pursuing a master's in political science at his alma mater as he prepares to apply to Ph.D. programs in political theory.

¹ Perhaps the most well-known proponent of this vision of politics was Aristotle, who asserts that men enter into political society not just to live but to live well. See Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2.1252b20-30.

For Cicero, the Roman statesman, orator, and philosopher who lived through the fall of the Roman republic, virtue refers to those features of a Roman that are essential for proper and effective governance – that is, they are particular dispositions of an individual’s character that allow him to govern honorably, to the benefit of his friends and the security of the state.² Chief among these virtues are courage in times of adversity and total dedication to one’s political community. For Cicero, these virtues are moral virtues. Since these virtues inform the manner in which a statesman governs, Cicero suggests that cultivating virtue among Roman citizens is necessary to ensure political stability of the whole regime.

Contrariwise, he cites how a lack of virtuous statesmen led to the near collapse of the republic in 91 B.C.E. with the rise of the Social War. In his dialogue *De Oratore*, Cicero traces the roots of political corruption in Rome to the loss of virtue in Roman public statesmen. He frames *De Oratore* with a letter to his brother Quintus in which he connects the political problems of his day – namely, Catiline’s conspiracy to overthrow his consulship in 63 B.C.E. and the rise of the Triumvirate in 60 B.C.E.³ – to “the very disruption of traditional order and morals”⁴ that he witnessed at the dawn of the Social War in 91 B.C.E. These particular events were characterized by threats from various Roman statesmen to overthrow or alter the Roman republic’s mixed government, which happened either because the statesmen who led these events lacked clearly defined moral principles or, at the very least, because they lived according to corrupt moral principles that led them to pursue selfish interests over the well-being of the republic. The larger message of this introduction in *De Oratore* is that measures must be taken to address the disruption of traditional order and morals, and Cicero suggests that the proper measures can be found in the

² Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. James M. May and Jakob Wisse (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1.34.

³ *Ibid.*, 58 n. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.3.

“refinements of education.”⁵ Thus, he suggests that virtue can be taught.⁶

Cicero’s proposed education in virtue has two components: imitating already virtuous statesmen, and acquiring universal knowledge by studying the academic disciplines that are today known as the liberal arts. The principal idea behind education by imitation is that statesmen should work together to preserve the existing republican constitution rather than develop factions that threaten to dissolve the republic. Cicero’s decision to set book 1 of *De Oratore* at the rise of the Social War signals that aspiring statesmen should learn the republican principle of collegiality by examining how the interlocutors in the text peacefully address the impending political crisis.⁷

Such is the *modus operandi* of Crassus, Scaevola, and Antonius – all three of whom were aristocratic conservatives who favored Senatorial supremacy over the popular will – and Sulpicius and Cotta – who were members of the Plebeians or common people. Their willingness civilly to discuss contrasting and possibly interfering ideological strains reflects the Roman government’s constitution, in which the aristocracy composed the advisory body of the Senate that counseled members of the Tribune of the Plebeians, while only the latter possessed authority to assent to laws and vote on elected offices. Cicero’s education by imitation also suggests that aspiring statesmen should espouse a distinctively republican concept of moral righteousness in which the freedom of citizens is taken as synonymous with the good of political society.

Crassus, who represents the Conservatives, begins his first speech by praising Sulpicius and Cotta, who represent the Plebeians, for developing oratorical skills comparable to some of the greatest Roman

⁵ Ibid., 1.5.

⁶ Cf. the opening line of Plato’s *Meno* (70a): “Tell me, Socrates, can virtue be taught?”

⁷ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 63 n. 20.

orators of his day. He then extols the power of eloquence in speech because he sees nothing more admirable than “being able, through speech, to have a hold on human minds, to win over inclinations, to drive them at will in one direction, and to draw them at will from another.”⁸ Crassus praises eloquence not because it gives the statesman tyrannical power over other human beings but, rather, because eloquence gives orators the capacity to sway people toward establishing a free nation and peaceful communities.⁹ In short, he praises eloquence for its political utility. Crassus implies that the orator has the power to sway people toward any end he pleases; yet out of his moral goodness, he liberates them by leading them to a free society in which political and legal institutions preserve freedom for Roman citizens. Crassus supports this notion when he asks if there is anything more powerful than when a single man’s speech “reverses popular upheavals, the scruples of jurors, or the authority of the Senate,”¹⁰ and whether there is anything so magnanimous as “lending aid to those in distress, raising up the afflicted, offering people safety, freeing them from dangers, [and] saving them from exile.”¹¹ The republican principle implicit in Crassus’ first speech is that glory and magnaminty come to the statesman who dedicates his career to serving his country and preserving freedom for his fellow citizens. Such an aim is indeed reachable, as the historical Crassus had himself preserved freedom for citizens by practicing legal oratory and serving as consul in 95 B.C.E. One of the lessons for students of *De Oratore* is that aspiring statesmen should imitate Crassus by defending the political freedom bestowed upon citizens of the republic.

In addition to learning by imitating exemplars of virtue, Cicero defends the study of the liberal arts – subjects ranging from poetry and history to music and mathematics – as the means for cultivating virtue.

⁸ Ibid., 1.30.

⁹ Ibid., 1.30-31.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1.31-32.

¹¹ Ibid., 1.32.

In his legal oration *Pro Archia Poeta* (*In Defense of Archias the Poet*), Cicero extols poetry for preserving through time the Roman virtues, especially courage and seeking honorable things without concern for one's personal safety or benefit. Cicero notes that his boyhood investment in humane studies not only improved his skills as an orator,¹² but also taught him "that in this life there is no greater work than to seek praise and what deserves honour; and that, in pursuing all these tortures of the body, all risks of death and of exile are to be deemed insignificant."¹³ One such example of honorable action in Cicero's own past was his tireless work "in defence of your safety,"¹⁴ an allusion to his defense of the Romans and the Roman constitution both as a legal orator and as consul. Moreover, Cicero praises Greek and Latin poets for giving statesmen "images of the most courageous men"¹⁵ to serve as models "not only for contemplation, but for imitation."¹⁶ This suggests that he values courage as one of the virtues that made Roman statesmen among the most illustrious in history, and that one can learn courage by studying the actions of courageous men, whom the poets record in their literature.

Despite the merits of Cicero's ideas about education in virtue for Roman citizens, a problem with his model lies in its potential inapplicability to non-Roman regimes. Since Cicero was operating as an aristocrat in the Roman republic, much of his techniques for educating aspiring Roman statesmen – including his emphasis on mentorship and his defense of a liberal education – appear to be far too numerous and complex to apply with equal efficacy to all citizens of a more democratic regime. Indeed, in a large democratic regime, it would be nearly impossible, logistically speaking, to allocate to each

¹² Ibid., 6.13.

¹³ Cicero, "In Defense of Archias the Poet," 6.14, trans. Robert E. Proctor & Ernest H. Williams with notes by Dustin A. Gish, typescript, 2014.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

individual citizen a mentor of equal capacity and resources of similar utility with regard to teaching virtue.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau addresses this problem by democratizing the pursuit of virtue so that all citizens of a regime may acquire virtue. However, Rousseau's paradigm of civic virtue is not Cicero's orator statesman but, rather, the Spartan military type. Rousseau conceives of a citizen who is concerned not with studying the arts and sciences, but with serving the public. In his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, Rousseau disparages French society's reverence for the arts and sciences because these, he suggests, compromise citizens' morals by making them more self-interestedly concerned about developing their minds and impressing their scholarly companions, instead of selflessly serving the state. Rousseau is nostalgic for Sparta, which he describes as the ideal society that all others ought to aspire to emulate, in which the cultivation of civic virtue was of paramount importance, and in which individuals' private interests were aligned with the public good.

Rousseau attempts to merge civic and moral virtue so that a morally virtuous person and a good citizen are one and the same, and a good citizen is one who desires the things that his fellow citizens desire. Rousseau describes the body politic as "a moral being possessed of a [general] will,"¹⁷ which "tends always to the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part, and is the source of the laws."¹⁸ When he refers to the "preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part," he seems to simply refer to the preservation of life for the whole (the body politic) and the parts that compose the whole (the citizens). The general will, as Rousseau describes it, simply involves those courses of action that a particular body politic does to provide for the life of its constituent parts (that is, to the life of its citizens).¹⁹ Rousseau describes civic virtue by saying that "every man is virtuous

¹⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Political Economy*, selection from *Social* available at www.bartleby.com/168/.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

when his particular will is in all things conformable to the general will.”²⁰ Thus, his standard of civic virtue, which he equates with moral virtue, is based on a citizen’s capacity to promote the general well-being of the state while acting with other citizens²¹ to promote the same end.

Rousseau suggests that citizens must be created by the state. “To form citizens is not the work of a day,” he asserts, “and in order to have men it is necessary to educate them when they are children.”²² For this reason, civic education ought to teach children to love passionately their duty to the state.²³ For Rousseau, the state replaces the family as teacher of the youth. Rousseau describes the fruits of civic education as follows: “[I]f [children] are imbued with the laws of the State and the precepts of the general will,” and if they are surrounded by examples and objects of the tender mother (that is, the state) who nourishes them, “we cannot doubt that they will learn to cherish one another mutually as brothers, to will nothing contrary to the will of society . . . and to become in time defenders and fathers of the country of which they will have so long been children.”²⁴ The end of civic education is to produce citizens who are virtuous in that they desire what the state desires, and they conform their own wills to the general will. They will love the state that raises them and satisfies all their material needs.

A problem with Rousseau’s vision of a virtuous political society is that his plan for bringing it about is completely detached from the reality of human decision-making and action. Moreover, Rousseau’s vision of the state is far too closed, especially insofar as the civic

²⁰ *Ibid.*, par. 29.

²¹ Rousseau states that acting in unity with other citizens makes a citizen’s decision to will the betterment of the state much easier, as he suggests in saying that “we voluntarily will what is willed by those whom we love.” See *ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, par. 36.

²³ *Ibid.*, par. 12.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, par. 38.

education he proposes is to begin as early as infancy. If a child requires years of education in order to feel passionate love for the state, then it would seem quite difficult, if not impossible, for foreigners ever to immigrate and be integrated. Quite likely, foreigners would be already formed in the ways of their native regimes and thus incapable of unlearning those ways and learning anew to love their duty to their adopted one. Despite these issues, in his attempt to merge civic and moral virtue, Rousseau articulates some useful ideas concerning civic education, including the suggestion that civic and moral virtue can be taught to children at a young age.

Attempts at merging civic and moral virtue and at instituting a system of civic education were taken up again during the American founding, most notably by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's vision of politics is in continuity with the classical interest in virtue of Cicero and others, but it also shows traces of Rousseauian influence. Writing in the years following Rousseau's death, Jefferson also suggests that political society should cultivate virtue among citizens, but while Rousseau's proposed political system and model of education are far too much of an abstraction, Jefferson's vision of politics and of civic education are based on what we today call the scientific method: observe a set of circumstances, and then formulate a testable hypothesis about what sort of government or education system will function well in those circumstances.

Like Rousseau, Jefferson conceives of the ideal citizen who also exhibits moral virtue. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson proposes a system of publicly funded education that teaches children how to be good citizens. His model of education includes two main elements: children should begin their education by learning "the most useful facts of Grecian, Roman, European, and American history," as well as the first principles of morals.²⁵ For Jefferson, teaching history

²⁵ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (New York: Library Classics of the United States, Inc., 2011), 273. A careful reader of Jefferson's *Notes* will notice that the author of this paper has omitted a key

is useful because we can learn to avoid the mistakes of individuals and civilizations of the past.²⁶ This learning promotes in children, who are citizens in training, the important virtue of prudence, which is essential for participation in civic life. Jefferson also includes moral education for citizens because moral principles necessarily inform the way people engage with one another in a political setting.

Jefferson's proposal for public education goes beyond basic moral principles. For Jefferson, a good citizen is one who pursues his own enlightened self-interest, since doing so also leads the individual to pursue the interests of the whole political society. When detailing the purpose of his proposed system of public education, Jefferson indicates that "of all the views [aims] of this law none is more important, none more legitimate, than that of rendering the people the safe, as they are the ultimate, guardians of their own liberty."²⁷ Jefferson's plan aims to mold youth into politically engaged republican citizens,²⁸ whose prudent minds and morally virtuous habits lead them to attain their own happiness, which in turn promotes happiness for all other members of the state. Jefferson notes that the reasons for doing so are that citizens can secure happiness for themselves, which is founded not on the fickleness of fortunate circumstances but on

clause in Jefferson's proposed education which immediately precedes the lines quoted in the preceding sentence. This clause reads, "Instead therefore of putting the Bible and Testament into the hands of children, at an age when their judgments are not sufficiently matured for religious enquiries." This line was omitted not to in any way alter the historical perception of Jefferson or his rather ambivalent views towards religion, but to instead articulate and develop the ideas posited in his thought which may illuminate his useful conceptualization of education. It is for this reason that this paper focuses fundamentally on the positive attributes of Jefferson's proposed plan for education.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 274.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ By "republican," I refer to a regime where the people possess the sovereign authority to democratically elect representatives.

one's conscience and freedom in all just pursuits.²⁹ Happiness as an end of politics is a condition that arises when an individual pursues with a morally upright approach courses of action that are actually just. Thus, happiness does not mean pursuing any course of action so long as others desire it as well, but pursuing just things in a morally correct way.

Jefferson's citizen is one who serves the body politic and is morally virtuous, seeking out just pursuits. Jefferson also subscribes to Rousseau's idea of the need for civic education, but he does not endorse Rousseau's reduction of moral virtue to whatever accords with the whims of the state. Instead, Jefferson's citizen pursues courses of action that are truly just, and he is capable of discerning which things are just because of his education. In further contrast to Rousseau, Jefferson's model is far more open to foreigners seeking to acquire citizenship through the process of naturalization, so long as they swear an oath of fidelity to the state.

Among these three approaches to incorporating the pursuit of virtue into politics, Cicero's concept of virtue and his vision of civic education, which are based on his vision of the learned and morally upright orator-statesman, are compelling because they equip the statesman to handle nearly any political crisis that comes his way. The main issue with Cicero's ideas is that they are better applied in a nondemocratic setting in which the proliferation of mentors for all citizens would be more practicable. Rousseau's ideas about virtue and politics extend the possibility of cultivating virtue to everyone in the regime, but they fall short because his vision is far too much of an abstraction from the real-world circumstances of any particular regime. Jefferson's approach to virtue and civic education is the most promising of the three because he manages, like Rousseau, to democratize virtue through a state-mandated civic education that teaches citizens to pursue their own enlightened self-interest, precisely

²⁹ Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 273.

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because doing so will benefit the state in turn. Though all three approaches have their merits, Jefferson's vision has greatest resonance in the United States today, and his vision of education is still applicable to the circumstances of the contemporary American republic.

Montesquieu and Tocqueville on Republican Christianity

*Sammy Roberts**

FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT POLITICAL THOUGHT has shaped the United States immensely. While the great political theorist Montesquieu molded the mind of many a Founding Father, Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* has become a critical lens for American self-reflection. In their analyses of republicanism – in theory and in practice – both Montesquieu and Tocqueville weigh the influence of religious practice and customs. While the two concur substantially in their accounts of Christianity's contribution to economic growth and republican development, they diverge considerably on the issue of the compatibility of Catholicism and commercial liberalism. In fact, the Church that symbolizes the waning French monarchy, for Montesquieu, engenders the most eager participants in the American experiment from Tocqueville's perspective.

A close examination of both thinkers will shed light on the critical divergences that render their conclusions so disparate. Both attribute economic and political development in Europe to the advent of Christian morality. Montesquieu contends that Roman Catholicism clings to the aristocratic past, while Protestantism embraces the new order of commerce and republicanism. By contrast, Tocqueville draws from his experience in America to argue that the social fruits of freedom and equality are distinctively Catholic.

* Sammy Roberts is a 2019 graduate of Hillsdale College, where he majored in history. He is currently the Catholic Initiative Director at Passages Israel, a nonprofit taking Christian college students on educational tours through Israel and Palestine.

Given the great intellectual influence of Montesquieu upon the young Tocqueville, it is unsurprising that their evaluations of Christian ethics have much in common. While the young Montesquieu hesitated to acknowledge the rationality of religion, he nonetheless recognized its critical importance in the development of free institutions.

In his early *Persian Letters*, Montesquieu lampoons organized religion for its seeming suppression of rational action. This work critiques Christianity through the poetic device of an Islamic traveler. The Persians begin their journeys with “prayers at the tomb of the Virgin who gave birth to twelve prophets,” but they come to question the dogma that restricts them, for their sense perception indicates “that nothing is either pure or impure in and of itself.”¹ Their imam rebukes them only for having “not read the Traditions of the Doctors . . . that pure source of all intelligence,” exemplifying a clerical suppression of free inquiry that, according to Montesquieu, is common to the scholastics of the West and the mullahs of the East.² As the novel progresses, however, Montesquieu attacks the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church directly, albeit through the continued guise of the Persians. The pope is nothing but a great “magician” who “makes the king believe that three are only one, that the bread he eats is not bread or that the wine he drinks is not wine,” all while his institution’s “monasticism spreads death over everything.”³ Rather than adherents

¹ Montesquieu, *The Persian Letters*, trans. Margaret Mauldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 23.

² *Ibid.*, 23.

³ *Ibid.*, 159. Sanford Kessler observes that “Montesquieu realized that the sponsoring of an entirely new religion capable of vitalizing the countries professing the Biblical faiths would be immensely difficult and politically dangerous. . . . [F]or this reason he included a set of practical recommendations in the *Persian Letters* for reforming the Biblical tradition from within.” This attitude would be corroborated later with his concern for the social utility of religion over its actual veracity in *Spirit of the Laws*. See Sanford Kessler, “Religion and Liberalism in Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*,” *Polity* 15, no. 3 (1983): 393.

to this religion of obedience and deception, the Persians praise those who worship “by conforming to the rules of society, and fulfilling the duties of brotherly love” apart from rationally unjustified traditions.⁴ For the young Montesquieu, the Church built herself on unwarranted belief and loyalty while neglecting the imperative of moral pedagogy.

As his thinking developed, however, Montesquieu acknowledged Christianity’s responsibility for the ethical progress that made growth in commerce possible. In his *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline*, he argues that the Christians who proclaimed “that the city of heaven was different from this earthly [one]” broke the Roman imagination that “mingled religious sentiments with love of country” and disparaged glorious conquest as nothing but earthly vanity.⁵ As this Roman “project for universal monarchy” was really just an endeavor for “satiating the happiness of five or six monsters” who were the emperors, the Christian elimination of this tyranny and its attendant barbarism was a welcome interruption.⁶ This admission would culminate in Montesquieu’s *Spirit of the Laws*, with a recognition of Christianity’s role in paving the path of economic prosperity. That “gentleness so recommended in the gospel stands opposed to the despotic fury with which a prince would mete out his own justice,” and thus “it is quite useful for one to believe that god exists” even if he actually does not.⁷ This Christian “gentleness” is essential for the propagation of commercial enterprise, and as “commerce cures destructive prejudices” that divide men from one another, it happens “that everywhere there are gentle mores, there is commerce and that everywhere there is commerce, there are gentle

⁴ Montesquieu, *The Persian Letters*, 56.

⁵ Montesquieu, *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline*, trans. David Lowenthal (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999), 176, 98.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷ Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold S. Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 461, 459.

mores.”⁸ The twofold force of Christianity and commerce calm vicious tempers and draw men together.

Though lacking Montesquieu’s early cynicism, Tocqueville agrees with his predecessor concerning the Christian provenance of political freedom. In his introduction to *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville remarks that “in whatever direction we cast a glance, we perceive the same revolution continuing in all the Christian universe,” an “irresistible revolution” marching across the West.⁹ He continually emphasizes the Christian nature of the democratic movement, declaring that “conditions are more equal among Christians in our day than they have ever been.”¹⁰ Though God guides these affairs, according to Tocqueville, the movements of Providence have unfolded through the discernible practices and teachings of the faith. While the nobility had originally exercised full propriety over all land in France, once “the clergy opens its ranks to all, to the poor and to the rich . . . equality begins to penetrate through the church to the heart of the government.”¹¹ The universal respect for clergymen allows the lowliest to seek “his place as a priest in the midst of nobles, and will often take a seat above kings” as the barriers between the weak and the strong vanish in the eyes of the Lord and his people.¹² At its heart, this “Christianity, which has rendered all men equal before God, will not be loath to see all citizens equal before the law,” and its followers who truly value “the truths of the other life” will “favor human freedom, the source of all moral greatness.”¹³ Though obscured by malicious

⁸ Ibid., 338. Paul Rahe’s “Soft Despotism, Democracy’s Drift” class at Hillsdale College was immensely helpful in helping me to form a coherent account of Montesquieu’s religious thought as well as Tocqueville’s.

⁹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. and ed. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 6.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 11.

regimes, the natural equality of men has been brought into political reckoning through the teachings of the Church.

Despite their general consensus on Christianity's positive impact on liberal development, Montesquieu and Tocqueville part ways in their assessments of Catholicism and Protestantism vis-à-vis republics. For Montesquieu, Protestant churches should flourish in republics on account of their independent character, while Catholicism must remain irrevocably bound to king and court. Tocqueville concluded contrariwise – from firsthand experience of a working republic – that although Protestants are certainly amenable to the commercial order, America's Catholics are her greatest citizens and can expect an inevitable great conversion to their sect.

Although he does not examine religion as intensely as Tocqueville does, Montesquieu outlines close relationships between the form of a regime, its geographical location, and its dominant religion. In *The Spirit of the Laws* he distinguishes three forms of government – republican, monarchical, and despotic – with each requiring a particular psychological trait – virtue, honor, and fear, respectively – among its governed in order to sustain itself.¹⁴ The “general spirit” of each regime is shaped not only by these characteristics and “the past things, mores, and manners” contained in a country's cultural milieu, but also by the nature of its terrain.¹⁵ Montesquieu contends that “the empire of climate is the first of all empires,” for “the great heat enervates the strength and courage of men” while “there is in cold climates a certain strength of body and spirit,” and so the “physical state of the machine” instills the preliminary habits and dispositions that incline men to one form of government over another.¹⁶

Within Christianity itself, the sluggish, decorated Catholicism of the Mediterranean south contrasts with the industrious, simplistic Protestantism of the Germanic north. Reapplying his climatological

¹⁴ Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 10, 22, 26, 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 316.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 278, 233.

lens within a narrower context, Montesquieu notes how “the peoples of the north embraced the Protestant religion and those of the south kept Catholic,” a shift probably deriving from the fact that “the peoples of the north have and will always have a spirit of independence and liberty that the peoples of the south do not.”¹⁷ Apparently derived from the harsher terrain, the fierce individuality of northern Christians does not dispose them to accept meagerly the authority of another, and thus “a religion that has no visible leader is better suited . . . than is the religion that has one.”¹⁸ Furthermore, the Protestant dismantling of needless ornamentation welcomes the efficiency and expediency of commerce that Catholic insistence on tradition inhibits. In keeping with his interest in “the various religions of the world only in relation to the good to be drawn from them in the civil state,” Montesquieu argues that Catholics’ emphasis on the liturgy renders them “more invincibly attached to their religion than Protestants . . . and more zealous of its propagation,” as Catholics are encouraged to delight in the many “festivals” and fanciful “externals of worship” promulgated by bishops and monarchs.¹⁹ By contrast, “the suppression of festivals suited Protestant countries better” because “one needs to work more” within their climate, and so an excessive enumeration of festivals would not only inhibit commerce but also distinguish each country in a way potentially lethal to international trade.²⁰ Ultimately, men are “made to preserve, feed, and clothe themselves, and to do all things done in society,” and so “religion should not give them an overly

¹⁷ Ibid., 463.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 479-80, 475. For the part of Catholic citizens, Montesquieu himself acted as an exemplar of conforming with the religion of the fatherland. Roger Oake wittily remarks that “Montesquieu died a dutifully conforming Catholic there is no real reason to doubt; it would in any case have been quite out of character for him to act as other than a good citizen of France, which for him meant support of the official cult.” See Roger B. Oake, “Montesquieu’s Religious Ideas,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14, no. 4 (1953): 560.

²⁰ Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 475.

contemplative life.”²¹ While he does not dismiss Catholicism outright, Montesquieu perceives a prosaic turn in Protestantism that suits it far better for the commercial revolution dominating the European future.

In contrast to Montesquieu’s assertions, Tocqueville observed that American Catholics, in keeping with their own religious principles, exceeded their Protestant counterparts in democratic fervor. He recalls in *Democracy in America* that while “these Catholics show great fidelity in the practices of their worship,” they simultaneously “form the most republican and democratic class there is in the United States.”²² As American Catholics are a generally impoverished minority, they appreciate constitutional liberties more than anyone else and stand guard against encroachment of these rights.²³ While these Christians admittedly “are not carried *violently* by the nature of their beliefs toward democratic and republican opinions, at least they are not naturally opposed to them,” finding no contradiction between their piety and patriotism.²⁴ This practical acceptance of republicanism is corroborated doctrinally. While Montesquieu found Catholicism to be mainly incompatible with republicanism, Tocqueville thinks “that it is wrong to consider the Catholic religion as a natural enemy of democracy,” arguing that their sect is “one of the most favorable to equality of conditions.”²⁵ His initial commentary on the egalitarianism of Christianity stems most directly from the Catholic condition in which “the priest alone is raised above the faithful; everything is equal

²¹ Ibid., 466.

²² Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 275.

²³ Ibid., 276.

²⁴ Ibid. James Schleifer helpfully observes that Tocqueville intended not to castigate French republicans but “to bring together open-minded men of good will, including both those believers who were skeptical about democracy and those lovers of liberty who were skeptical about religion.” See James Schliefer, “Tocqueville, Religion, and Democracy in America: Some Essential Questions,” *American Political Thought* 3, no. 2 (2014): 260.

²⁵ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 275-76.

below him.”²⁶ Bringing men of disparate means and abilities together as one flock, Catholicism “likes to intermingle all classes of society at the foot of the same altar, as they are intermingled in the eyes of God.” In Tocqueville’s estimation, the Catholic faith achieves equality better than an American Protestantism that “generally brings men much less to equality than to independence.”²⁷ While Catholic republicanism seemed impossible from Montesquieu’s theoretical perspective, its practical implementation in America allowed Tocqueville to understand reasons for success that had eluded his intellectual forbear.

In fact, the nonsectarian demands of American republicanism purged European Catholicism of its unification with temporal power. On the Continent “the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom almost always move in contrary directions,” but in the United States Tocqueville “found them united intimately united with one another.”²⁸ American clergymen all “attributed the peaceful dominion that religion exercises in their country principally to the complete separation of church and state,” for, much to Tocqueville’s astonishment, clerics in this country “did not fill any public post . . . they were not even represented within the assemblies.”²⁹ Although priests did not participate in political affairs, the Catholic faith commanded the hearts of countless Americans, leading Tocqueville to a deeper reflection on religious truth and its great power in isolation from political mechanisms. While Montesquieu treats religion in terms of its social utility and disregards its actual veracity, Tocqueville boldly proclaims that “faith alone is the permanent state of humanity,” succoring with a comfort that “the incomplete joys of this world” can never replace.³⁰

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 276.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 282.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 283.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 283-84. His difference from Montesquieu should by no means suggest that Tocqueville did not care for the social application of religion as well. As Norman Graebner observes, “for Tocqueville the foundations for a

Speaking abstractly, he adds that “when religion wishes to be supported by the interests of this world, it becomes almost as fragile as all the powers on earth,” just as Catholicism in Europe wavers with the collapse of the *ancien régime*.³¹ When the faith instead “finds its force in the sentiments, instincts, and passions . . . , it defies the effort of time” and “can attract the hearts of the human race to it.”³² Freed from allegiance to political interests, Catholicism in America opens itself widely to meet the basic desire for divine consolation.

Tocqueville predicts that Americans beleaguered by the social and ideological upheaval of democracy will fall in love with Catholic unity. He observes that “America is the most democratic land on earth, and it is at the same time the country where the Catholic religion is making the most progress.”³³ Democratic men value independent judgment and tend to eschew most forms of religious hierarchy, and yet, “if they do consent to submit to an authority like this, they at least want it to be one and uniform,” a single source whose teachings apply to all equally.³⁴ For Tocqueville, the universal nature of Catholicism’s doctrine and traditions satisfy a religious impulse, a longing that emerges because of the widening gulf between faith and disbelief. He states that “men of our day are naturally little disposed to believe; but when they have a religion they immediately encounter a hidden instinct in themselves that pushes them without their knowing it toward Catholicism,” fueled by “a secret admiration for its government . . . and its great unity.”³⁵ If it might slough off “the political hatreds” of the Old World, Catholicism “would make great conquests” such that “this same spirit of the century that seems so contrary to it would

moral order, so essential for democracy, lay in the acceptance of an immortal principle.” Norman Grabner, “Christianity and Democracy: Tocqueville’s Views of Religion in America,” *The Journal of Religion* 56, no. 3 (1976): 271.

³¹ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 285.

³² *Ibid.*, 285, 284.

³³ *Ibid.*, 424.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

become very favorable to it,” with the flux of ideas in democracy, far from being a hindrance to the faith, giving rise to many conversions.³⁶ While Christians of the past had enjoyed the luxury of widespread religious stability and “let their minds float at random between obedience and freedom,” the intellectual tumult of the imminent democratic age will cause “our descendants . . . to be divided into only two parts, those leaving Christianity entirely and others entering into the bosom of the Roman Church.”³⁷ When egalitarian forces have leveled the last battlements of insubstantial, fair-weather creeds, the Catholic Church will prove the only lasting source of stability left to mankind.

Overall, Montesquieu and Tocqueville’s basic presuppositions about Christianity were both their most decisive points of divergence and the points upon which their arguments hang in retrospect. Montesquieu openly declared that he cared solely for the social application of religion divorced from any doctrinal truth, and his pursuit of a flexible moral code led him to privilege Protestantism over Catholicism in a republican context. Tocqueville, by contrast, believed that religion met a genuine human desire and accordingly concluded that Catholicism was the only religion that contained the universal appeal and venerable traditions necessary for survival in a democracy.

In a contemporary world that has witnessed the dissolution of many traditional social institutions, Catholic thinkers would do well to heed the lesson of this crucial difference between these thinkers. While some American Catholic intellectuals defend the Christian alliance with liberalism, others condemn the Enlightenment’s creations wholesale and call for a fundamental reevaluation of what a contemporary Christian polity should be. It is true that the dogmatically insubstantial moralism sought by Montesquieu in Protestantism has not sufficiently prevented the erosion of Christian

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 425.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

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culture, but American Catholics still can turn to Tocqueville not only for re-education in the principles that make the faith enduring, but also for encouragement about the compatibility of Catholicism and democracy.

The Right Way to Be Selfish: On Self-interest and Responsibility for the Other

*Sean P. Haefner**

EVER SINCE ADAM SMITH articulated its principles and powers, the free market economy has been critiqued by minds as diverse as Karl Marx¹ and G. K. Chesterton.² A recurring concern is that the good of economic freedom is compromised by the greed of a successful few capitalists who exploit the many wage laborers by recklessly pursuing profit. Though periods such as the Industrial Revolution seem to confirm that the dangers of an economy that affirms self-interest are real, one would be remiss to hastily

* Sean P. Haefner is a 2019 graduate of Northeast Catholic College, where he majored in philosophy. He is currently pursuing a joint M.A. in philosophy and theology at Boston College.

¹ “We presupposed private property, the separation of labor, capital and land, hence of wages, profit of capital and rent, likewise the division of labor, competition, the concept of exchange value, etc. From political economy itself . . . we have shown that the worker sinks to the level of a commodity; that the misery of the worker is inversely proportional to the power and volume of his production; that the necessary result of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands; thus the revival of monopoly in a more frightful form; and finally that . . . the whole society must divide into the two classes of proprietors and propertyless workers.” Karl Marx, “Alienated Labor,” in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts and Society*, ed. Lloyd Easton and Kurt Guddat (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967), 287.

² “The truth is that what we call Capitalism ought to be called Proletarianism. The point of it is not that some people have capital, but that most people only have wages because they do not have capital.” Gilbert Keith Chesterton, “The Beginning of the Quarrel,” in *The Outline of Sanity* (London: The Royal Literary Fund, 1926), 27.

abandon an economic theory that has clearly contributed to the alleviation of poverty worldwide.³

The focus of this essay will be the concept of self-interest, a fundamental facet of economic activity in the free market that is often misconstrued as necessarily egoistic or in conflict with the good of others. I argue that self-interest in the free market is not inherently egoistic and that it can be reconciled with man's responsibility toward others when it is situated within a holistic understanding of human action and an adequate moral framework. After setting up our problem in light of Adam Smith's basic assertions about self-interest, I will situate the position of the self with regard to others through the anthropological insights of Pope John Paul II and Emmanuel Levinas. The work of economist Philip H. Wicksteed will then help to determine how self-interest in economic relationships can be reconciled with each person's responsibility to others.

It is not my intention to make a study of Adam Smith's understanding of self-interest, but his arguments will be helpful in framing the task at hand. Smith's vision of the free market economy is built upon man's natural propensity to "truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another."⁴ To sustain himself in civilized society, each man must advantageously employ his capital or labor in the production of some good that he can trade to acquire other goods, be they necessities, luxuries, or capital. A man cannot rely upon the good will of others to provide his daily bread, so he must be able to produce and trade something desirable to other parties. "We address ourselves," says Smith, "not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages."⁵ Economist

³ See Ricardo Hausmann, "What Should We Do About Inequality?" The Growth Lab, available at <https://growthlab.cid.harvard.edu/news/what-should-we-do-about-inequality>.

⁴ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Laurence Dickey (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

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Wilhelm Röpke describes the economic activity driving Smith's system of cooperation and competition as "an *ethically neutral* method by which, in virtue of a contractual reciprocity between the parties to an exchange, an increase of one's own well-being is achieved by means of an increase in the well-being of others."⁶

Nature, according to Smith, inclines man to work for his own self-interest, which will ultimately contribute to the good of society. Smith argues that it is in the interest of each person to do what is best for himself and his own business. When a merchant or manufacturer directs his

industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this . . . led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. . . . By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it.⁷

Nature harmonizes the interests of society and the individual in Smith's view of the free market economy.

Yet it is this system that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels later condemned for its cruelty. Engels ascribes the destitution and misery of the masses in nineteenth-century London to the selfish tyranny of capital and profit, to the system built around class warfare: "Since capital, the direct or indirect control of the means of subsistence and production, is the weapon with which this social warfare is carried on, it is clear that all the disadvantages of such a state must fall upon the poor. For him no man has the slightest concern."⁸ In such a system, it would be in the self-interest of each man to acquire as much capital as

⁶ Wilhelm Röpke, *Economics of the Free Society* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1963), 21.

⁷ Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 130.

⁸ Friedrich Engels, *Conditions of the Working-Class in England* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), 65.

possible, since he falls either in the monied and relatively safe capitalist class or in the destitute and exploited proletarian class. Marx believes that the interests of the capitalist and his wage workers will be at odds in a free market economy, for, in pursuit of capital, the former exploits the labor of the latter.⁹ Self-interest, in this view, is nothing but callous egoism.

There is more to self-interest, however, than meets Marx's eye. Rightly understood, self-interest is not to blame for corruption and exploitation in a free market economy. Even if self-interest is the "consideration of advantages for yourself in making a decision, usually without worrying about its effect on others,"¹⁰ what is truly to the advantage of each depends on how one understands the human person. Self-interest does not necessarily conflict with the interests of others, though it can if it is removed from the context of a worldview in which the individual is fulfilled through his relationships with others and God.

Emmanuel Levinas offers a helpful perspective in arguing against a rigid and individualistic interpretation of self. Whatever concept of the *I* a person begins with is shaken in encounter with the other, he maintains, for the alterity of the other is transcendent, ever eluding reduction to the terms of the self. One sees in the face of the other the possibility of death, and all surety of one's right to exist over and against others is put into doubt. Levinas writes,

The death of the other man puts me on the spot, calls me into question, as if I, by my possible indifference, became the accomplice of that death, invisible to the other who is exposed to it; and as if . . . I had to answer for that death of the other, and not leave the other alone to his deathly

⁹ See Karl Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 475.

¹⁰ Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, s.v. "self-interest," available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/self-interest>.

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solitude. It is precisely in that recalling of me to my responsibility by the face that summons me, that demands me, that requires me . . . that the other is my neighbor.¹¹

One's self or ego is not a closed unit set adrift in a world of atomized alterities. Far from being the only secure existent, one's self exists as a "being-in-question"¹² because of encounter with the other. The self realizes that its being comes with the risk of "occupying . . . the place of another, and thus, concretely . . . of condemning him to a miserable condition in some 'Third' or 'Fourth' World, of killing him."¹³ Concern for the life of the other and doubt of one's own right to be engender together a call to responsibility for one's neighbor that can never be fully discharged.

Levinas thus argues that "from the heart of the original identity of the *I* . . . there arises . . . a responsibility for the other to whom I was committed *before* any committing, before being present to myself or coming back to myself."¹⁴ Concern for the other shapes the identity of the self. The self does not exist in a vacuum but, rather, always in a world of relationships and responsibilities. Self-interest, properly speaking, should not egoistically exclude or inhibit the good of others, for doing so would violate man's relational nature.

This responsibility "not to let the other die alone, i.e., to answer for the life of the other man"¹⁵ is an expression of love. In the words of Josef Pieper, "The first thing that a lover 'wills' is for the beloved to exist and live."¹⁶ Such willing is obviously good for the other, and Pope John Paul II shows how it is also good for the self. The Catholic

¹¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 24-25.

¹² *Ibid.*, 22.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶ Josef Pieper, *On Love in Faith, Hope, Love*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 168.

Church affirms that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God.¹⁷ The three Persons of the Trinity exist as an eternal *communio*, and so, as the pope highlights, “man became the image of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons.”¹⁸ A person thus fulfills his nature through self-gift: “‘alone,’ man does not completely realize this essence. He realizes it only by existing ‘with someone’ . . . [and] ‘for someone.’”¹⁹

In his work *Love and Responsibility*, Karol Wojtyła (later John Paul II) describes the nature of self-gift in the context of betrothed love: the person who loves reaches beyond their self, renouncing “its autonomy and its inalienability.”²⁰ This renunciation “does not diminish and impoverish, but . . . enlarges and enriches the existence of the person. What might be called the law of *ekstasis* seems to operate here: the lover ‘goes outside’ the self to find a fuller existence in another.”²¹ It is good for man to give of himself, and his happiness will be found in communion. This idea is consonant with the words of Christ: “Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.”²²

The other-oriented, selfless nature of these anthropologies and actions can be reconciled with self-interested action in the free market,

¹⁷ Genesis 1: 26-27: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them’” (Revised Standard Version).

¹⁸ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), General Audience 9, par. 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, General Audience 14, par. 2.

²⁰ Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 125.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 126.

²² Luke 17:33 (RSV).

as an analysis of economic activity will show. In *The Commonsense of Political Economy*, Philip H. Wicksteed posits that each person distributes his resources in order to satisfy an internal hierarchy of needs and ultimate ends as best as he can, thereby establishing an “economic relation.”²³ Though Wicksteed maintains that the “things that money commands are strictly necessary to the realisation on earth of any programme whatsoever,” he also argues that the “range of things . . . that money can command in no case secures any of those experiences or states of consciousness which make up the whole body of ultimately desired things.”²⁴ The exchangeable things are only means toward satisfying one’s ultimate desires, which is why Wicksteed argues that “to regard the ‘economic’ man . . . as actuated solely by the desire to possess wealth is to think of him as only desiring to collect tools and never desiring to do or to make anything with them.”²⁵ Accordingly, Wicksteed refuses to acknowledge a unique “economic motive” among the hierarchy of motivations ordering one’s actions. The economic relation is guided by the same nexus of ends that govern a person’s actions in any sphere of life.

Wicksteed thus maintains, “Economic *relations* constitute a complex machine by which we seek to accomplish our purposes, whatever they may be. They do not in any direct or conclusive sense

²³ “By the system of ‘economic relations,’ then, I understand that system which enables me to throw in at some point of the circle of exchange the powers and possessions I directly command, and draw out other possessions and the command of other powers whether at the same point or at some other. And I define my relation with any other man as ‘economic’ when I enter into it for this purpose of transmuting, either at one or at two or at more removes, what I have and can into what I want and would.” Philip H. Wicksteed, *The Commonsense of Political Economy, including a Study of the Human Basis of Economic Law* (London: Macmillan, 1910), under “Chapter V: Business and the Economic Nexus,” available at <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/wicksteed-the-commonsense-of-political-economy>.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, “Chapter IV: Money and Exchange.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*, “Chapter V: Business and the Economic Nexus.”

either dictate our *purposes* or supply our *motives*.”²⁶ A man may seek his advantage in exchanging for goods that he believes will satisfy his desires, but this does not necessarily mean that he is egoistically motivated, since he may desire wealth for altruistic purposes. Neither egoism nor altruism sets economic action apart from other spheres of activity, as Wicksteed illustrates with the example of a housewife:

It is often said or implied that the housewife, for example, is actuated by a different set of motives in her economic transactions in the market and her non-economic transactions at home; but this is obviously not so. . . . It would be transparently absurd to say that she is only thinking of herself in the market-place, and thinking chiefly of others in the home; or that her motives are entirely egoistic when she is buying the potatoes, and preponderatingly or exclusively altruistic when she is helping them. And as it will be generally admitted that she conducts her marketing in the main on business principles, it follows that the difference between what we are to consider a business transaction and what we are not so to consider is not determined by the selfishness or unselfishness, the egoism or altruism, of the inspiring motive.²⁷

The housewife’s entire nexus of motivations – altruistic and egoistic alike – guides her economic action. She may be seeking her advantage in an economic relation, but this does not mean that entering the market has made her suddenly egoistic. Wicksteed explains that “the economic relation is entered into at the prompting of the whole range of human purposes and impulses, and rests in no exclusive or specific way on an egoistic or self-regarding basis.”²⁸

²⁶ Ibid., “Introduction.”

²⁷ Ibid., “Chapter V: Business and the Economic Nexus.”

²⁸ Ibid.

Wicksteed's analysis of the economic relation does not eliminate the role of self-interest in economic decisions, but I argue that it does show that self-interest in the free market is neither intrinsically egoistic nor altruistic. At the simplest level, one aids the other party in an economic relation as a means to achieving one's own ends, so self-interest, not concern for the other party, is the primary principle. However, the nexus of motives that prompt one to act with self-interest in the market may still be altruistic; one may be striking an advantageous deal in order to provide for one's family, pay one's employees, or serve the needy. Concern for others is often enough a motivation behind self-interested action in the free market. Wicksteed uses the term "non-tuism"²⁹ to capture the character of the economic relation, for however much one may be helping the other party achieve his ends, one has not engaged the other, the *tu*, in business for his sake.³⁰ According to Wicksteed, then, "the note of a business transaction between A and B is not that A's *ego* alone is consciously in his mind, but that, however many the *alteri* are, B is not one of them."³¹ To act out of self-interest in an economic relation does not mean that one is acting only for one's own sake, since one's ends may include others; it means only that one is not acting ultimately for the sake of the other party involved.

Considering non-tuism, it is simple enough to see how self-interest in the market can include the interests of those for whom one is responsible and for whom one cares. Whether one is egoistic or altruistic, one must find the best way to secure the exchangeable goods necessary to achieve one's ends. Each person is by nature responsible

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Considerations such as friendship or coincidence of views may, of course, prompt someone to sympathize with the ends of the other party and promote his success, but such interest goes beyond the mere economic relation. It is a good and natural growth in the relationship of persons, but it is not strictly necessary in business.

³¹ Wicksteed, "Chapter V: Business and the Economic Nexus."

for others and fulfilled through self-gift, and self-interested decisions promoting one's advantage in the free market can be used to secure the means by which one may ultimately love others.

Self-interest in the free market may thus serve those one cares about, but what of those with whom one conducts business transactions? Levinas's analysis of the self as "being-in-question" suggests that self-interest should not be pursued to the exclusion of the good of the other, and John Paul II speaks in *Centesimus annus* of a "shared responsibility for all of humanity."³² Nevertheless, Wicksteed observes that in the economic relation the other and his ends are thought of "as a link in the chain"³³ to one's own ends. This stance is necessary to some degree, for a person can provide for himself and many others, but not everyone. No one has the capacity to give full concern to each of the myriad persons involved in the complex system that puts food on one's table. The economic relation does not set the limitations of one's altruism, but it does reveal them.³⁴ Responsibility for others in the free market therefore does not take the form of consistently putting the interests of the other before one's own in the economic relation.

It is not enough to trust in the other-oriented features of the free market economy, though they are important. The free market

³² *Centesimus annus*, 51.

³³ Wicksteed, "Chapter V: Business and the Economic Nexus."

³⁴ "The economic relation does not exclude from my mind every one but me, it potentially includes every one but you. You it does indeed exclude, and therefore it emphasises, though it does not narrow or tighten, the limitations of the altruism of the man who enters into it; for it calls our attention to the fact that, however wide his sympathies may be, they do not urge him to any particular effort or sacrifice for the sake of the person with whom he is dealing at the moment. An economic relation may be entered upon equally well from egoistic or altruistic motives; but as long as it remains purely economic, it must remind us that no man's altruism is indiscriminating to the extent of lavishing itself upon all persons or all purposes at all times." Ibid.

economy supports private ownership of property, which enables each person to determine the best way to administer his resources and thereby provide for himself and those for whom he cares. Furthermore, one of the strengths of the free market economy is its systematic use of reciprocity, whereby it is in one's self-interest to discern and satisfy the interests of others. Ideally, this means that each person would look to produce goods that others genuinely need or desire. One cannot, however, simply trust that everything will turn out well. Self-interest generally prompts individuals in the market to direct their efforts and resources toward whatever will yield the greatest remuneration. As Wicksteed observes, though, the greatest remuneration does not always come from addressing the genuine needs of others:

A whole school of cheerful optimism has been based upon the creed that if every man pursues his own interests in an enlightened manner we shall get the best of possible results, because it will be to his interest to apply his energies where they are 'most useful to others.' Yes, but what others? The answer is, 'those who already have most of everything else that they want.'³⁵

It is possible – though not necessary – that a businessman working solely from motives of economic self-interest will devote his resources to goods or services that do not bring about the good of others. It is also possible that his interests will violate the freedom or rights of others with whom he deals economically. The potentially altruistic purposes that such self-interested action in the free market may serve do not justify violation or neglect of the good of the economic other.

Self-interest alone does not determine whether an economic relation promotes the good of others in the free market. The economic relation is a means to one's ends, and of itself it does not dictate those ends or the specific decisions one will make to accomplish them. It is,

³⁵ Ibid.

in this sense, “unmoral” or morally neutral. “But if by unmoral,” Wicksteed cautions, “we mean unaffected by moral considerations, or not subject to moral restraints, then the economic relation is no more unmoral than the relations of friendship . . . or the family relations generally.”³⁶ Within any relation, one has the capacity to act immorally, and in the economic relation, immorality is not necessarily owing to self-interest, but sometimes to decisions within that relation that violate the “incomparable dignity”³⁷ of the persons in the relationship. Though it directly involves an exchange of goods, the economic relation is nevertheless a relationship of human persons, and no person can ever be reduced to a link in the chain. As Röpke points out, an economic system depends upon its “moral reserves.”³⁸ Corruption seeps in when self-interest is detached from an adequate moral grounding and recast as egoism.

John Paul II once said, “One can transcend one’s immediate interest and still remain bound to it.”³⁹ To act out of self-interest in the free market does not mean that one must exclusively seek one’s own advantage against that of others, but instead that one seeks one’s own interests rather than those of the other party in the economic relation. The economic relation makes it possible to accomplish one’s ends – which may include the good of any number of other persons – by satisfying the interests of others. Both parties in the economic relation can genuinely benefit if the self-interest and economic decisions of each are molded by moral responsibility toward the other person. Man’s responsibility for others and natural fulfillment through self-gift are not necessarily abandoned when one pursues self-interest in the economic relation, but discernment, freedom, and a commitment to the good of the whole person are needed to find ways of harmonizing self-interest with the good of all.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Centesimus annus*, 11.

³⁸ Wilhelm Röpke, *Economics of the Free Society*, 25.

³⁹ *Centesimus annus*, 25.

A Wealth in Human Nature: Adam Smith, Jane Austen, and the Foundations of Marriage

*Tobias Hoonhout**

THE OPENING LINE of *Pride and Prejudice* declares that marriage is a “truth universally acknowledged” for a man with property.¹ For the land-owning gentry in late eighteenth-century Britain, matchmaking boiled down to the economic essentials: the typical relationship consisted of connecting a man and his wealthy estate to a woman with beauty, grace, and the ability to provide and care for future heirs. Jane Austen, however, challenges this notion. *Pride and Prejudice* centers around the fickleness of first impressions, and the idea that a virtuous foundation, rather than simply an economic one, is required for a happy marriage. In this, Austen engages directly with the moral philosophy of Adam Smith, particularly his concept of the “impartial spectator.” By considering these two writers side-by-side, one can better understand the importance of marriage as a relation grounded not in circumstance, but in character – a perspective that helps to explain its natural moral foundation.

Even if one may initially question whether such an analysis is worthwhile, it is important to recognize that Austen is much more than a novelist. Alasdair MacIntyre, for one, judges that Austen is a moral philosopher who “turns away from the competing catalogues of the virtues of the eighteenth century and restores a teleological perspective,” one that unites “Christian and Aristotelian themes in a

* Tobias Hoonhout is a 2019 graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he majored in the Great Books Program and economics, and minored in constitutional studies. He is currently writing full-time at *National Review*.

¹ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (London: Penguin, 2014), 5.

determinate social context.”² Austen also displays a keen understanding of the themes of Enlightenment Europe and stands as a forerunner among female intellectuals.

Mary Wollstonecraft – the mother of Mary Shelley – was a contemporary of and important influence for Austen. She wrote the famous *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792. In what was a radical departure from the norms of her time, Wollstonecraft argued that men and women are equal in reason and dignity, and that civilized women should reject the petty romantic refinement of the day in favor of a more substantive education. “Despising that weak elegance of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manners, supposed to be the sexual characteristics of the weaker vessel, I wish to show that elegance is inferior to virtue, that the first object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, regardless of the distinction of sex,” she proclaims in the introduction to her *Vindication*.

This understanding of the female character as one grounded in virtue is also seen in Austen’s works and adds an obvious ethical component to her writing. As MacIntyre explains, “her novels are a moral criticism of parents and of guardians quite as much as of young romantics; for the worst parents and guardians – the silly Mrs. Bennet and the irresponsible Mr. Bennet, for example – are what the romantic young may become if they do not learn what they ought to learn on the way to being married.”³

Not unlike Austen, Adam Smith is best known for his contributions in a different field: in his case, economics. But it is his great philosophical work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, that offers striking moral conclusions regarding human nature – conclusions that in fact ground his economic thought. While Smith is often criticized for emphasizing self-interest in his famous *Wealth of Nations*, such claims about his thought are clearly in tension with the first line of *The*

² Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 240.

³ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 239.

Theory of Moral Sentiments: “How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.”⁴ Here Smith avers that human nature includes a dimension of other-focused benevolence that sits alongside our natural self-interest.

But Smith also knows that the individual man is fallible. As Cecil E. Bohanon and Michelle Albert Vachris point out, “Our knowledge is limited, especially our knowledge of the condition and feelings of our fellow man. So what is our recourse? There is none except to draw on our own personal experiences.”⁵ Man is limited in his natural altruism by two key factors: his tendency toward narcissism and his imperfect knowledge of others. In order to orient self-interest properly in the service of sympathy, he needs a reference point for determining how to act.

To solve this problem Smith introduces the concept of the impartial spectator, which is roughly the equivalent of what might be called a properly formed conscience. One is not born with such a thing; rather, over time, through interactions with others, one develops a “relationship” with it, in the same way that acquaintances who become friends grow in mutual understanding of one another. Smith never offers a precise definition of the impartial spectator; instead, he speaks of it in terms of relationality: “The breast is, in some measure, calmed and composed the moment we come into his presence. We are immediately put in mind of the light in which he will view our situation, and we begin to view it ourselves in the same light; for the effect of sympathy is instantaneous.”⁶ Smith also makes it clear that there are

⁴ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982), 9.

⁵ Cecil E. Bohanon and Michelle Albert Vachris, *Pride and Profit: The Intersection of Jane Austen and Adam Smith* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), 12.

⁶ Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 23.

certain preconditions for fostering and, when necessary, restoring the impartial spectator: “society and conversation, therefore, are the most powerful remedies.”⁷

With his moral framework established, Smith then offers an extended discussion of virtue and vice. He identifies the most fundamental virtue as “self-command,” for without it, one will inevitably fall into passionate error. “His own passions are very apt to mislead him; sometimes to drive him and sometimes to seduce him to violate all the rules which he himself, in all his sober and cool hours, approves of,” he explains.⁸ Because of the tension between one’s relationship to self and one’s relationship to others, self-command is crucial in limiting one’s own passions. Without self-command, one risks two major pitfalls: pride and vanity. Although vanity differs from pride in that vanity is more outward-facing, both stem from the same egotistical source. Smith’s solution is explicit: self-command allows one to limit natural selfishness, which in turn promotes authentic respect for others. “That degree of self-estimation, therefore, which contributes most to the happiness and contentment of the person himself, seems likewise most agreeable to the impartial spectator. . . . He desires no more than is due to him, and he rests upon it with complete satisfaction,” he writes.⁹ In order to form a relationship with the impartial spectator, one needs to practice discipline in regulating self-centered tendencies.

Jane Austen develops this key point in *Pride and Prejudice* by offering several different pictures of marriage – two old and two young – that illustrate in different ways the significance of the impartial spectator. The Bennets and the Gardiners serve as examples for her analysis of the intertwined relationships of the main characters: Elizabeth and Darcy, and Jane and Bingley. Through the lens of the impartial spectator, Austen draws the reader to a preference for the relationship

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 237.

⁹ Ibid., 261.

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of Elizabeth and Darcy over that of their counterparts – a relationship grounded in limiting the tendencies of the self for the sake of the other to promote the relationship itself.

The first couple introduced in the novel are the Bennets. While the reader may find Mr. Bennet's witty retorts to his wife during the discussion of the arrival of Mr. Bingley amusing, later on it is revealed how unfortunate their relationship actually is. "Captured by youth and beauty, and the appearance of good humor . . . [Mr. Bennet] had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind, had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her," Austen writes. "This is not the sort of happiness which a man would in general wish to owe to his wife."¹⁰ Immediately, Austen has taken the "societal ideal" for marriage – landowning man; beautiful, respectable woman – and criticized it by showing that the marriage of the Bennets is both shallow and unhappy. Both characters are written to highlight their superficiality: Mr. Bennet enjoys finding amusement in the antics of his wife, and Mrs. Bennet orders her life solely around the romantic undertakings of her daughters. From a Smithian perspective, it is clear that neither spouse has any real development of an impartial spectator, because neither has made any real effort to get to know the other. Even after twenty-three years of marriage, Austen writes, Mrs. Bennet did not "understand his character."¹¹

An undercurrent throughout *Pride and Prejudice* is Wollstonecraft's condemnation of and Austen's commentary on the societal barriers that prevent relationships from developing actual depth. In the world of gentlemen and ladies, public perception is everything. Because appearances are so important, it is needful, especially for women, to put themselves in the best situation possible in order to receive a marriage proposal. The ball serves as the fulcrum of social interaction within Austen's world, and, as a well-born, eligible bachelor, Mr. Bingley can dance with whomever he chooses. Bingley gravitates

¹⁰ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 228.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

toward the beauty and grace of the Bennets' eldest daughter, Jane, and dances with her, sparking a potential match. Jane in turn is struck by the fact that Bingley asked her to dance twice and supposes that he is "just what a young man ought to be, sensible and good humored, lively; and I never saw such happy manners! – so much ease, with such perfect breeding!" Elizabeth, Jane's younger sister, responds as her father would, with a witty retort: "His character is thereby complete."¹²

While Elizabeth and Jane are inseparable, they exhibit radically different temperaments – Jane is meek, gentle, and good natured, but also vain. Elizabeth, on the other hand, is independent and rational, but prejudiced and not so agreeable. Because she thinks she knows best, Elizabeth is also fiercely protective of her sister, and she recognizes the danger of thoughtlessly obliging the standards of public politeness and limited interaction when judging character. "She cannot even be certain of the degree of her own regard, nor of its reasonableness," she confides in her best friend Charlotte Lucas regarding Jane's affection for Bingley. "She has known him only a fortnight. She danced four times with him at Meryton; she saw him one morning at his own house, and has since dined in company with him four times. This is not quite enough to make her understand his character."¹³ Elizabeth worries that Jane's good-natured disposition to see only the best in people will lead to her being hurt, and thus she is apprehensive that the feelings Jane has naively developed for Bingley will be crushed.

Elizabeth's desire to shield her sister is motivated by her conviction that real happiness is achievable, but only if one proceeds prudently. She resists Charlotte's assertion that "happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. . . . [I]t is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life."¹⁴ Elizabeth's strength is that she judges people not according to the

¹² *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

vanity that the public eye engenders, but rather only after she can ascertain the strength of her character. For this reason she rejects – in direct contrast to Charlotte – the advances of Mr. Collins.

But while Elizabeth resists the tendency to err by seeing only the best in people, those she sees as immoral she immediately scorns. Her reaction to Darcy's initial insult and prideful refusal to dance with her gives her the basis to declare, "I may safely promise you *never* to dance with him."¹⁵ Just as Jane is immediately drawn to Bingley's outward charm, Elizabeth is repulsed by Darcy's disrespect. Consonant with Smith's theory of the impartial spectator, Austen shows how Elizabeth's decision to ground her prejudice toward Darcy in a fickle first impression inhibits her ability to judge others correctly. The best example here is her interaction with Mr. Wickham.

Wickham exhibits many of the superficially personable, gracious, and vain qualities that Elizabeth would be inclined to distrust. Even so, she is drawn in by Wickham's charm because of his willingness to slander Mr. Darcy. Because of her low opinion of Mr. Darcy, she is willing to take Wickham's account of the tumultuous history between the two at face value, and is seemingly confirmed in her distaste when it is revealed that Darcy helped convince Bingley to leave Netherfield and return to the city, seemingly crushing Jane's dreams of happiness.¹⁶ Out of love for Jane and hatred for Darcy, she allows her prejudice to rail against the inactivity and passiveness of Bingley, who apparently suffers from an "easiness of temper, that want of proper resolution which now made him the slave of his designing friends, and led him to sacrifice his own happiness to the caprice of their inclinations."¹⁷ Elizabeth then goes on a rant laced with irony. "Every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of either merit or sense," she exclaims. "You shall not for the individual, change the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

meaning of principle and integrity, nor endeavour to persuade yourself or me, that selfishness is prudence.”¹⁸ Of course, Elizabeth does exactly that by falling for Wickham’s charm – simply because he aligns with her distaste for Darcy.

But everything changes when Darcy shockingly proposes to her. For while Elizabeth has grown only more confirmed in her initial impression of Darcy, Darcy has realized that he was misguided in his first feelings toward Elizabeth. “No sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes.”¹⁹ Through their brief interactions and conversations in volume 1 of the text – while operating within the same societal framework as Jane and Bingley – they continue to develop their contrasting impressions of one another, each unbeknownst to the other. In chapter 34, when Darcy proposes, Elizabeth is taken aback, while Darcy is, in turn, angered at her response. When they explain themselves, the divide between them seemingly grows even deeper: Elizabeth can’t believe that Darcy could have an actual reason for wanting to separate Bingley and Jane, and Darcy can’t believe Elizabeth would so rashly throw her trust behind the claims against his character made by Mr. Wickham.²⁰

In this moment of confusion, embarrassment, and frustration, character finally emerges. Both Elizabeth’s and Darcy’s impressions have been completely misguided – despite their having conversed on several different occasions – for the societal expectations of courtship downplay the need for authentic communication. Neither character has made any real attempt to get out of his or her own subjective conceptions to arrive at a more objective view of the other. Here readers can observe, in its absence, the real value of the impartial spectator.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 186-88.

Darcy goes out on a limb. While Elizabeth has offended his pride, he also knows that he has hurt her by criticizing both her and her family for their vanity. As a result, he writes her a letter, both to explain his position and to apologize. The more Elizabeth reads it, the more she realizes he is right.

Just as Elizabeth is overly concerned with the well-being of Jane, particularly out of a fear that her naive optimism will ultimately hurt her, Darcy looks out for Bingley. It is suggested early on that “on the strength of Darcy’s regard Bingley had the firmest reliance, and of his judgement that highest opinion. In understanding Darcy was the superior.”²¹ As Elizabeth questioned Bingley’s character, Darcy simultaneously questioned whether Jane was simply vain in her interactions with Bingley, or whether there was a real possibility of happiness. He ultimately concluded that it was necessary “to preserve my friend from what I esteemed a most unhappy connection.”²² The letter convinces Elizabeth that she and Darcy share much more in common than she previously imagined, for they both have a standard outside of themselves – placing the well-being of those close to them over superficial social norms – by which they operate. Their shared “impartiality” changes her perspective.

The most remarkable part of the letter, however, is Darcy’s defense of his character, to such an extent that he lays bare the scandalous truth of his distaste for Wickham – a truth that would never, ever be revealed according to normal social standards. His account of Wickham’s character forces Elizabeth to reflect on her interactions with him and makes her realize that she has fallen into the common error of relying on her own faulty, subjective judgment. “How despicable I have acted! I, who have prided myself on my discernment,” she exclaims. “Vanity, not love, has been my folly. – Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our

²¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²² *Ibid.*, 193.

acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away.”²³

Darcy’s letter functions in much the same way as Smith’s impartial spectator. Elizabeth’s reading and reflection on it, coupled with her stark change of heart, shows how the impartial spectator – concrete and objective, like the words on paper – shapes Elizabeth’s understanding and also forces her to recognize her own flaws.

Elizabeth’s transformation is confirmed by her visit to Pemberley, a trip in which the reader can similarly discern Smith’s impartial spectator at work. First, she experiences the natural beauty and order of Darcy’s home as a physical manifestation of his character that she can directly relate to. “It was neither gaudy nor uselessly fine; with less of splendor, and more of regal elegance,” and her subsequent thoughts immediately entertain the idea that “I might have been mistress [of this estate].”²⁴ This judgment is only reinforced by the comments of Darcy’s maid, Mrs. Reynolds, who states, “I have never had a cross word from him in my life, and I have known him ever since he was four years old. . . . He is the best landlord and the best master.”²⁵ Of all the characters in the novel, Mrs. Reynolds has arguably the most objective view of Darcy, especially owing to the experience of watching his character develop. She has the best view of the authenticity of his character and relationships, and Elizabeth can’t help but take her words as true: “What praise is more valuable than the praise of an intelligent servant?”²⁶

Finally, Elizabeth makes the trip with her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, a middle-class couple who are both described in glowing terms, especially in contrast to the Bennets. Austen writes that Mr. Gardiner is “greatly superior to his sister [Mrs. Bennet], as well by

²³ Ibid., 201-02.

²⁴ Ibid., 236.

²⁵ Ibid., 238-39.

²⁶ Ibid., 240.

nature as education.”²⁷ If anyone comes close to meeting Austen’s criteria for a virtuous marriage it is the Gardiners, and Austen makes it clear that their advice is impartial and valuable. The verdict to Elizabeth is a sterling assessment of Darcy: “He is perfectly well behaved, polite and unassuming. . . . [T]hough some people may call him proud, *I* have seen nothing of it.”²⁸

Elizabeth’s recognition of her own shortcomings in judgment, together with these well-founded insights, not only completely alter her view of Darcy but also give her an accurate reading of his character. The fact that Darcy saves the Bennet family from certain shame by convincing Wickham to marry Lydia confirms Elizabeth’s thoughts. “She began to comprehend that he was exactly the man, who, in dispositions and talents, would most suit her. His understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would have answered all of her wishes. It was a union that must have been to the advantage of both.”²⁹

As the novel closes with the engagements of Darcy and Bingley, who return to Meryton and propose to Elizabeth and Jane, Austen thus comes full circle in her analysis of marriage and society. For while both couples seem set for happiness, the use of the impartial spectator throughout the book has shown what is necessary for a genuinely good marriage.

Bingley and Jane share a virtuous good-naturedness that promises to unite them in happiness. But in many ways, these two are the image of marriage that society attempts to establish. They are outwardly vain and interact only in the superficial ways society deems appropriate, and they are limited in their ability to achieve authentic knowledge of each other. Their initial attraction – stemming principally from the fact that they are the two most desirable people at the ball – doesn’t advance their relationship; rather, their lack of reflection forces them to rely on those who do strive for impartiality. In fact, without the development

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 246.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 295.

of Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship, the two would not have ended up together. While they may be happy in the end, through Wollstonecraft's lens one can see why Jane really fails in her pursuit of a happy marriage. Austen emphasizes this fragility by drawing parallels between the relationship of Jane and Bingley and couples like the Bennets, illustrating how the absence of a Smithian impartial spectator severely hampers the achievement of a "happily ever after" marriage.

By comparison, while Darcy and Elizabeth have initial differences – arising within the same social structure – through their vulnerability, each realizes a need for the other. This movement away from the social customs of naive optimism, in favor of an emphasis on a more objective appeal to virtue and commitment, echoes Wollstonecraft and encapsulates much of Smith's moral philosophy. For both Austen and Smith, marriage appears to be the foundation by which subjective personal preferences are abandoned in favor of authentic communication and love, a shift that ultimately brings out the best in human nature.

The Mother of All Virtues: Reverence in the Catholic Disposition

*Theresa Ryland**

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TODAY faces the particularly challenging task of professing the faith to a world that has settled into cultural nihilism after the wars, genocides, and other atrocities of the twentieth century. Moral relativism, radical political polarization, and general spiritual apathy run rampant in a world that has come to the consensus that God is dead. Catholic philosophers try to alleviate this dreadful spiritual poverty by advocating a recommitment to a respect for “the givenness of things,” that is, a reverence for objective reality.¹ This fundamental concept of the givenness of reality, the idea that the world in which we live is a gift from our Creator, lies at the heart of this sort of disposition; such recognition engenders a response of reverence for this reality or, in the language of twentieth-century German philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand, a “response to value.”² Once one becomes aware of the ultimate value of the created order and the pinnacle of creation, the human person, one necessarily responds with the appropriate reverence due to this highest value of human dignity. In this way, “reverence is the attitude that can be designated as the mother of all moral life, for in it man first takes a position toward the world that opens his spiritual eyes and enables him to grasp values.”³

* Theresa Ryland is a 2019 graduate of the University of Virginia, where she majored in classics. She is currently pursuing a master’s in theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC.

¹ Marilynne Robinson, *The Givenness of Things* (New York: Picador, 2016), 90.

² Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Liturgy and Personality* (Steubenville, OH: Hildebrand Legacy Project, 2016), 36.

³ Dietrich von Hildebrand, *The Art of Living* (Steubenville, OH: Hildebrand Legacy Project, 2017), 3.

Hildebrand's focus in his *Case for the Latin Mass* is the irreverence wrought by progressive liturgical changes following the Second Vatican Council, which in no way were necessitated or even encouraged in the council documents themselves. He bemoans the new practices around reception of the Eucharist that do not render to it the reverence it deserves as the most sacred object on earth. His fear is that irreverent dispositions in the celebration of the mass will compromise doctrinal clarity regarding the Eucharist; unfortunately, this fear is proved warranted by the recent finding that only one-third of all Catholics believe in the real presence in the Eucharist.⁴ It seems as though Hildebrand's concerns about the effects of losing reverence in the liturgy were well founded. Yet his exhortations extend beyond an interest in liturgical reform.

Hildebrand also claims that reverence is an "indispensable pre-supposition for all deep knowledge."⁵ This is because "it is only the reverent man who can consciously transcend himself and thus conform to his fundamental human condition and to his metaphysical situation."⁶ This essay will argue that liberal education, principally understood as formation in thoughtfulness, is an admirable and practical way to restore a posture of reverence in the Church and society.

When rightly grounded, education begins with the experience of wonder at our sensory experiences. This wonder leads us to an exploration of being that ends in reverent awe of its ultimate source, the Creator who gave it all to us. The initial disposition is key: "reverence gives being the opportunity to unfold itself, to, as it were,

⁴ 2019 Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel, February 2019, available at https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FT_19.08.05_Transubstantiation_Topline.pdf.

⁵ Hildebrand, *The Art of Living*, 6.

⁶ Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Case for the Latin Mass*, available at <http://ourladyhelpofchristians-al.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/the-case-for-the-latin-mass.pdf>.

speak to us; to fecundate our minds. Therefore, reverence is indispensable to any adequate knowledge of being.”⁷ The liberal arts tradition offers this sort of education, namely, a formation in reverence through the habit of allowing our minds to be open to receiving the fullness of being through knowledge of the created world in its wondrous variety and ordered complexity.

Since man is the only one of God’s creatures to possess an intellect and a will, he is the only one capable of knowledge and love. “Man reflects his essentially receptive character as a created person solely in the reverent attitude”;⁸ this is why, Hildebrand maintains, “the ultimate grandeur of man is to be *capax Dei*,” capable of receiving God.⁹ He alone has the ability to perceive and respond to the spiritual dimension of reality, an ability that is actualized in a posture of reverent receptivity. As Hildebrand writes, “reverence permits us to experience the sacred, to rise above the profane,” whereas “irreverence blinds us to the entire world of the sacred.”¹⁰

Hildebrand comments on the irreverence that pervades every aspect of modern culture: “our epoch is pervaded by a spirit of irreverence. It is seen in a distorted notion of freedom that demands rights while refusing obligations, that exalts self-indulgence.”¹¹ Perhaps this irreverence is most clearly seen in contemporary advocacy of supposed rights for practices like abortion, same-sex marriage, transgender privileges, and euthanasia, all of which entail a false understanding of freedom and some disordered desire to overcome the givenness of nature. In all of these people seek to make objective reality conform to a disordered human will – the will to change the gender one was given at birth, the will to redefine the natural order of marriage, and the will to decide when life should end for oneself or for

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

the baby in one's womb. Perhaps the pernicious effects of this institutionalized irreverence are most evident in the legalization of abortion, which has allowed fatal violence to enter the wombs of millions of mothers, spaces that ought to be most sacred since therein happen the creation and ensoulment of human life. These modern social interests betray irreverence for the givenness of gender, life, and nature itself.

This is not to suggest that men have grown more irreverent over time. Irreverence, having its root in pride, is written into our fallen human nature and has been manifested in various forms throughout history. Yet modernity seems to have institutionalized irreverence with its adoption of the Enlightenment notion of freedom (which can be traced to the Middle Ages and the thought of William of Ockham) as the ability to exercise power arbitrarily and capriciously, to choose whatever we wish, in contrast to the classical understanding of freedom as the ability to choose that which reason recognizes as objectively good.

Hildebrand comments that “the feeling of reverence is undermined by the increasing technicalization and instrumentalization of the world wherein everything is considered only as a means for the attainment of practical aims, and being is not allowed to be taken seriously.”¹² While this observation applies to many fields of contemporary commercial and social life, perhaps it rings most true in the educational landscape, where academic degrees are sought as instruments for professional and other material gain. Since the overwhelming trend is that knowledge is no longer valued as an intrinsic good sought for its own sake, modern education is no longer ordered to the transcendent goal of contemplation. Although contemplation is good in itself, its fruits will be manifested in the active life of those who engage in contemplation. St. Thomas Aquinas, who understood well how the contemplative life serves a fruitful, active life,

¹² Hildebrand, *Liturgy and Personality*, 38.

wrote that “the ultimate perfection of the contemplative life” is “that the Divine truth be not only seen but also loved.”¹³ Aquinas affirms that the ultimate end of seeking truth is to know better the source of all truth, God, so as to deepen our love for him. This love of God, deepened through reverent study of his creation, fructifies our love of that creation, including most of all the people with whom we interact. The contemplative mode of reverent study, then, ought to lead to a life of charity.

St. John Paul II also commented on the shift that has happened in modern education after eighteenth-century thinkers argued for a rationalistic approach to study: “It has happened therefore that reason, rather than voicing the human orientation towards truth, has wilted under the weight of so much knowledge and little by little has lost the capacity to lift its gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being.”¹⁴ Enlightenment thinkers esteemed “pure” reason above all other ways of encountering truth, most notably in the arts and humanities, since these other disciplines offer no scientifically verifiable access to truth. This was the result of a radical skepticism concerning the knowability of objective truth and a desire for moral and religious neutrality in university life. The goal of education was thus reduced to praxis, that is, knowledge sought for practical ends, and the classical notion of education as the path to true enlightenment by means of contemplation of transcendent truths was abandoned. As a result of this shift, modern education lost its elevated gaze on “the heights” of the “truth of being.”¹⁵ It equips students with useful knowledge instead of nurturing souls in thoughtfulness so that they might see the world with an enlightened vision. Russell Kirk predicted the effect this change would have on students who are not given a glimpse of transcendence: “if we linger smug and apathetic in a bent world, leaving the works of reason and imagination to smolder, we all

¹³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 180, a. 7, ad 1.

¹⁴ *Fides et ratio*, 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

come to know servitude of mind and body. The alternative to a liberal education is a servile schooling.”¹⁶

A classical epistemology and program of education, found in the liberal arts tradition, must be recovered in order to correct the modern emphasis on servile schooling that has contributed to irreverence in the public square. How, exactly, do the liberal arts engender reverence toward being? First, I should clarify the term “liberal arts.” Its technical meaning is an education in the mode of seven disciplines – the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). I wish to focus not on this technical meaning, however, but more the general idea of “liberal learning.” Over the years, “liberal arts” has served as an umbrella for several different facets of the movement toward reviving more traditional forms of education. Some advocates push for a greater emphasis on the humanities and the study of literature and art over the practical sciences for the purpose of aesthetic enrichment and cultural literacy. Others emphasize the study of the “great books,” particularly classical texts. Still others emphasize the study of moral philosophy and theology in order to promote the moral formation of students. While these different approaches to liberal arts education all have value, in my view none taps into the full power of the liberal arts tradition.

The approach I prefer is more fundamental than any of these others and is rooted in ancient Greek philosophy. It begins with Aristotle’s observation that all philosophical inquiry has its source in the natural experience of wonder:

It is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophize; wondering in the first place at obvious perplexities, and then by gradual progression raising questions about the greater matters too, e.g. about

¹⁶ Russell Kirk, “The Conservative Purpose of a Liberal Education,” in *The Essential Russell Kirk: Selected Essays*, ed. George A. Panichas (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2007), 403.

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the changes of the moon and of the sun, about the stars and about the origin of the universe. . . . [T]herefore if it was to escape ignorance that men studied philosophy, it is obvious that they pursued science for the sake of knowledge, and not for any practical utility.¹⁷

Aristotle explains how the intellectual life both begins and ends in wonder. In continuity with this Aristotelian idea, Leon Kass writes that we need not seek “the adding of new truths to the world, not the transmission of old truths to the young, but the cultivation in each of us of the disposition actively to seek the truth and to make the truth our own.” Kass conceives of this tradition of education as more than a certain type of acquisition of knowledge for a purely material goal: “more simply, liberal education is education in and for thoughtfulness. It awakens, encourages and renders habitual thoughtful reflection about weighty human concerns, in quest of what is simply true and good.”¹⁸ And so it is appropriate to turn to the wisdom of the great fathers of the Western tradition, beginning with the ancient philosophers, who can offer us answers to the deepest questions about our existence.

Hildebrand makes the helpful distinction between *pietas* and reverence. Piety is the proper response to a specific tradition of content and the people who have passed on that tradition. He writes, “[P]ietas is a derivative type of reverence, and so should not be confused with primary reverence, which we have described as a response to the very mystery of being, and ultimately a response to God.”¹⁹ More important than piety, however, is the response of reverence for the truth that is passed down in the writings of a tradition, as these can offer an encounter with being. We have reverence not for Aristotle himself, for

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 1.982b.

¹⁸ Leon Kass, *The Aims of Liberal Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 86.

¹⁹ Hildebrand, *Case for the Latin Mass*.

example, but for the truth he articulates in his metaphysics that elucidates the divine origin and purpose of our natural order.

What does Kass mean by this word “thoughtfulness?” He means a frame of mind, a disposition that genuinely seeks knowledge of the truth by engaging in a dialogue, or dialectic with that which is, with objective reality and its Creator. Kass reminds us that “a true question is a state of mind in which I want to know what I do not know.”²⁰ This dialectical approach to knowledge distinguishes liberal learning as a shift in intellectual attitude or disposition. It describes a posture that does not seek to dominate but is open to receiving reality as it is given.

An account of the liberal arts should also attend to the word “liberal,” which comes from the Latin *libertas*, meaning freedom. Following Aristotle, the idea of liberality in education means that knowledge is sought for its own sake and not as a means to any further end. Knowledge that is a means to some end is servile, not free. John Dewey and other pragmatist thinkers inverted the sense of the term by asserting that any type of education, including vocational training, is liberal because it frees man from his own ignorance.²¹ Freedom, in this view, means power to shape and mold reality according to one’s will, instead of receiving and wondering at what is given. Thus we observe the shift from ancient to modern conceptions of freedom: Dewey’s aim was man’s emancipation from the limitations of nature, while the classical tradition valued education and knowledge insofar as these serve no end beyond the contemplation of being or reality itself. Again, in the classical approach, liberation is associated not with an arbitrary ability to choose but rather with the capacity to know what is objectively true and good. The classical approach to liberal learning is best suited for understanding and developing education that seeks to craft souls in a reverent, receptive disposition.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Henry T. Edmondson, *John Dewey & the Decline of American Education: How the Patron Saint of Schools Has Corrupted Teaching and Learning* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006), 32.

Pope Francis has argued that a “culture of waste” so prevalent throughout the world “calls for a renewed ethical vision, one that places persons at the center, desiring to leave no one on the margins of life.”²² The teaching authority of the Church affirms the need to return to a person-oriented ethos within our church and society, which can be accomplished only with a reverent recognition of man’s preeminent status among the hierarchy of values.

Both schools and the church are often personified as “mothers of souls,” and this word “mother” is important in an account of reverence. St. Edith Stein wrote that a woman’s soul “is fashioned to be a shelter in which other souls may unfold.”²³ The feminine soul seems particularly well suited to this kind of reverent approach to nature and being because of its unique capacity to nurture and bring to fruition that which it has received in reverent, receptive contemplation.

In his apostolic exhortation *Verbum domini*, Pope Benedict XVI comments on how the Marian response to the news of her role in the incarnation is a model for how we ought to read scripture:

The incarnation of the word cannot be conceived apart from the freedom of this young woman who by her assent decisively cooperated with the entrance of the eternal into time. Mary is the image of the Church in attentive hearing of the word of God, which took flesh in her. Mary also symbolizes openness to God and others; an active listening which interiorizes and assimilates, one in which the word becomes a way of life.²⁴

²² Francis, public address, June 8, 2019, available at https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-the-world-needs-an-ecological-conversion-86993?fbclid=IwAR1y8vmZktGBLTwOQ8fKWCQLmRcyj_UU5VXX5_ddEus-hFIMyT7I2n-If68.

²³ St. Edith Stein, *Principles of Women’s Education*, II.4, available at <http://www.kolbefoundation.org/gbookwebsite/studentlibrary/greatestbooks/aaabooks/stein/principleswomeneducation.html>.

²⁴ Benedict XVI, *Verbum domini*, 28.

Benedict identifies Mary's attentive and open posture, her complete receptivity, as that which makes her the ultimate human example of being *capax Dei*. She pondered with thoughtfulness the mystery of the angel's message.²⁵ Because of this posture of reverence for what is given to her, Mary is able to give her *fiat* freely, bear the Incarnate Word, and become coredemptrix with her Son. Mary thus offers the model par excellence for the reverent posture toward being, allowing it to present itself to her so that her soul might "magnify the Lord" with praise and wonder at his awe-inspiring gift of being.²⁶ At the annunciation, Mary exemplifies the Christian model not only for education but also for the proper Christian disposition toward reality, that is, receptivity to the Word of God, spoken to all of creation.

In conclusion, liberal education is an important practical way of restoring reverence toward reality. Two fundamentally different approaches to education have been considered: one that values knowledge as practical and seeks to control nature, bringing it into conformity with man's will, and one that receptively and reverently allows being to disclose itself in nature so that we might discern and live God's will. The liberal learning tradition is one in which the soul is open to reality and as such always reverent toward the good it encounters. This disposition is also at the root of the Catholic approach that insists on the "givenness" of the divinely created natural order into which every person is born and the inherent duty we all have to live piously, with our minds and hearts always open to the goodness of the created order, our own humanity, and those in communion with us.

Hildebrand offers a profound comment on the significance of this disposition: "The depth and plenitude of being, and above all its mysteries, will never be revealed to any but the reverent mind."²⁷

²⁵ Luke 1:22.

²⁶ Luke 1:46.

²⁷ Hildebrand, *The Case for the Latin Mass*.

Catholics have a duty to recommit themselves to reverence in all spheres of their lives – from their daily interactions with others, to the protection of human dignity in the womb and in the workplace, to the way they educate their children, and, most importantly, in how they approach the ultimate value available to us, the Eucharist. The faithful must once again lift their eyes to the contemplation of the highest things. Only with reverent respect for transcendent reality will the Church be able gently to correct the modern materialist ideology that gives rise to a cynical posture in those who proudly seek to conquer nature. Only through thoughtfulness, following Mary's example, will the Church fulfill her role as *lumen gentium*, a light to all people, offering a posture toward reality founded in humility and love of the transcendent being who is God himself.

Faith in Action: Catholic Social Thought, John Paul II, and the Collapse of Communism

Patrick Ambrogio *

IN THE THIRTY YEARS that have passed since the breakup of the Eastern Bloc, a great deal of scholarly work has been dedicated to exploring the reasons for communism's collapse.¹ Comparatively little effort has been spent detailing the influence of the Catholic Church, and much less still the moral philosophy and theology that have undergirded its social thought and informed its opposition to socialism.² In this essay, I do not consider simply the Church's significance as a social institution. Of course, it is necessary to acknowledge the Church as an independent organization, and one of the few capable of mounting meaningful opposition to the communist system. But to consider the Church solely in these sociological terms, minimizing its religious nature and doctrine, does not satisfactorily

* Patrick Ambrogio is a 2019 graduate of George Washington University, where he majored in international affairs and political science, and minored in Russian language and literature. He currently works at the International Republican Institute, where he focuses on civil society issues and democracy in Asia. The views expressed in this essay are his own and do not necessarily represent those of the Institute.

¹ Jane Leftwich Curry and Sharon L. Wolchik, "Twenty-Five Years After 1989," in *Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy*, ed. Jane Leftwich Curry and Sharon L. Wolchik (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 25-28; Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics, From the Great War to the War on Terror* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 415-18; George Weigel, *The Final Revolution: The Resistance Church and the Collapse of Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 15-35.

² Weigel, *The Final Revolution*, 17.

account for its social role or adequately explain why Eastern Europeans overthrew their communist governments. Western analysts miss what George Weigel identifies as the “connective thread” that needs to be considered if we are to understand the demise of communism not solely in political terms; in fact, any examination of its collapse as a political system must first account for the failure of the moral and ethical structure underpinning it. “The West,” Weigel explains, “has too often forgotten that politics is a function of culture, and that at the heart of culture is religion.”³ With this in mind, I attempt to show how Catholic social thought (CST), as exemplified in the work of Popes Leo XIII, Pius XI, and John Paul II, conceives of the nature of labor and the human person. As Weigel rightly notes, the Revolution of 1989 was “first and foremost a revolution of conscience, a revolution of spirit.”⁴ Because this revolution was both spiritual and political, it becomes all the more necessary to understand why, according to the social doctrine of the Church, socialism and communism are not just intrinsically wrong but indeed inherently evil.

I find it especially important to explore the religious and philosophical roots of the Church’s social doctrine given the publication of an article entitled “The Catholic Case for Communism” in the July 2019 edition of the prominent Jesuit magazine *America*. Clearly, the question of the Church’s place in society remains contested, and there is much confusion regarding its stance on socialism, communism, and capitalism. By reevaluating the objections to socialism in CST and by exploring its historical continuity in Church teaching, we might better understand what the Catholic Church has to say about the pressing social issues of the day. The question that this essay explores, then, is hardly a trivial curiosity, of concern only to the historian or political scientist.

³ Ibid., 34.

⁴ Ibid., 3.

John Paul II's papacy ushered the Catholic Church into the third millennium. His 26-year-long pontificate witnessed the collapse of communism, a process in which he was significantly, if not always obviously, involved. Building upon the legacy of his predecessors and a rich CST tradition, the pope calls attention to the essential dignity of the human person and the proper role of work in the life of man. His teaching and the Church's broader social thought inspired movements, like the Polish labor union Solidarity, that would challenge the communist hegemony and eventually contribute to its collapse.

The social thought of Pope John Paul II cannot be understood in a vacuum. For this reason, the first section of this essay briefly explores the basis of CST and the Church's understanding of her role in society. With this background established, the second section examines the responsive nature of CST, particularly focusing on its reaction to the rise of socialism. Special attention is given to *Rerum novarum* and *Quadragesimo anno*, two papal encyclicals that were especially formative for the trajectory of CST with respect to socialism and communism. Having provided this necessary context, the third section opens with the beginning of John Paul II's papacy and lays the basis for his opposition to communism. The fourth section considers the impact of the pope's teaching by specifically examining his 1979 trip to Poland. The homily delivered by the pope in Warsaw's Victory Square is highlighted for its emphasis on the dignity of the person. It also references the special witness that John Paul feels is demonstrated in his homeland and provides insight into the pope's perception of his own role as an instrument of divine providence. The fifth section more closely considers the pope's philosophy of the human person and the nature of labor. The philosophy of Karol Wojtyla is undoubtedly a complex subject; the aim of this section, and the essay in general, is not to offer an exhaustive description of it. Rather, the basic elements presented here are intended to show how the influence of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI is apparent in John Paul II's teaching, demonstrating the continuity that lies at the core of the social teaching of the Catholic

Church. To this end, John Paul II's encyclicals *Laborem exercens* and *Centesimus annus* are highlighted and considered in light of *Rerum novarum* and *Quadragesimo anno*.

I

The Role of the Church in Society as Understood through Catholic Social Teaching. CST ought to be understood as an articulation of the Church's relation to society at large and the expression of her role within it. Exploring the intersection of faith and politics in his encyclical *Deus caritas est*, Pope Benedict XVI writes:

[The aim of CST] is simply to help purify reason and to contribute, here and now, to the acknowledgment and attainment of what is just. . . . The Church is duty-bound to offer, through the purification of reason and through ethical formation, her own specific contribution towards understanding the requirements of justice and achieving them politically.⁵

While the Church recognizes that it “cannot and must not replace the state,” Benedict explains, “the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply.”⁶ The principle of the common good is thus understood to be an important spiritual and political concept; in the context of CST, the spiritual and political aspects of the common good are inextricably linked. Drawing upon the Second Vatican Council's constitution *Gaudium et spes*, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* defines the common good as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more

⁵ *Deus caritas est*, 28.

⁶ *Ibid.*

easily.”⁷ This understanding of the common good imposes a task on those with political authority. As the *Compendium* notes, “the responsibility for attaining the common good, besides falling to individual persons, belongs also to the State, since the common good is the reason that the political authority exists.”⁸ In other words, providing for the common good is the very *raison d’être* of the state. Where the state is charged to promote the common good, the Church likewise has a responsibility to engage with it and offer her wisdom to see this aim realized. As Pope Leo XIII argued, the Church, “because it knows the innermost hearts of men and has a mandate from Jesus Christ . . . must act on all levels of society to help bring about a society in which all persons are treated with justice and are open to the call of charity.”⁹

II

The Articulation of CST and Its Response to Socialism. The promulgation of Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical, *Rerum novarum*, marks the beginning of modern CST. Its roots, however, clearly predate the nineteenth century.¹⁰ As Richard John Neuhaus notes, “Christian social thought is theologically grounded in the revelation of God in Christ.”¹¹ Neuhaus continues, “The purpose of Christians is to prepare the world for that day when . . . all creation declares, ‘The kingdom of the world

⁷ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), 164.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁹ William Murphy, “Rerum Novarum,” in *A Century of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. George Weigel and Robert Royal (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1; John A. Coleman, introduction to *One Hundred Years of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. John Coleman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 2.

¹¹ Richard John Neuhaus, introduction to *A Century of Catholic Social Thought*, xiii.

has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ' (Rev. 11)."¹² Clearly, CST cannot be understood apart from its biblical and Christological origins, and it would be a mistake to assume that *Rerum novarum* is the origin of the social doctrine of the Church.¹³ Nevertheless, subsequent encyclicals pertaining to CST, such as *Quadragesimo anno*, *Laborem exercens*, and *Centesimus annus*, are indebted to the legacy of Leo XIII's thought.¹⁴ *Rerum novarum* is the foundational encyclical of this larger body of work in the CST tradition that comprises the "unified doctrinal corpus that interprets modern social realities in a systematic manner."¹⁵

While the Church's social doctrine is rooted in permanent principles such as the dignity of the human person and the common good, it is also deeply responsive to social trends and has evolved over time as a result.¹⁶ John Coleman explains, "Catholic social teaching has been inductive in its methodology and remains concerned about reading the signs of the times."¹⁷ Therefore, it is only appropriate that the title of Leo XIII's encyclical is translated, "Of the New Things." The "new things" that *Rerum novarum* addresses are the emergence of socialism and the consequences of unrestricted capitalism.

In *Rerum novarum*, Leo emphasizes the spiritual aspect of labor and the needs of the worker. He notes in particular that the faithful ought to participate in society through Catholic organizations with "the specific purpose of serving the spiritual needs and protecting the rights of the laboring population."¹⁸ He further laments how "public institutions and the laws [have] set aside the ancient religion," thereby

¹² *Ibid.*, xiv.

¹³ *Laborem exercens*, 3.

¹⁴ Peter V. Armenio, *The History of the Church* (Woodridge, IL: Midwest Theological Forum, 2011), 689; Coleman, *One Hundred Years*, 4.

¹⁵ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, 162.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁷ Coleman, *One Hundred Years*, 6.

¹⁸ Gordon C. Zahn, "Social Movements and Catholic Social Thought," in *One Hundred Years*, 50-52; *Rerum novarum*, 57-58.

surrendering the “isolated and helpless [working men] to the hardheartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition.”¹⁹ Here, the pope specifically comments on the conditions wrought by the excesses of *laissez-faire* capitalism, though he immediately proceeds to critique the socialist remedy of abolishing private property and vigorously defends its possession as a natural right.²⁰ “[The socialists’] contentions,” he writes, “are so clearly powerless to end the controversy that were they carried into effect the working man himself would be among the first to suffer.”²¹ He continues by criticizing the expansive state structure that socialism requires, especially noting how much harm it would bring to the education of children and the cohesion of the family unit. After all, the pope explains, “the family is a true society, and one older than any state.”²²

Before moving on from *Rerum novarum*, I should make an important clarification. Although Leo and his successors clearly condemn the excesses of capitalism, these critiques should not be considered as grave as their criticism of socialism, as if socialism and capitalism represented two opposing but equally extreme positions on a moral or political spectrum. Nor is it the case that CST presents itself as some kind of “third way” alternative to capitalism on one end and socialism on the other. This is not my contention. Quite the contrary, as I have suggested above and will detail below, socialism and its underlying ethic are inherently wrong; capitalism per se does not engender so great a reaction from the popes because its foundation is not built upon an ethic that the Church considers to be fundamentally flawed and morally repugnant, as is the case with socialism.

Pope Pius XI continues to describe the errors of socialism in his encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*, issued in 1931 on the occasion of the

¹⁹ *Rerum novarum*, 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5-9, 22.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²² *Ibid.*, 12, 14.

fortieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum*'s release. One of the central themes of Pius's encyclical – and Leo's before it – is the misguided understanding of human nature that lies at the core of the socialist ideological framework. The devaluation of the family in favor of the state, as noted above, is a prime manifestation of this error inherent in socialist thought. Highlighting this example, Pius takes particular aim at the objective of education in a socialist system. He writes, “Under the guise of affection it tries in particular to attract children . . . and win them to itself . . . *in order finally to produce true socialists who would shape human society to the tenets of Socialism.*”²³ Implicit in this prescient observation is the recognition that the socialists' objective is to change the very nature of the human person; the individual person and society are to be brought into ideological alignment with the principles of socialism. This, in effect, “reduces the essence of man to its socioeconomic dimension rather than appreciating its unique metaphysical reality.”²⁴

Socialist machinations to indoctrinate youth under the guise of providing education do not go unnoticed in *Rerum novarum*. As Leo explains, “the socialists . . . in setting aside the parent and setting up a State supervision, act against natural justice, and destroy the structure of the home.”²⁵ The matter of education is an especially pressing concern, considering the socialist state's aim of raising a new generation indoctrinated with the tenets of its ideology. One such tenet is the idea of class conflict, which Pius and Leo both criticize as further evidence of a flawed understanding of human nature and relationships. In *Rerum novarum*, Leo explains:

The great mistake made in regard to the matter now under consideration is to take up with the notion that class is

²³ *Quadragesimo anno*, 121. Emphasis added.

²⁴ John McNerney, *John Paul II: Poet and Philosopher* (London: T&T Clark LTD, 2003), 136.

²⁵ *Rerum novarum*, 14.

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naturally hostile to class, and that the wealthy and the working men are intended by nature to live in mutual conflict. So irrational and so false is this view that the direct contrary is the truth.²⁶

Rebutting this framework, Leo adds, “If Christian precepts prevail, the respective classes will not only be united in the bonds of friendship, but also in those of brotherly love.”²⁷ Nearly a century later, the Polish pope, John Paul II, would carry this same message to the Socialist Bloc and inspire the movements that contributed to the collapse of communist rule across Central and Eastern Europe.

III

The Polish Pope. The elevation of Karol Józef Wojtyła to the papacy in 1978 heralded a new era in relations between the Church and the countries of the Socialist Bloc. It was clear that the first Slavic pope would present a serious challenge to the communist system in Eastern Europe. Shortly after the election, the director of the Soviet Religious Affairs Council addressed the Central Committee of the Soviet Union and conveyed a warning from the Polish communist authorities. “The Polish comrades,” he recounted, “characterize John Paul II as more dangerous at the ideological level than his predecessors.”²⁸ Indeed, the pope was well acquainted with Marxist thought and had penned several impassioned critiques of it.²⁹ In his memoirs he explicitly characterizes communism as an “ideology of evil.”³⁰ While archbishop of Krakow,

²⁶ Ibid., 19.

²⁷ Ibid., 25.

²⁸ Jonathan Luxmoore and Jolanta Babiuch, *The Vatican and the Red Flag: The Struggle for the Soul of Eastern Europe* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999), 207.

²⁹ Ibid., 198-99, 307.

³⁰ John Paul II, *Memory and Identity* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), 5-6.

Wojtyła was informed of the proliferation of underground dissident publications. He maintained friendly relations with leaders of the nascent Workers' Defense Committee (KOR), one of the first organized anticommunist groups in Poland that was formed to provide material assistance to the families of imprisoned workers; many of its leaders would contribute to the creation of Solidarity, an independent trade union, in 1980.³¹ Wojtyła's support of KOR and the connections that he developed with its leadership were crucial in drawing the Polish opposition movement close to the Church, solidifying a relationship that would have a significant influence on the country's pro-democracy movement.³²

IV

A Triumph of Spirit. Pope John Paul II's first visit to Poland in 1979 would prove to be a turning point in the Cold War. Weigel describes it as a "psychological earthquake," igniting a moral revolution that "helped create the conditions in which Solidarity could emerge a year later."³³ The pope preached no fewer than thirty-two sermons over the course of the nine-day trip but was careful not explicitly to attack the communist government. Nevertheless, those familiar with the pope's thought dating back to his days as archbishop of Krakow could see the

³¹ Curry, "Poland: The Politics of 'God's Playground,'" 238-39; Luxmoore and Babiuch, *The Vatican and the Red Flag*, 196.

³² Luxmoore and Babiuch, *The Vatican and the Red Flag*, 207; David Yallop, *The Power and the Glory: Inside the Dark Heart of John Paul II's Vatican* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2007), 87-89.

³³ George Weigel, *The End and the Beginning: Pope John Paul II – The Victory of Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy* (New York: Image Books, 2010), 111; Gale Stokes, "Poland in the Late 1970s," in *From Stalinism to Pluralism: A Documentary History of Eastern Europe Since 1945*, ed. Gale Stokes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 193; Frances Millard, "Nationalism in Poland," in *Contemporary Nationalism in East Central Europe*, ed. Paul Latawski (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 118.

internal logic of his remarks, and it was hardly difficult for Poles to pick up on the political insinuations in his speeches. One of his most famous orations was his homily during the celebration of Mass in Warsaw's Victory Square. The conclusion of those remarks is especially poignant and memorable. "I cry out," the pope exclaimed, "I a son of Poland who am also John Paul II, Pope – I cry out of the depths of this millennium – I cry out on the Vigil of Pentecost: Let your Spirit come down! Let your Spirit come down! And let him renew the face of the earth – *this* earth!"³⁴ The homily had an electrifying effect and reinvigorated Polish civil society. Weigel writes, "[A]s the secular dissident Adam Michnik would put it afterward, 'those very people who are ordinarily frustrated and aggressive in shop lines were metamorphosed into a cheerful and happy collectivity, *a people filled with dignity*.'"³⁵

Indeed, the dignity of the human person, a constant theme in the pope's speeches and writings, is a core principle of the Church's broader social thought. Armed with this idea, the pope peacefully confronted communism. "Christ," the pope explained, "is the key to understanding that magnificent and utterly fundamental reality which is the human person. Apart from Christ it is impossible to understand the human person in a full and radical way."³⁶ Taking aim at Marxism without directly mentioning the ideology, the pope proclaimed, "[I]t is impossible, then, to exclude Christ from the history of the human race anywhere in the world. . . . [T]he exclusion of Christ from the history of the [human] race is an attack on the person."³⁷ After the completion of the pope's journey, the KGB accused him of engaging in "ideological subversion" and concluded that "the Church had begun

³⁴ John Paul II, "Pope John Paul II Speaks in Victory Square, Warsaw," in *From Stalinism to Pluralism*, 203.

³⁵ Weigel, *The End and the Beginning*, 112. Emphasis added.

³⁶ John Paul II, "Pope John Paul II Speaks in Victory Square," 201.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

‘an ideological struggle against the Socialist countries.’”³⁸ This accusation is perhaps partly true, though not in the way conceived by the Soviets.

Neither John Paul II nor his predecessors or successors would characterize CST as an ideology, a term “used in order to denote systems of ideas.”³⁹ In an essay on the subject, Joseph Schumpeter makes an important observation. He writes, “[I]deologies are not simply lies; they are . . . statements about what a man thinks he sees.”⁴⁰ The Church’s social teaching transcends ideology precisely because it speaks to the fundamental realities and truths of the human person and condition.⁴¹ The social doctrine of the Church, as the *Compendium* notes, “is a word that brings freedom.”⁴² It is hardly surprising, then, to see why the Poles, living under a repressive system, were so moved by the pope’s preaching. In this subtle but still powerful way, it can be said, John Paul II was indeed subverting the communist system.

Over the course of his journey, the pope also made frequent references to a fundamental unity among the peoples of Eastern Europe, rooted in their common Christian heritage and culture. In his first encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*, the pope “stressed the Church’s temporal tasks in helping safeguard this national inheritance.”⁴³ He writes, “Since man’s true freedom is not found in everything that the various systems and individuals propagate as freedom, the Church, because of her divine mission, becomes all the more guardian of this freedom, which is the condition and basis for the human person’s true dignity.”⁴⁴ Dissidents across Eastern Europe read such statements as

³⁸ Weigel, *The End and the Beginning*, 113.

³⁹ Joseph A. Schumpeter, “Science and Ideology,” *The American Economic Review* 39, no. 2 (March 1949): 347.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 349.

⁴¹ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, 60-71.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴³ Luxmoore and Babiuch, *The Vatican and the Red Flag*, 215.

⁴⁴ Karol Wojtyła, “Redemptor Hominis,” in *Toward a Philosophy of Praxis*, ed. Alfred Bloch and George T. Czuczka (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 119.

criticisms of the prevailing order, giving encouragement to their opposition campaigns. Few movements were so strongly impacted by the pope's words as the labor union Solidarity.

The close relationship between the Polish Church and Solidarity would prove to be a crucial factor contributing to Poland's eventual democratic transition. Lech Wałęsa, a former electrician and strike leader at the Gdańsk shipyards, became one of the prominent leaders of the trade union. Solidarity's position was especially strengthened after Wałęsa's meeting with John Paul II in January 1981.⁴⁵ The growing influence of Solidarity concerned hardliners in the government and led to General Wojciech Jaruzelski's appointment as First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP), the state's official communist party. So as "not to disappoint his supporters at the Kremlin," Jaruzelski declared martial law, suppressed Solidarity, and arrested many of its leaders, including Wałęsa.⁴⁶ Martial law ended in 1983, the same year the pope made his second visit to the country. By the late 1980s, Poland's communist government, whose legitimacy had long been contested, reached out to Solidarity to seek some compromise.⁴⁷ The negotiations undertaken in the subsequent Round Table Talks would eventually lead to elections that resulted in a landslide victory for Solidarity candidates; PUWP was dissolved in January 1990.⁴⁸ Wałęsa later credited John Paul II as having been an indispensable ally of Solidarity who helped usher in a new period of democracy in Poland.⁴⁹

Whether or not communism would have collapsed without the influence of John Paul II is a question best explored elsewhere, though

⁴⁵ Marian S. Mazgaj, *Church and State in Communist Poland: A History, 1944-1989* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2010), 124-25.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁴⁷ Luxmoore and Babiuch, *The Vatican and the Red Flag*, 261.

⁴⁸ Curry, "Poland: The Politics of 'God's Playground,'" 240-41.

⁴⁹ Joseph A. Reaves, "Emotional Walesa Thanks Pope for His Support of Solidarity," *Chicago Tribune* (April 21, 1989).

it is difficult not to perceive his papacy as having occurred at a particularly fortuitous point in history; moreover, the pope certainly believed that divine providence was working through him. He asked the Polish faithful in his Victory Square homily, “[I]s not my pilgrimage to my native land . . . to be taken as a special symbol of our Polish pilgrimage through the history of the church?” He continued, “I must ask myself, as all of you must ask yourselves, why it was that in the year 1978 a son of the Polish nation . . . should be called to the Chair of St. Peter.”⁵⁰ Poland was “called to give an especially important witness,” and he, as a native son, must certainly have felt called to give a particular witness by his own life. Indeed, the Poles were the first nation in the Eastern Bloc to topple their communist government, beginning a process that ultimately culminated in the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.⁵¹

V

The Dignity of Work. One of the central elements of John Paul II’s teaching, in addition to his emphasis on the inherent dignity of the human person, is the nature of dignified work. Having experienced communism in Poland, he was perhaps best positioned to attack Marxism on the grounds that it disregarded the dignity of people and their work. This concern recalls the warnings of Leo XIII in *Rerum novarum* and Pius XI in *Quadragesimo anno*. Socialist policies implemented under the promise of bettering the conditions of workers are bound to harm the very people they are intended to help, precisely because they emerge from a false understanding of human nature and the nature of work.

John Paul II was deeply influenced by his predecessors’ thought with regard to the Church’s social teaching, and his contributions to

⁵⁰ John Paul II, “Pope John Paul II Speaks in Victory Square,” 201.

⁵¹ Curry, “Poland: The Politics of ‘God’s Playground,’” 242.

the understanding of the human person are an important element of CST. He explains in *Centesimus annus* that the essential error of Marxism, and socialism in general, is anthropological.⁵² The root cause of this error is the atheism and materialism at the heart of the system. The pope writes:

[Socialism] considers the individual person simply as an element, a molecule within the social organism, so that the good of the individual is completely subordinated to the functioning of the socioeconomic mechanism. . . . Man is thus reduced to a series of social relationships, and the concept of the person as the autonomous subject of moral decision disappears.⁵³

In this framework, labor, as “one of the characteristics that distinguish man from the rest of creatures,” is also stripped of its dignity.⁵⁴ Rightly conceived, the pope writes, “[h]uman work has an ethical value of its own, which clearly and directly remains linked to the fact that the one who carries it out is a person, a conscious and free subject, that is to say a subject that decides about himself.”⁵⁵ The subjective aspects of work, that is, its source in and effects on the dignity of the worker, are the pope’s primary concern.⁵⁶ The dignity of the human person must always be the primary focus, lest workers be reduced to the functional equivalent of slaves, as occurred under the Marxist system.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the act of working reflects man’s participation in Creation and imitates the creative work of God. If, as St. Gregory of

⁵² Luxmoore and Babiuch, *The Vatican and the Red Flag*, 307; *Centesimus annus*, 13.

⁵³ *Centesimus annus*, 13.

⁵⁴ *Laborem exercens*, 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁶ Charles K. Wilber, “Incentives and the Organization of Work,” in *One Hundred Years*, 213.

⁵⁷ Robert A. Destro, “*Laborem exercens*,” in *A Century of Catholic Social Thought*, 158.

Nyssa explains, “the goal of a virtuous life is to become like God,” work and its role in life cannot be reduced to a purely materialistic exercise.⁵⁸ John Paul II explains:

The fact that the one who, while *being God*, became like us in all things devoted most of the years of his life on earth to *manual work* at the carpenter’s bench . . . constitutes in itself the most eloquent “Gospel of work”, showing that the basis for determining the value of human work is not primarily the kind of work being done but the fact that the one who is doing it is a person.⁵⁹

As the final line of this passage suggests, the acting person is an important focus of John Paul II’s moral philosophy.

VI

The Greatest Commandment. At the core of the pope’s writings and the broader body of CST is the question of how man relates to his fellow men. Marxism and socialism have clearly failed as frameworks because they render the person no more than a deterministic machine. Capitalism accounts for and channels man’s natural self-interest. Here, self-interest need not be read as selfishness. Exchanges in a free market, motivated by mutual self-interest, might bring about a greater good for all. It is when self-interest devolves into selfishness that capitalism’s excesses emerge. For this reason capitalism must be “circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious.”⁶⁰ How can we see to it that this circumscription is achieved? Reading encyclicals and familiarizing ourselves with CST is not

⁵⁸ Weigel, *The End and the Beginning*, 417.

⁵⁹ *Laborem exercens*, 6.

⁶⁰ *Centesimus annus*, 42.

enough. More deeply, we must come to understand the “other” as another self and order our actions accordingly. We are called to love God with all our heart and love our neighbors as ourselves.

The greatest commandment is not a banal platitude. McNerney recounts the pope’s thought as he explains, “[W]hen the ‘human being acts’ in a self-conscious way, then each of his or her conscious acts is an ethical experience.”⁶¹ He adds that we must also “explore ‘what happens to the person through the act that person consciously performs’” as we seek to become more fully human.⁶² The pope’s aim is to “recapture the reality of the human act and its metaphysical significance for the human person.”⁶³ The neighbor is the “‘ultimate point of reference’ for any adequate philosophy of the human person.”⁶⁴ Christ’s commandment of love discloses “what is indispensable for a community to be truly human.”⁶⁵ All can readily grasp the simplicity of this command. John Paul II’s great gift was the ability to communicate this to audiences in terms they could easily comprehend. The pope preached in Warsaw that Christ, who is love, is “the key to understanding that magnificent and utterly fundamental reality which is the human person.”⁶⁶ It is no coincidence that the greatest commandment consists of two parts, loving God and loving one’s neighbor.

VII

Conclusion. The writings and witness of Pope John Paul II vividly bring to life the rich tenets of CST, with its primary focus on the fundamental dignity of man, who is created in the image and likeness

⁶¹ McNerney, *John Paul II*, 55-56.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁶⁶ John Paul II, “Pope John Paul II Speaks in Victory Square,” 201.

of God. The human person participates in God's creative design through his labor and interactions with his neighbor. For this reason, the communist aim to exclude God from the history of the human race is a direct attack on the person himself; this is the ultimate anthropological error of socialism that Leo XIII, Pius XI, and John Paul II warned against.

Above all, it is crucial that the other is viewed as another self, lest the moral framework that is necessary to circumscribe the free market becomes corrupted. That John Paul II reigned as pope and conveyed this wisdom at such a critical point in history was providential indeed. "If you remain in my word," Christ tells his disciples, "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."⁶⁷ The truth did indeed set the peoples of Eastern Europe free.

⁶⁷ John 8:31-32.

“Known in the Breaking of Bread”: Glimpsing Christ in the Practice of Hospitality

*Ellen Friesen**

*For Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs and lovely in eyes not His
To the Father through the features of men's faces.*

Gerard Manley Hopkins, “As Kingfishers Catch Fire”

THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES repeatedly urge the Christian faithful to practice hospitality – welcoming, sheltering, and nourishing travelers and strangers. Paul commands the Romans to “practice hospitality,” and Peter in his first epistle writes that that believers ought to “practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another.”¹ By no means, however, do these affirmations of hospitality arise with the advent of Christianity; rather, they are part of a long tradition, found in a variety of ancient cultures, of honoring those who welcome, shelter, and nourish sojourners. Hospitality in the kingdom of God is not merely in continuity with ancient precedent, though. Importantly, it introduces something different into this tradition in light of the new dimensions of love made possible by Christ’s coming.

Surprisingly, there are few philosophical treatments of hospitality; the academic discussion of the theme chiefly analyzes it from

* Ellen Friesen is a 2019 graduate of Hillsdale College, where she majored in history. She is currently teaching and developing curriculum for humanities courses at John Paul II Junior College, a school in Belize run by the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity.

¹ Romans 12:13, 1 Peter 4:9 (RSVCE; this translation will be used throughout).

historical, political, or economic perspectives. What philosophical analyses of hospitality do exist focus mainly on twentieth-century phenomenology, particularly the work of Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas.² Without denying the value of these developments, there remains a dearth of sustained conversation about the theological implications of the Incarnation for hospitality. Let us first, then, look briefly at the cultural traditions of hospitality preceding Christianity and in which Christianity arose, before turning to the commentaries of Thomas Aquinas on various scriptural passages concerning hospitality. Dietrich von Hildebrand's *The Nature of Love*, because it unites acceptance of the Incarnational fact with a phenomenological analysis of love, will further provide a helpful backdrop against which we may develop the implications of Christ's coming for the act of welcoming strangers and sojourners.

Ancient polytheistic cultures prized hospitality, at least in part because of the hostile conditions often faced by travelers. In Homeric epics, for example, "every man regarded it as his privilege and inviolable duty to receive and entertain any stranger who applied for hospitality."³ Both Romans and Greeks worshipped their chief god under the title of protector of strangers.⁴ Certainly, underlying this emphasis on hospitality was recognition of the fact that counting on the private hospitality of others was often necessary for survival: "[T]o protect the stranger was an acute necessity in Early Greece: Overnight wealthy shipowners and merchants could become beggars through shipwreck."⁵ Aware that a reliable system of hospitality could be

² See, for instance, Andrew Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other: Levinas, Derrida, and a Theology of Hospitality* (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 2014); and Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

³ Oscar E. Nybakken, "The Moral Basis of Hospitium Privatum," *The Classical Journal* 41, no. 6 (March 1946): 248.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 249-50.

⁵ Christoph Astarff, "Protecting Strangers: Establishing a Fundamental Value in the Religions of the Ancient Near East and Ancient Greece,"

maintained only if everyone discharged their obligations when called upon to do so, most men likely extended hospitality at least partially, if not entirely, out of self-interest. As a matter of practicality, then, hospitality possessed a “fundamentally reciprocal structure” maintained by both a desire to receive hospitable treatment from others should it become necessary and a fear of possible retaliation if one failed to fulfill one’s obligations as host.⁶

Given the similarly harsh and volatile conditions under which the ancient Hebrews lived, their practice of hospitality was likely motivated by the same considerations of necessity and self-preservation possessed by their pagan counterparts. Nor were such conditions much ameliorated by the time of the coming of Christ. This raises a question: Are the ancient pagan, Jewish, and Christian directives to welcome the stranger simply based on practical necessity and self-interested concerns? If hospitality’s vital importance is historical and situational rather than theological, these directives would be gutted of their moral force in our own circumstances, where the market provides relatively safe and reliable options for shelter and food in various forms such as hotels, restaurants, and hostels.

I would suggest, however, that the Hebrew scriptures’ exhortations concerning hospitality hint at the divine significance of hospitality, which Christianity further develops. The epistle to the Hebrews makes explicit the idea that Christians’ practice of hospitality arises from a filial emulation of the precedent set by their elder brother, the Hebrew nation. It directs Christians “not [to] neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”⁷ Although the text does not name him, “some” refers to Abraham, who welcomed three strangers into his dwelling by the oaks of Mamre,

Numen 39, no. 2 (December 1992): 200.

⁶ James A. W. Heffernan, “Classical Hospitality,” in *Hospitality and Treachery in Western Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 15-17, 22.

⁷ Hebrews 13:2.

giving them rest and nourishment, only to discover that they were divine messengers bearing an announcement of Sarai's unexpected childbearing.⁸ The Hebrew scriptures repeatedly hold up the sojourner as one particularly vulnerable to injustice and thus particularly in need of protection. Deuteronomy provides a twofold justification for this care that resembles Christ's twofold law of love in the New Testament. The Israelites should love the sojourner both because they, too, know what it means to be vulnerable and without a land of their own, but also because, in doing so, they imitate the divine love of their Lord, who "loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing."⁹ The Deuteronomic law stipulates that "you shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a sojourner in his land."¹⁰ These Egyptians whom the Israelites are commanded to love are those same whom the book of Wisdom roundly condemns for a litany of sins against hospitality: "they practiced a more bitter hatred of strangers," "made slaves of guests who were their benefactors," and "afflicted with terrible sufferings" those whom they had appeared to welcome "with festal celebrations."¹¹ In this way, the sacred author suggests that the obligation to hospitality goes beyond preserving a situationally useful system of reciprocity.

The Incarnation imbues that particular kind of personal love present in acts of hospitality with unassailable moral weight. In a homily given on the second Sunday after Epiphany, glossing Romans 12:13 ("given to hospitality"), Thomas Aquinas emphatically affirms that hospitality remains essential regardless of a host's expectations of reciprocal treatment. He identifies four things that "ought chiefly to move us" to practice hospitality: "the command of the Lord," "the example of the saints," "the loss which is sustained by not practicing

⁸ Genesis 18:1-15.

⁹ Deuteronomy 10:18-19.

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 23:7.

¹¹ Wisdom 19:13-16.

hospitality,” and “the manifold advantage in its exercise.”¹² The command of the Lord comprises scriptural directives as well as “the law of nature,” which dictates “that as we desire to receive hospitality from others, so we should shew it to others.”¹³ After this clear acknowledgement of the desire to preserve reciprocity, one naturally expects that the “loss sustained” by lack of hospitality and the “manifold advantage” of its practice will be extensions of this principle; the inhospitable man will cut himself off from his community and become unable to rely on the hospitality of others, while the hospitable man will be well loved and received by his community. It is startling when Aquinas does not tie a single advantage of hospitality (or disadvantage of neglecting it) to the temporal realm. All six advantages and disadvantages – he gives three of each – pertain directly to the person’s relationship with God, and particularly to the state of the soul after death.¹⁴ Hospitality is essential primarily because of its formative effect on the souls of those offering it, and only secondarily because its exercise may be necessary in certain circumstances to preserve a system of reciprocity.

Thus the exercise of hospitality has a moral dimension that is present regardless of circumstances. The existence of modern-day hotels and restaurants in no way renders meaningless the New Testament directives to practice hospitality. At this point we can begin to look more deeply at the nature of hospitality, at what occurs in the act of welcoming the traveler or the sojourner and at the formative

¹² Thomas Aquinas, “The Law of Hospitality,” in *Ninety-Nine Homilies of St. Thomas Aquinas upon the Epistles and Gospels*, trans. John Ashley (London: Church Press Company, 1867), 7-8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴ The losses sustained by inhospitable men are that they are “punished by the Lord,” “confounded in the judgment,” and “shut up in an evil habitation” (*ibid.*, 8-9). The manifold advantages from being hospitable are that “we gain grace,” “we frequently entertain saints and angels,” and “we shall be received into an eternal, heavenly, and glorious habitation” (*ibid.*, 9).

effect this act has on the soul of both giver and receiver. Hospitality in this analysis refers to what one could call private hospitality, rather than the public hospitality commonly referred to as the “hospitality industry,” where food or shelter are offered for a price to those ready to pay. As we shall see, true private hospitality of the sort commanded in scripture possesses both a physical and a spiritual dimension. Although certain spiritual values can be present in the hospitality industry, their presence or absence is not per se part of its essential nature.¹⁵ If the spiritual dimension is absent in private hospitality, however, that hospitality loses much of its moral value.

Both the physical and spiritual dimensions of hospitality are suggested by Thomas Aquinas in his commentary on the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews. Hospitality, Aquinas asserts, upholds the good of others in a “special” way, as “a person who receives travelers does three acts of charity at once, because he receives and feeds and gives them drink.”¹⁶ For Aquinas, hospitality is an act of charity, the particular recipients of which are “travelers”: those who are displaced, who are not at home, and who are likely unknown to those who are receiving them. His enumeration of the threefold nature of hospitality raises a question about the first component, reception. On the one hand, given the clearly corporal nature of the other two components, feeding and giving drink, perhaps here reception refers only to allowing shelter or physical space to the traveler. On the other hand, let us suppose that a traveler approaches a household along his way, seeking physical nourishment and a place to rest. The owner of the household accedes to the traveler’s request, providing food, water, and physical space within his home – yet all the while showing in his demeanor, in

¹⁵ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 32, a. 3, on the relationship between compensation and “physical almsdeeds.”

¹⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, trans. Fabian Larcher, O.P., Priory of the Immaculate Conception at The Dominican House of Studies, 728, available at <https://dhspriory.org/thomas/english/SSHebrews.htm#131>.

what he says and how he says it, that the guest is a distrusted burden of whom he would be only too glad to be rid. Contrast this with a second host, who, when appealed to for help, offers food, water, and physical space of equivalent or perhaps even lesser quality than those offered by the first host, but does so with a cheerfulness and gratitude that make evident to the stranger that he is welcome. Clearly, charity is not fully present in the first instance as it is in the second; the former host offers at best imperfect hospitality, even if his actions are, on a material level, equal or superior to those of the latter host. This essential disposition of spiritual and psychological receptivity clarifies why the sojourner as well as the traveler may be a recipient of hospitality. As one who is residing, at least semipermanently, in a place not his own, the sojourner may possess in his own right the shelter and food that generally constitute the physical components of hospitality. Unlike the traveler, his vulnerability stems not from physical need but from the potential to be psychologically rejected by the community in which he lives. That hospitality can be extended to the sojourner testifies to the truth that hospitality's most important dimension is not physical. Rather, hospitality is an act of charity, consisting in offering not only physical succor but also spiritual and psychological receptivity.

This makes clear why the distinction between private and public hospitality is so necessary – the spiritual reception that is essential to hospitality cannot command a price in the market. Receptivity is an internal disposition of the heart that recognizes the value of the one received because of his personhood and God-bestowed dignity. If such a disposition could be purchased, it would mean that the host would be making a continuous (if subconscious) calculation concerning the marginal benefit of receiving the stranger, conceived in monetary terms, over the marginal cost he could expect to himself. Precisely because it is based on receiving the other insofar as he contributes to one's own benefit rather than his value as a person, such a disposition could never approach spiritual receptivity. In the words

of Benedict XVI, “the market of gratuitousness does not exist.”¹⁷ Within the hospitality industry, the criterion for acceptance is ability to pay; hotels do not lodge those who cannot afford to stay at them. Certainly, the transactional nature of this sphere in no way eliminates the possibility that spiritual values such as charity and generosity may be present.¹⁸ Nor is this to say that hotels that refuse to function as shelters for the needy somehow fail to let Christian values transform their mission. In fact, the market incentivizes the public hospitality sector to provide genuine goods that private hospitality might not, such as cleanliness, privacy, and security. Because lodging can command a price, hoteliers have a material interest in welcoming any paying customer and in opening lodging establishments in locations where private individuals would be unlikely to live. At the same time, because the acceptance that characterizes spiritual hospitality rests on the guest’s identity in Christ and not on his ability to compensate the host materially, this value can be present only in private hospitality. It is for this reason that civil society is “the most natural setting for an economy of gratuitousness and fraternity.”¹⁹ Although “in every one of these layers [of economic life], to varying degrees and in ways specifically suited to each, the aspect of fraternal reciprocity must be

¹⁷ *Caritas in veritate*, 39.

¹⁸ An interesting illustration of this principle can be found in Airbnb, which extends the “sharing economy” to the lodging industry. While competitive pricing constitutes one key reason why Airbnb accommodations are generally chosen over traditional hotels, most who use the service also cite the “authenticity” and that “sharing” relationships between hosts and guests that they experience. See Daniel Guttentag, “Assessing Airbnb as a Disruptive Innovation Relative to Hotels: Substitution and Comparative Performance Expectations,” *2017 ttra International Conference*, Quebec City, Canada, June 20-22, 2017, available at https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/2017/Academic_Papers_Visual/19; and Eroze Sthapit and Jano Jiménez-Barreto, “Sharing in the Host-Guest Relationship: Perspectives on the Airbnb Hospitality Experience,” *Anatolia* 29, no. 2 (2018): 283.

¹⁹ *Caritas in veritate*, 38.

present,” a disposition to welcome those in need in the name of Christ is “specifically suited” to the sphere of private, non-price-driven action.²⁰

Characterized in its essence by welcoming the stranger, the charity that animates hospitality turns out to be an example *par excellence* of the Christian love of neighbor. In *The Nature of Love*, Dietrich von Hildebrand discusses the qualities of this love. He begins first by describing that benevolent love of neighbor that, though not permeated by love of Christ, still contains a moral value beyond other natural loves. Love of neighbor, whether natural or Christian, arises in the context of “a relation to persons to whom one has no particular personal bond,” from an attitude that “does not derive from a value-response to the neighbor, but rather anticipates the encounter with the neighbor.”²¹ The essence of this love of the neighbor, Hildebrand asserts, is that “it is He or She as such and not our relation that stands in the foreground.”²² Clearly, the hospitality we have been describing bears a very close resemblance to this love of neighbor: it is an anticipatory disposition to love those encountered, particularly through welcome of strangers. At the same time, there is nothing about this love that is distinctively Christian; Hildebrand gives the example of the person who extends hospitality to someone he meets simply because he is naturally kind-hearted or given to pity.²³ Others might extend hospitality because it is an important value in their culture or because they expect to create a sort of debtor relationship with their guest. Any of these purely natural ways of loving one’s neighbor could certainly be present in pre-Christian cultures.

The Incarnation, Hildebrand points out, makes possible a new and deeper love of neighbor – and by extension, we can then say, a new

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Dietrich von Hildebrand, *The Nature of Love*, trans. John F. Crosby with John Henry Crosby (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2009), 268.

²² Ibid., 240.

²³ Ibid., 266-68.

and deeper kind of hospitality. First of all, Christian love of neighbor is distinguished from its natural counterpart by a universal receptivity to loving other persons. “The one who loves is never good just to this one person,” Hildebrand writes, “but is ready to be good to any and every neighbor.”²⁴ Christ’s Incarnation and sacrifice make possible a genuine value-response to all people by elucidating the beauty inherent in a person, no matter how strange or repulsive. This value-response follows once a person “acknowledge[s] each person as existing in the image of God, as created by God, and called to eternal communion with Him.”²⁵ He who understands and is filled with the love of Christ on the Cross “sees his neighbor in the light of the redemption as one who is infinitely loved by Christ.”²⁶ The center of Christian hospitality is not one’s own human benevolence but a heart permeated with a consciousness of Christ’s complete self-giving love for oneself and for others.

Perhaps most significantly, the inception of the kingdom of God makes it possible for this love of neighbor to be imbued with what Hildebrand terms the *intentio unionis* – the desire for union with the one loved. Because love of neighbor embraces all persons, even those personally unknown, the possibility of its coexistence with the *intentio unionis* initially seems counterintuitive. After all, in that more easily grasped example, the *intentio unionis* of spouses, this desire for union accompanies an intimate knowledge of the other person. Loving in this manner seems to go hand-in-hand with knowledge. Seeing each person whom we meet in light of the Incarnation, however, means we already know the most significant facts about him. Although we may not “know” him in the typical sense of having made his acquaintance, we know that God created him out of love, that God shared his nature in order to redeem him, and that God wants to delight in him for eternity. Thus, a stranger no less than a close friend can be encountered with

²⁴ Ibid., 239.

²⁵ Ibid., 237.

²⁶ Ibid., 244.

the understanding that God intends us to be “united in the kingdom of Christ.”²⁷ Rather than an isolated instance of benevolence, extending hospitality takes on new meaning as part of that drama of grace in which, if both attain their ultimate good, host and guest will be reunited. “In Christian love of neighbor there is always a movement of rising up into the ultimate reality of the world of God,” Hildebrand writes, for “we penetrate to ultimate valid reality, to the way God sees things” and “are helped to break through to a real love of neighbor by having this view of the kingdom of God.”²⁸ Because they demand that we welcome the stranger, situations calling for hospitality strip away the affection and familiarity that typically aid our weak efforts to love with true charity. Hospitality calls uniquely for a purified love dependent on Christ and desirous of his will for others.

Rather than as mere commandments to continue ancient practices of hospitality, the New Testament’s exhortations to hospitality must be understood in light of the Word made flesh, whose dwelling among us makes possible a deeper love for mankind amongst whom he dwelt. Welcoming others both physically and spiritually has a profound moral effect on the souls of those who live it out. We can affirm intellectually that God became man and died out of love for all men, but the practice of hospitality translates the universality of that incarnated love into action. In fact, the narrative of Luke’s gospel moves almost immediately from reporting the resurrection of Christ to describing an act of human hospitality, as if to suggest that the triumph of divine love overflows into welcoming others. The two disciples whom Christ accompanies on their journey to Emmaus invite the as-yet unknown man who has joined them into their home: “[T]hey constrained him, saying, ‘Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.’”²⁹ Only by first welcoming the stranger do they create the space for sharing the subsequent meal in which the identity of their guest is

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 250.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 270-71.

²⁹ Luke 24:29.

revealed to them.³⁰ Indeed, Christ's words concerning love for "the least of these" intimate that receiving any stranger constitutes a reception of Christ just as real, if not in precisely the same manner, as that of the Emmaus travelers.³¹ That new and deeper meaning with which the Incarnation invests hospitality shines forth from these texts, revealing that when we open our homes and offer physical sustenance to strangers, we welcome God himself.

³⁰ Luke 24:35.

³¹ Matthew 25:38, 40.

Trends in Modern Consumption and Their Effects on Human Relationships

*Hannah Steiner**

I

FOLLOWING CHRIST'S COMMAND, "Love one another as I have loved you,"¹ the Church has always taught that human persons are called to interact with one another in ways that respect their inherent dignity. This fundamental idea has been echoed in different ways over the centuries. For example, St. Paul: "Honor one another above yourselves. . . . Share with the Lord's people who are in need."² St. Thomas Aquinas: "Friendship unites good men and preserves and promotes virtue. Friendship is needed by all men in whatever occupations they engage."³ Pope Paul VI: "For by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others, he can neither live nor develop his potential."⁴ And Pope John Paul II: "Love that animates the interpersonal relationships of the different members of the family constitutes the interior strength that shapes and animates the family communion."⁵ The ways human persons positively relate to one another is clearly a focal point of Catholic teaching.

* Hannah Steiner is a 2019 graduate of Creighton University, where she majored in mathematics and economics. She is currently working toward an M.Ed. through Notre Dame's ACE Teaching Fellows program as she teaches high school math in Indianapolis.

¹ John 15:12.

² Romans 12:10, 13.

³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship to the King of Cyprus* (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949), no. 77.

⁴ *Gaudium et spes*, 12.

⁵ *Familiaris consortio*, 21.

We are witnessing in our world today a new wave of consumeristic trends. Marked particularly by online shopping, rising incomes, customization, and superfluous product variety, consumption in the Western world has greatly evolved in just the past few decades. I would argue that Generation Z (which consists of people born between 1995 and 2015) is most impacted by these trends and their effects, as they have never experienced any other sort of world.

Consumption habits impact people far more than just materially; their effects spill over into the ways human beings interact with one another on a spiritual or interpersonal level. In this paper, I argue that modern consumption is marked by three characteristics – totalization, convenience, and excess – and that their effects undermine the sanctity of human relationships. Specifically, I contend that totalization leads to unreasonably high expectations, convenience leads to loneliness and distractibility, and excess leads to indifference to the commodification and suffering of persons.

Though damaging and widespread, the problems associated with modern consumption are, at least in part, remediable. In the words of John Paul II, “[a] great deal of educational and cultural work is urgently needed . . . to create life-styles in which goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are factors which determine consumer choices.”⁶ Individual consumers can make conscious decisions to amend their personal consumption habits in order to focus on cultivating the value of human relationships.

II

Secular Relevance and Definitions. It is worth noting that the complications wrought by modern trends in consumption are also realized beyond the religious sphere. In recent years, secular scholars have called attention to various problems: “new consumerism” erodes

⁶ *Centesimus annus*, 36.

well-being;⁷ postmodern consumerism impacts the construction of the self;⁸ and there is dialogue about the relationship of consumerism and human flourishing.⁹ Furthermore, statistical research indicates an inverse relationship between spirituality and a desire to spend lavishly,¹⁰ and provides evidence both that materialistic individuals experience relatively low levels of well-being¹¹ and that household waste is growing at an unsustainable rate.¹²

Though I write this paper primarily for young Catholics and will frequently reference the Church's perspective, I include this background information to demonstrate that consumeristic trends also have a wider social impact. My aim here is to provide tangible, practical examples of how modern consumption trends impact human relationships and to suggest applications of Catholic thought that may also be relevant from a secular perspective.

It is worth noting up front that there is an important distinction to be made between "consumption" and "consumerism." Consumption itself is necessary for life; it entails purchasing and consuming goods to satisfy human desires. Consumerism, on the other hand, refers to an unhealthy and excessive preoccupation with the acquisition of

⁷ Juliet Schor, "The New Consumerism. An Essay on Social Comparisons, Inequality and Well-Being," *Tijdschrift voor Sociologie* 23, no. 1 (April 2002): 10-20.

⁸ Danielle Todd, "You Are What You Buy: Postmodern Consumerism and the Construction of Self," *HOHONU* 10 (2011): 48-50.

⁹ Amitai Etzioni, "The Crisis of Modernity: Deviation or Demise," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 16 (March 1975): 1-18.

¹⁰ Tyler F. Stillman et al., "The Material and Immaterial in Conflict: Spirituality Reduces Conspicuous Consumption," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 33 (2012): 1-7.

¹¹ Monica Bauer et al., "Cuing Consumerism: Situational Materialism Undermines Personal and Social Well-Being," *Association for Psychological Science* 23, no. 5 (May 2012): 517-23.

¹² Martin O'Brien, "Consumers, Waste and the 'Throwaway Society' Thesis," *International Journal of Applied Sociology* 3, no. 2 (2013): 19-27.

consumer goods – sometimes referred to as buying for the sake of buying.

Because consumerism has become an increasingly prevalent aspect of consumption practices, the term “modern consumption” refers to a culture of consumption with distorted consumeristic tendencies *in addition to* other trends (totalization, convenience, and excess). Consumerism thus falls under the umbrella of modern consumption.

III

Totalization. The first characteristic of modern consumption I will discuss is totalization, which may be described as an all-or-nothing stance. Totalization means “having no middle position or compromise available,”¹³ and it means individuals view the world in dichotomous fashion. Particularly troubling is the modern trend of totalizing thinking with respect to human relationships, which I suggest is an outgrowth of the all-or-nothing mindset that is characteristic of modern consumption.

Today, there is immense product variety. For instance, if someone wants to buy a jar of jelly, she can go to the grocery store and find organic jelly, seedless jelly, sugar-free jelly, squeeze jelly, 16 oz. or 24 oz. or 32 oz. jelly, a jelly and peanut butter twist – the list goes on. This phenomenon is new. Forty years ago, perhaps there were only two options for jelly on the grocery store shelf. Product variety has expanded.

With more product variety comes more choice. Psychologist Barry Schwartz developed a theory he calls “the paradox of choice,” which refers to the problem that, as choice becomes infinite, “it leads [people] to set unreasonably high expectations” and “question their choices before they even make them.”¹⁴ Having too many options to choose

¹³ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/totalization>.

¹⁴ Barry Schwartz, “The Paradox of Choice,” available at https://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_on_the_paradox_of_choice/t

among in consumption causes people to have exceptionally high expectations when purchasing products. Products are now expected to be far more than just “good enough.” Instead, people take an all-or-nothing approach to their purchases: Products must satisfy every single desire a person might have, or else they are not worth purchasing, and consumers decline to buy them.

Troublingly, this trend of totalization has crept into modern thought and practice more broadly. As I review below, these effects can be observed in data concerning politics, mental health, family life, and religious practices, among other contexts.

For example, American politics have become more and more polarized. In one research study, Americans with “mixed” political views (that is, a combination of both liberal and conservative perspectives) decreased 10 percent between 1994 and 2014.¹⁵ In that same time period, “very unfavorable” Democratic attitudes toward Republicans have risen 22 percent, and “very unfavorable” Republican attitudes toward Democrats have risen 26 percent.¹⁶ Politically, people have become less and less able to compromise and to understand the perspectives of those who don’t share their own views.

Another example of totalization is in the field of mental health. “Splitting” is the psychological term for all-or-nothing thinking, particularly in reference to the self and others. It is defined as “the division or polarization of beliefs, actions, objects, or persons into good and bad by focusing selectively on their positive or negative attributes . . . a compartmentalization of opposites.”¹⁷ The diagnoses

ranscript.

¹⁵ Carroll Doherty, “7 Things to Know About Polarization in America,” available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/12/7-things-to-know-about-polarization-in-america/>.

¹⁶ Doherty, “7 Things.”

¹⁷ Neel Burton, “Self-Deception II: Splitting,” *Psychology Today* (September 2016), available at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hidden-and-seeking/201203/self-deception-ii-splitting>.

of mental illnesses have risen dramatically in recent years,¹⁸ and splitting is known to play a significant role in many mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, personality disorders, and excessive anger.¹⁹

Even “marriage has increasingly become an ‘all-or-nothing’ proposition.”²⁰ Marriage used to be viewed as the proper and desirable relationship for satisfying sexual needs and for raising children. Now, men and women take a different view, setting the bar very high as potential partners are expected to “check every box” and meet an increasing array of demands – and if they don’t, they are not worth pursuing. People are no longer satisfied with partners who provide intimacy and security for raising children; instead, they are seeking their own self-actualization through their marriages, distorting that fundamental relationship into one that is self-serving, not oriented toward the good of others. As sociologist Eli Finkle theorizes, “Americans now look to marriage increasingly for self-discovery, self-esteem, and personal growth. . . . [T]hey have come to view marriage less as an essential institution and more as an elective means of achieving personal fulfillment.”²¹

A final example concerns religious practices, specifically church attendance. In the United States, church attendance among adults has

¹⁸ Jean Twenge, “Are Mental Health Issues on the Rise?” *Psychology Today* (October 2015), available at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/our-changing-culture/201510/are-mental-health-issues-the-rise>.

¹⁹ “Recognizing Cognitive Distortions: All-or-Nothing Thinking,” *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Los Angeles* (April 2015), available at <http://cogbtherapy.com/cbt-blog/cognitive-distortions-all-or-nothing-thinking>.

²⁰ Eli Finkle, “The All-or-Nothing Marriage,” *The New York Times* (February 15, 2014), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/15/opinion/sunday/the-all-or-nothing-marriage.html>.

²¹ Finkle, “The All-or-Nothing Marriage.”

declined nearly 20 percent in the last twenty years,²² and more than half of millennials have not been to a church service in the last six months.²³ As in the case of dating, many people are setting the bar very high as they are looking for a church that meets their every need. And when they discover that the perfect church doesn't exist, they drop religion entirely. This phenomenon is real: 58 percent of nonchurchgoing Christians report that "I haven't found a church/place of worship I like" is a "very important" reason why they don't attend services.²⁴

Perhaps products can be expected meet high standards of perfection, but human relationships – in politics, family, and religion – cannot. To view human beings or social institutions as "entirely right" or "entirely wrong," as "worth our while" or "not worth our while," is unreasonable. In short, totalizing thought undermines our relational capacities.

IV

Convenience. The second characteristic of modern consumption I would like to address is convenience. Particularly with the rise of online shopping, consumption has become far more efficient and convenient. A one-hour trip to the mall is now replaced by a one-minute scroll, click, and purchase. Never before has consumption been as convenient as it is now. But this convenience is harmful to human relationships; specifically, it contributes to the social problems of loneliness and distractibility.

²² Jeffrey Jones, "U.S. Church Membership Down Sharply in Past Two Decades," available at <https://news.gallup.com/poll/248837/church-membership-down-sharply-past-two-decades.aspx>.

²³ "Americans Divided on the Importance of Church," available at <https://www.barna.com/research/americans-divided-on-the-importance-of-church/#.UzwMlq1dW7o>.

²⁴ "Why Americans Go (and Don't Go) to Religious Services," available at https://www.pewforum.org/2018/08/01/why-americans-go-to-religious-services/pf-08-01-18_religious-services-00-07/.

First, loneliness: The convenience of online shopping may enable a person to spend more time in other, more fruitful areas. However, the data suggest that people are doing quite the opposite and in fact shopping even more than ever. Rates of OSA, the abbreviation for the named condition “Online Shopping Addiction,” have risen in recent years among college students.²⁵ Those with OSA are described as “giv[ing] importance to their virtual lives more than their real lives.”²⁶

In addition to online shopping, convenience is manifested in automatic checkouts, self-help desks at large department stores, and other automated features that allow consumers to pass through stores without ever needing to speak to another human being. Though there are benefits to these things, they obviously mean less social interaction, which in turn gives rise to underdeveloped relational skills such as speaking with strangers or asking for clarification. So convenience can be blamed for a rise in antisocial tendencies.

It is known that there is a growing epidemic of loneliness in the United States. One study asserts that in 2003, 10 percent of Americans identified as lonely, and today that number has doubled.²⁷ Social isolation in consumption is one contributing factor: “the steady movement toward increased mechanization in the retailing environment represents a threat that those in the less lonely mainstream population might not perceive.”²⁸ Simply put, the

²⁵ Haiyan Zhao, Wei Tian, and Tao Xin, “The Development and Validation of the Online Shopping Addiction Scale,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 8, no. 735 (May 2017), doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00735.

²⁶ Aytekin Firat et al., “Consumption, Consumer Culture, and Consumer Society,” *Journal of Community Positive Practices* 13, no. 1 (2013): 182-203.

²⁷ “How the Last Decade Changed American Life,” available at <https://www.barna.com/research/how-the-last-decade-changed-american-life/#.VvRuVMdOL8>.

²⁸ Andrew Forman and Ven Sriram, “The Depersonalization of Retailing: Its Impact on the ‘Lonely’ Consumer,” *Journal of Retailing* 67, no. 2 (1991): 226-43.

convenience of automated consumption contributes to human isolation and lack of relational skills.

Another effect of convenience is distractibility. As innovations make consumption easier and faster, they also have an impact on people's abilities to listen, be patient, and be present to others. For instance, in advertising, marketers have seen the need to develop strategies to address audiences with shorter and shorter attention spans. Up until the late 1980s, thirty seconds was the fairly standard length of TV and radio commercials. As attention spans notably decreased, however, advertisers responded with more and more 15-second ads. Since the 1980s and 1990s, commercial lengths have progressively grown shorter; some today run as few as five seconds.²⁹ Additionally, online shopping and mobile media devices are known to "encourage rapid and frequent task-switching."³⁰ Thus, people not only have a shorter attention spans but also suffer from a related problem: they are more susceptible to distraction and struggle to remain focused on a single task.

Owing to this increased convenience of modern consumption, some fundamental components of robust human relationships – patience, presence, attention – have become more and more difficult for individuals to cultivate and practice in their lives.

V

Excess. Pope Francis has decried the "throw-away culture" of the West – a widely recognized term associated with excessive

²⁹ Stuart Elliot, "TV Commercials Adjust to a Shorter Attention Span," *The New York Times* (April 8, 2005), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/08/business/media/tv-commercials-adjust-to-a-shorter-attention-span.html>.

³⁰ Theo Araujo et al., "How Much Time Do You Spend Online? Understanding and Improving the Accuracy of Self-Reported Measures of Internet Use," *Communication Methods and Measures* 11, no. 3 (April 2017): 173-90.

consumption. First, it is important to understand what is meant by the phrase “in excess” or “over-consumption.” Practicing over-consumption is not the same as having great wealth. Though one very frequently leads to the other, one need not be wealthy to be excessively consumeristic. The difference between the two is found in the intentions of agents; the end goal of an over-consumer is simply *having* a product rather than using that product as a means to some other end. For instance, a parent may purchase a tennis racket for her child in order to facilitate the child’s exercise and physical well-being. A grandparent may buy a new board game with the intention of spending time with family members. A teacher may buy a new set of textbooks with the intention of improving the education of his students.

Perhaps the best description of over-consumption comes from Pope John Paul II. He writes, “It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards ‘having’ rather than ‘being,’ and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as end in itself.”³¹ If a product does not cause behaviors that enable a person to *be* – that is, to be present with others, to provide for others, to relate to others, to experience God with others – its purchase is an act of over-consumption.

There is no definitive answer to the “how much is too much” question, but there is no shortage of concrete examples of over-consumption in the Western world. For instance, in America over 60 percent of pet owners give their pets Christmas presents, totaling \$5 billion annually.³² We own 1.1 TVs per person, and 2.6 per household.³³ The square-footage of the average American home has

³¹ *Centesimus annus*, 36.

³² Brad Tuttle, “Psych Experts: There’s Nothing Crazy about Giving Christmas Presents to Pets,” *Time* (December 2011), available at <http://business.time.com/2011/12/20/psych-experts-theres-nothing-crazy-about-giving-christmas-presents-to-pets/>.

³³ Chris Mooney, “The U.S. Has as Many Televisions as Humans. Here’s

more than doubled since the 1950s, despite declines in family size.³⁴ Additionally, planned obsolescence – the strategy of deliberately ensuring that the current version of a given product will become useless within a known time period – leads to more and more spending on replacement products. Excess consumption harms human relationships by fostering both indifference to human suffering and the tendency to view people as commodities.

Regarding indifference to suffering, a quote from Adam Smith may be suggestive: “As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation.”³⁵ Empathy is based upon relatability. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, for an over-consumer to empathize with those whose material needs frequently go unmet. The more over-consumers are isolated in comfort with their possessions, the less sensitive they are to the pains of others’ material poverty. Though it is difficult to measure empathy, indicators have shown its decline, and some of the decline has been attributed to consumption habits. For instance, one study has shown a decline in empathetic concern among college students over a 30-year period, attributing the decline partly to modern consumption habits.³⁶ Furthermore, there are reports that “volunteerism and charitable giving are consistently low among young adults and have decreased significantly throughout the 2000s.”³⁷

How Both Can Waste Less Energy,” *The Washington Post* (2016), available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment>.

³⁴ “Behind the Ever-Expanding American Dream House,” available at <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5525283?storyId=5525283>.

³⁵ Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982), p. 4, section 1.1.

³⁶ Sara Konrath, Edward O’Brien, and Courtney Hsing, “Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students Over Time: A Meta-Analysis,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 15, no. 2 (2011): 180-98.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 188.

Pope Francis has also spoken at length about the commodification of persons. He writes, “Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a ‘disposable’ culture which is now spreading.”³⁸ Other Catholic scholars have also expressed this concern, such as Fr. John Kavanaugh in his work *Commodity Form of Life* and John Paul II in his commentary on humanity’s “possessing [of others] without regard for their quality.”³⁹ The commodification of persons happens at both the macro and micro levels. Worldwide, there are over 40 million victims of human trafficking,⁴⁰ and an estimated 250 million children work in sweatshops.⁴¹ Up to 80 percent of college students engage in casual sex, a practice that often results in one party’s “strong feelings of regret because they felt used.”⁴² Additionally, the elderly are an often disregarded population, as “Western cultures tend to be youth-centric, emphasizing values like individualism and independence . . . which ties an individual’s value to his or her ability to work – something that diminishes in old age.”⁴³ Each of these examples shows how the dignity of certain human persons has been compromised in the contemporary world.

³⁸ *Evangelii gaudium*, 53.

³⁹ Gregory Beabout and Eduardo Echeverria, “The Culture of Consumerism: A Catholic and Personalist Critique,” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 5, no. 2 (2002): 339-83.

⁴⁰ “Human Trafficking: The Facts,” available at <https://polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/facts>.

⁴¹ “ILO Global Report on Child Labor Cites ‘Alarming’ Extent of its Worst Forms,” available at https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_007784/lang--en/index.htm.

⁴² Justin Garcia et al., “Sexual Hookup Culture,” available at <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2013/02/ce-corner>.

⁴³ Karina Martinez-Carter, “How the Elderly are Treated around the World,” *The Week* (July 2013), available at <https://theweek.com/articles/462230/how-elderly-are-treated-around-world>.

Modern consumption is not the sole cause of human commodification and diminishing empathy; however, it plays some role. The consumer mindset does not exist in a vacuum, but necessarily impacts the lives of individuals beyond the economic sphere.

VI

Conclusion. Clearly, consumption itself is necessary and good, as it satisfies basic needs and can serve as a means for greater ends. However, as it increasingly becomes marked by totalization, convenience, and excess, it begins to undermine human relational capabilities in both religious and secular dimensions. As Catholics, and young Catholics especially engulfed in destructive trends of modern consumption, we are called to uphold and respect the dignity of others, which is fostered through human relationships. Therefore, we must reevaluate and, if needed, seek to moderate our own consumption habits to ensure that we engage in consumption for the sake of “being” rather than “having.”

This is not an abstract appeal; again, the Church calls for “educational and cultural work”⁴⁴ to shift consumer practices toward the end of “being.” There are tangible actions that must be taken to restrict modern consumption’s hold on our hearts.⁴⁵ Only when the damaging nature of modern consumption is acknowledged, taken seriously, and acted upon, can we genuinely relate to other human persons in a way that promotes their flourishing as well as our own.

⁴⁴ *Centesimus annus*, 36.

⁴⁵ See the following Appendix for specific examples.

Appendix

The following are some practical suggestions that people can take to moderate consumption in their own lives.

Against Totalization

Set a defined limit before shopping. Perhaps that limit entails adhering to a two-store cap and making a purchase at one of those two stores, even if the “perfect product” isn’t there. For online shopping, one might set a 30-minute time limit for searching and purchasing a needed product.

Against Convenience

Make a point to use saved time in ways that benefit relationship-building. For example, approximate how much time is saved by technological conveniences such as self-checkout, and devote the same amount of time to a morning devotional with a housemate or a phone conversation with a family member.

Against Excess

Match excess spending with donations. For every dollar spent on a self-designated “want” such as eating out at a restaurant, nicer-than-needed furniture, or a Netflix or Spotify subscription, donate a dollar to a charitable cause.

When the desire to satisfy a “want” arises, write down the desired product and the date, and then impose 30-day waiting period before making the purchase.

Moral Obligation and Economics in American Medicine

*Rosemary Pynes**

DURING MY SOPHOMORE YEAR OF COLLEGE, while shadowing a physician, I encountered a situation that caused me to ponder how Catholic physicians should approach patients who are uninsured or underinsured. The doctor I was shadowing told me about his colleague, Dr. S, who would not admit into his practice patients insured by Medicaid. He refused these patients because he received less compensation for their care than he received for privately insured patients. The physician I was shadowing described Dr. S's practice of turning away Medicaid patients as "uncompassionate" and "not real medicine." I was struck by this story because I admired Dr. S and had previously witnessed his genuine care for his patients. As a Catholic pre-med student, I was prompted by this conversation to ask whether Dr. S's patient choices were justified. As a business owner and physician, was he doing the morally right thing in turning away patients who were not able to pay his fees?

In simplified terms, businesses provide products or services to those who can afford those things, and they make a profit based on sales of those products and services. The most basic framework of many business operations is a contractual agreement between the provider and the customer. However, with certain services, the provider–customer relationship can become significantly more complex. This relationship is especially complicated in the healthcare industry. Here, the responsibility of the provider to the patient goes beyond what is typical in other provider–customer relationships

* Rosemary Pynes is a 2019 graduate of Hillsdale College, where she majored in biochemistry. She is currently working as Director of Residence Life at Hillsdale College until she begins medical school in August 2020.

because this relationship centers on the dignity of the patient in an intimate and privileged way. The importance of the service to the human person magnifies the gravity of the contract between practitioner and patient. Under current law in the United States, doctors can refuse patients for a number of reasons, including economic ones. But in good conscience, doctors, especially Christian ones like Dr. S, must earnestly ask: How does the moral law inform healthcare professionals when it comes to their responsibilities to patients? Should doctors be obliged to treat any and all patients, or do they have the discretion to turn away some? Considering the role of their profession and Church teaching, Catholic doctors must consider their special responsibility to respect human dignity in their careers and should work to the best of their ability to promote healthcare for all persons; however, as I seek to explain in this paper, they do have a right to decline to treat nonemergency patients who are uninsured.

In the United States today, there are laws that promote the rights of patients to obtain medical treatment, but also laws that protect the autonomy of physicians. In her essay “Can a physician refuse to help a patient? American Perspective,” Virginia Hood examines the ethics and history of physicians refusing care to patients. The social and legal obligations of doctors around the world have changed and developed over time. Hood offers a brief outline of this evolution and details many examples. She cites the bubonic plague in the fourteenth century as the first time doctors were obliged to treat patients whom they may have wanted to turn away. She writes that treatment became part of the “societal expectations for physicians” and “those not doing so lost social standing.”¹ As new epidemics broke out around the world, the expectation that doctors would care for their patients became more and more commonplace. These obligations often came at the cost of doctors risking their own personal health in order to treat patients in

¹ Virginia Hood, “Can a Physician Refuse to Help a Patient? American Perspective,” *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine* (2008): 369.

need. Having chosen to become physicians, they were expected to put themselves in harm's way for the sake of the common good. At times, their training meant greater than normal responsibility to their neighbors. This requirement to serve is largely still encouraged in emergency situations. Hood writes that, as of 2004, the American Medical Association (AMA) affirmed that it "support[s] the medical profession's obligations in the face of a public health emergency," but that it also "supports a physician's right to choose which patients to accept into their practice" on a regular basis.²

The Emergency Medical Treatment And Labor Act of 1986 requires that hospital emergency departments cannot refuse care to patients in emergency situations, even if they are unable to pay for care.³ Outside of emergencies, however, doctors (especially those in private practice), are not bound by this law and have discretion to decide whom they will and will not accept as patients. Under U.S. law, one legitimate reason for doctors to turn away nonemergency patients is a patient's lack of insurance or inability to pay for the services.⁴

For Dr. S and many physicians who refuse to treat certain patients, this decision is made because they receive less compensation from Medicare and Medicaid than they do from private insurance companies. In 2014, CNNMoney reported that, on average, Medicare pays doctors about 80 percent of what private insurers do for identical procedures.⁵ Hood notes that in the United States there are groups who refuse to treat uninsured patients because they lose money when they treat these patients. She writes: "It is well documented that individual physicians and group practices refuse to treat patients

² Ibid.

³ "Emergency Medical Treatment And Labor Act (EMTALA)," American College of Emergency Physicians, News Room, available at <http://newsroom.acep.org/2009-01-04-emtala-fact-sheet>.

⁴ Hood, "Can a Physician Refuse to Help a Patient?" 368.

⁵ Tami Luhby, "Medicare vs. Private Insurance: Which Costs Less,"

CNNMoney (April 2014), available at <https://money.cnn.com/2014/04/21/news/economy/medicare-doctors/>.

covered by Medicaid, a state government program for the poor, because the payment for physician services is lower than their administrative costs.”⁶

Hood asserts that this refusal to treat is often associated with the inaccurate assumption that if the patient truly needs care, he will be treated “by someone, somewhere, in an emergency room, a free clinic, some other doctor’s office or hospital.”⁷ She maintains that, in the United States, medicine is not recognized as a “moral enterprise,” and thus “any legal obligations reflect a contractual model.”⁸ Thus, there are no legal implications if doctors refuse nonemergency patients as long as the patient is not refused after previously being accepted by the doctor in a contractual agreement or because of disability, “race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or any other basis that would constitute invidious discrimination.”⁹

In Hood’s view, U.S. law does not place sufficient restrictions on doctors’ ability to turn away patients. She asserts that medicine should be recognized as a moral enterprise and claims that economic reasons for turning away patients are unacceptable in the healthcare industry. To explain what she means by moral enterprise, Hood quotes the American Board of Internal Medicine’s Physician Charter, which states that “market forces, societal pressures, and administrative exigencies must not compromise” the principle of altruism that is critical to the physician–patient relationship.¹⁰ Doctors should, in Hood’s view, always uphold this principle of altruism, even when it may be economically disadvantageous. In regard to refusal of care, she states, “[I]f a patient cannot pay, does not follow the care plan, takes too much time, etc., there is no ethical justification for refusing to help.”¹¹

⁶ Hood, “Can a Physician Refuse to Help a Patient?” 368.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 369.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 370. Hood does note that there are times when it is ethical for a

Hood understands the moral nature of medicine to include the obligation of doctors to care for even difficult patients who cannot pay.

Because there are many disparate situations in which a physician has discretion regarding whom he will accept into his practice, doctors must ask themselves: What does it mean to be called to be a physician, and what are the moral duties associated with responding to that call? Are doctors called to sacrifice their own economic good for the good of those persons who need their help?

In “Principles of Medical Ethics,” the AMA outlines the responsibilities that health professionals have to those who cannot afford full access to care. The AMA states, “[A]s professionals, physicians individually and collectively have an ethical responsibility to ensure that all persons have access to needed care regardless of their economic means.”¹² The AMA encourages doctors to do their best to treat patients in need through “pro bono care in their office or through freestanding facilities or government programs that provide health care for the poor, or, when permissible, waiving insurance copayments in individual cases of hardship.”¹³ Though the AMA encourages doctors to help patients who cannot afford services, it does not advocate that doctors be legally required to care for any and all patients in need. Even though the AMA maintains that physicians’ special training means they have a unique responsibility to serve others, it does not regard medicine as a distinctly moral enterprise in the same way Hood does.

In his essay “The Roots of Honour,” John Ruskin examines the duties of soldiers, pastors, lawyers, physicians, and merchants in a

doctor to refuse care such as when he does not have sufficient expertise for the care or simply has too many patients and cannot take on more.

¹² American Medical Association, “Ethics of Financing & Delivery of Health Care,” in *Code of Medical Ethics*, 11.1.4, available at <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/ethics/code-medical-ethics-financing-and-delivery-health-care>.

¹³ *Ibid.*

nation. He refers to these five callings as the “intellectual professions.” In regard to men in these callings, he writes, “[F]or, truly, the man who does not know when to die, does not know how to live.”¹⁴ Ruskin’s view is that men who are in professions “relating to the daily necessities of life” will likely face situations in which their professional duties require them to act in ways contrary to their natural concern for personal gain and well-being.¹⁵ At a certain crossroads, men in these professions will be called to give even their lives. For example, Ruskin notes that soldiers should die “rather than leave [their] post in battle,” and physicians should die “rather than leave [their] post in plague.”¹⁶ In such situations, doctors should know that they are called to sacrifice themselves for the good of others.

Ruskin also discusses the issue of monetary compensation for pastors and physicians. He states, “[I]he stipend is a due and necessary adjunct, but not the object, of his life, if he be a true clergyman, anymore than his fee is the object of the life of a true physician.”¹⁷ This argument makes sense in light of the physician’s “due occasion” of death. While Ruskin recognizes that compensation is good and necessary, he also argues that monetary compensation cannot be the primary reason why men become doctors or care for their patients. Doctors should have a sense of duty that goes beyond financial motivations, because their work is critical to the dignity of human life. In a way, Ruskin seems to believe, like Hood, that physicians are engaged in a moral enterprise because their profession obliges them in ways that go beyond normal contractual agreements. However, unlike Hood, he does not assert that doctors should always be required to treat patients who cannot pay for care.

¹⁴ John Ruskin, “The Roots of Honour” in *Unto This Last* (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1873), 38.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

In its document *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Services*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) addresses many questions regarding Catholic healthcare. In the current edition of the directives, the USCCB first reviews the mission of Catholic healthcare, stating:

Catholic health care ministry is rooted in a commitment to promote and defend human dignity; this is the foundation of its concern to respect the sacredness of every human life from the moment of conception until death. The first right of the human person, the right to life, entails a right to the means for the proper development of life, such as adequate health care.¹⁸

The USCCB clearly states that the role of Catholic healthcare professionals should not be taken lightly. Doctors and nurses exist to protect persons and their inherent dignity; thus, as Ruskin claims, these professionals should not be motivated primarily by economic concerns. In the heart of every doctor should be a deep respect for the importance of his work precisely because it is in service to the human person.

Beyond the primary responsibility of Catholic healthcare – the care for the human person – the directives specifically address the issue of healthcare for the uninsured or underinsured. On this point the USCCB states that, as Catholics, we are called to “work to ensure that our country’s health care delivery system provides adequate health care for the poor.”¹⁹ Further, it says, “Catholic health care should distinguish itself by service to and advocacy for those people whose social condition puts them at the margins of our society and makes

¹⁸ Committee on Doctrine of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* (Washington DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018), 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

them particularly vulnerable to discrimination.”²⁰ While the USCCB stresses the important concern that Catholic professionals should have in their approach to these groups, it does not lay out specific rules or obligations that obtain in such situations.

The USCCB does explain that Catholic physicians have a responsibility to integrate their work and faith. This integration should not only inform whom they treat and the respect with which they should approach their patients, but it also calls them to spiritualize the work they do. In his essay “Reflection: Formation of a Catholic Physician,” James McTavish, a former plastic surgeon and now priest, describes the spiritualization of the work of medical professionals. He recalls a lesson from the gospel of Matthew: “A Catholic doctor is further assisted in living his/her faith in the hospital when he/she comes to the awareness . . . [that Christ] is also present in the patient because, as Christ states, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’”²¹ McTavish argues that Catholic physicians should view their work as something that can be united to their pursuit of Christ. He quotes from *Gaudium et spes*: “[T]he split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age.”²² For McTavish, the role of Catholic physicians is always a moral one because faith life and professional life should be constantly integrated. Doctors’ faith should inform how they treat the patients they encounter. Even so, McTavish does not comment that this integration specifically means doctors must treat any and all patients in need of care.

In light of these considerations, Hood’s claim that there is never an ethical justification for refusing care based on economic reasons seems too strong. Physicians have a great responsibility to others, but

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ James McTavish, “Formation of a Catholic Physician,” *The Linacre Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (February 2015): 13.

²² Ibid.

it does not mean they have no right to turn patients away for financial reasons. They should avoid the pitfall Hood raises of assuming that others will care for patients they cannot serve, and they should give back through pro bono work and other means that are possible in their personal circumstances. As Catholic doctors determine whom they will treat, they should reflect on their professional call as a vocation. They must live out their Catholic faith in their professional lives, and as doctors they have an especially poignant calling because it is one that deals directly with the very lives of human persons. In a special way, doctors should strive above all to protect and promote human dignity to the best of their ability, recognizing that they are a part of one community with their patients. The great responsibility physicians have to treat each person as a member of the body of Christ cannot be taken lightly.

Even considering the great implications of their work, however, there will be times when doctors are unable to treat all patients, including, sometimes, ones who are unable to pay for care. For example, doctors may have another vocational responsibility that takes precedence – such as parental duties. In order to provide for their families, most doctors need to work for compensation. In *Laborem exercens*, Pope John Paul II writes that work for pay is good and necessary, especially as supportive of family life. He says in defense of work, “[I]n a way, work is a condition for making it possible to found a family, since the family requires the means of subsistence which man normally gains through work.”²³ Doctors must also consider whether taking on new patients will prevent them from offering adequate time and attention to their already existing patients. These and other examples show that a doctor’s decision to turn away uninsured patients may be necessary and justifiable in certain circumstances. And so I return to the example I began this paper with, and I conclude that,

²³ *Laborem exercens*, 13.

absent further details, calling Dr. S's actions "uncompassionate" is not necessarily warranted and possibly unjust.

As outlined by the USCCB, Catholic healthcare professionals have a great responsibility to promote human dignity. This responsibility means that Catholic doctors examine their motivations when making decisions about patients and should strive to provide excellent ethical care for each patient they see. They can, however, choose not to accept into their practice patients who are uninsured or cannot pay. They should not turn away patients because they are solely motivated by monetary gain, and they should seek wise advisors – both economic and spiritual – for counsel as they make business decisions. And, at the extreme, they should be mindful of the very high bar that Ruskin sets: If it should come to it, Catholic doctors should strive to know and sacrifice themselves at their "due occasion of death."²⁴

²⁴ Ruskin, "The Roots of Honour," 38.

Rules and Flourishing: A Connection between Catholicism and Engineering

*Natalie Moulton**

I

SCIENCE AND CATHOLICISM are often presented as opposed to one another. For those who think this way, science is a modern, truth-seeking enterprise, while religion includes archaic practices and superstitious storytelling that dubs the unexplainable “miraculous.” The Catholic Church and her “rules” are thought to hinder or otherwise conflict with the advances offered by technology. Catholicism affirms that birth control is harmful, that abortion does not help women, and that love requires real sacrifice. It is a countercultural idea, founded in real truth, that what the Church teaches on these matters, rather than limiting people, actually enables them to flourish.¹

In our society, it can sometimes be a challenge to convey the idea that rules or norms promote flourishing. In this paper I will draw parallels between physical and moral laws, demonstrating how rules in both engineering² and the social context enable flourishing. Since

* Natalie Moulton is a 2019 graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where she majored in mechanical engineering. She is currently living in North Carolina and working as an engineer in the biotech/pharmaceutical industry.

¹ For the purposes of this paper, to flourish means “to grow luxuriously; thrive; to achieve success: prosper,” as found in *Merriam Webster’s Deluxe Dictionary, Tenth Collegiate Edition* (Pleasantville, NY: Merriam-Webster, 1998).

² This paper will investigate one specific branch of science rather than looking at all of science and technology. Similar analyses could be done in other branches.

many of the examples use principles of design engineering, I will explain this concept in order to provide a basis for understanding the examples. These engineering examples will then be compared to tenets of the Catholic faith to understand their connection.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a framework for discussing problems that can be understood by people who are trained in engineering or the sciences and by those who are trained in Catholic moral theology. I will attempt to cross a barrier that often divides people who think differently. Moral theologians may struggle to see how their work can possibly be connected to that of engineers or scientists. They may feel incapable of evangelizing among scientists and engineers who believe that Catholicism thwarts progress by means of rules and other moral principles. Likewise, those who think Catholicism is too restrictive may not realize that they themselves follow and benefit from a similar framework of rule-based constraints in their own studies or professional lives. However, engineers who are also practicing Catholics may realize that these two things are closer than initially assumed.

II

Background. Before discussing examples that show how both physical and moral laws facilitate flourishing, it will be helpful to consider an explanation for developing constraints in engineering, specifically as they pertain to the product development process. Figure 1 below shows a visual representation of the product development process.

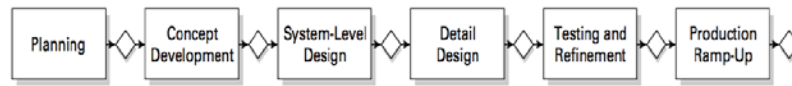


Fig. 1. Product development process flow chart.³

From the design perspective⁴ of the product development process, the first stage, planning, is when outputs are developed. The most relevant outputs are the project mission statement, key assumptions, and constraints. Once these are established, the design team begins to outline the details in the concept development phase. This step includes collecting customer needs and identifying and conforming to constraints that help guide the rest of the process.

In the world of engineering, constraints are positively reframed and developed into customer needs and specifications.⁵ For example, a constraint for a coffee table may be “the product cannot be too heavy to lift,” while the customer need would be “product must be reasonable for an average person to lift unassisted.” This reframing is often helpful for pitching product designs because it provides a positive goal to strive for, rather than something to avoid. Part of the concept development phase is also prioritizing the needs of the

³ Karl T. Ulrich, and Steven D. Eppinger, *Product Design and Development* (Boston: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2012), 14.

⁴ Different aspects of the project (marketing, design, manufacturing, and so on) have various focuses at each of these stages. However, for the purposes of this argument, design will be the sole concern.

⁵ Customer needs are qualitative statements about how the product should be, while product specifications are quantitative measures that can be used to measure the success of the product (or current prototype) against the “goal product.” For example, a customer need could be “handle must be easy to turn,” while a product specification would be “handle requires less than X Newton meters of torque to turn.” Product specifications can also be informed by governing bodies (for example, OSHA says that an employee should not be lifting more than fifteen pounds unassisted regularly).

customer. These needs can be grouped into sets that can be ranked in terms of relative importance based on certain constraints. In the coffee table example, it is more important for the chosen material and design to be able to support x amount of weight (coffee table must support coffee mugs and feet while remaining stable), rather than be offered in y number of colors (coffee table must be aesthetically appealing to a range of customers). Constraints help to keep projects on schedule, on budget, and on track to meet the needs of the customer. They help determine what may be included or excluded among the specifications of the project and how to prioritize the needs of the customer.

In Catholic moral theology, the theme of rules or laws⁶ enabling true freedom is well developed. Often, people think of rules as constraints that limit their ability to act as they please and to be self-determining. However, there are many cases that reveal that this perception is in fact false, and that the opposite is true. While moral norms delimit what people can and cannot do, they also reveal a better way to live – one in which flourishing is much more likely, and where faithful adherence to rules increases a person’s virtue. If a person fails to see why lying is wrong, for example, he fails to understand the importance of building up the virtue of honesty. Likewise, he may fail to see how certain actions conflict with the virtues. For example, a person may fail to see how a seemingly small and harmless white lie erodes our commitment to truth and detracts from the virtue of honesty.

⁶ Here, “rules” is a term to capture all the norms of Catholic teaching derived from the Ten Commandments and Christ’s teachings in the New Testament, as well as guidelines set forth in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, among other sources.

III

Rejection. To develop a fuller understanding of how rules and constraints enable flourishing, I will first examine what happens when rules and constraints are rejected. In an engineering and design context, the Juicero press – a Silicon Valley engineering flop – is a useful example. The Juicero was a countertop cold-press juicer that required juice packs with produce that were sold on a subscription basis by the company. Bloomberg even posted a video⁷ exposing the farce that was the Juicero press – showing that you didn’t need a \$700 machine to squeeze juice packets into a glass. The development of this product took over two years, which gives rise to the question: Where did they go wrong?

The Juicero team proved that “unconstrained development is lethal.”⁸ The marketing idea behind the product was to appeal to the wave of health-focused consumers with this new product that would be the “Keurig for juice.”⁹ Without the challenge of constraints and with the backing of big name investors, the developers of Juicero designed and constructed an extraordinarily complex system to squeeze open a packet of juice. They came up with complex injection molded parts,¹⁰ dozens of components, and a custom power supply.

⁷ Ellen Huet and Olivia Zaleski. “Silicon Valley’s \$400 Juicer May Be Feeling the Squeeze” (April 2017), available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-04-19/silicon-valley-s-400-juicer-may-be-feeling-the-squeeze>.

⁸ Ben Einstein, “Here’s Why Juicero’s Press Is So Expensive” (April 2017), available at <https://blog.bolt.io/heres-why-juicero-s-press-is-so-expensive-6add74594e50>.

⁹ Juicero was given this nickname in tech blogs.

¹⁰ While injection molded parts can be used in normal production settings, they are designed carefully to account for production time and quality consistency. For example, there are guidelines for the wall thickness of injection molded parts to allow for consistent flow while filling the mold, and the introduction of minimal stresses during cooling. There are also

More parts means more money, testing (more time and money), and greater potential for error during production. While most custom components are more expensive than their similar, shelf-stocked counterparts, a custom motor is exceptionally problematic: Any power supply has to be tested and verified according to strict standards before being introduced in a consumer setting. This additional testing takes time and money, which adds further risk if your custom supply fails. All of these major engineering mishaps occurred during the production of the Juicero press; however, the Juicero engineers failed in even more ways to work under a framework of constraint.

In addition to the actual design, their process was also flawed. While the development path showed similarities to other consumer products, it lacked one important thing – feedback.¹¹ Juicero developed excessive add-ons¹² to their product, including “relationships with farmers, co-packing/food-processing facilities, complex custom packaging, beautifully designed mobile/web applications, and a subscription delivery service. But they did all this work without the basic proof that this business made sense to consumers.”¹³ Millions of dollars were raised without shipping even one unit for investors to test themselves in order to provide feedback. With similar products, companies typically do market research and customer-centered design¹⁴ to ensure that they are meeting customers’

important guidelines for the design of the part itself to ensure that the supports needed (if any) in the mold are reasonable.

¹¹ Most products go through a loop of product development that includes development, small scale production, testing, reflection (on repeat) until it is determined that the product aligns with the needs of the customer and the goals of the project.

¹² All of these “add-ons” would typically be done after proving the concept and developing a customer base, and perhaps even held back until the second version of the product.

¹³ Einstein, “Here’s Why Juicero’s Press Is So Expensive.”

¹⁴ A common term in design that refers to the process of centering the design process around customers. This often involves engaging customers

needs and prioritizing the right things. This research helps teams decide which features to include and which to exclude, if they must eliminate some due to budget or time constraints. It is a low-cost way to optimize the scope of the project early in the process before spending a lot of time and money on development. However, without such constraints, there is little motivation to seek this feedback early in the process, if ever at all.

While Juicero failed both as a product and as a process, it truly flopped as a business venture. Just after the news broke that Juicero's packets could be used relatively easily by squeezing them with two hands, the company lost a \$55 million deal with investors and dropped the unit price from \$700 to \$400. With manufacturing costs at \$750 per unit, Juicero was losing about \$4 million every month. The board replaced the man who started it all, Doug Evans, with a former Coca-Cola president in an attempt to salvage the company. However, even the new head of the company was unable to save Juicero, and the company announced that it would shut down operations on September 1, 2018, after four years of struggling to be profitable.¹⁵

Juicero is a good example of the disastrous effects of neglecting rules in engineering, and something analogous is found in C. S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce*.¹⁶ This book is meant to make the reader think about heaven and hell, and what a person does to arrive in either state, as well as to contemplate the purpose of purgatory. Lewis offers stories of

regularly, at various stages of prototyping, to interface with the product and provide feedback. The team can also observe customers interacting with the product in order to understand better the latent needs (needs that are not stated outright but may be subconscious and unrecognized even by the user) of customers.

¹⁵ Olivia Zaleski, Ellen Huet, and Brad Stone, "Inside Juicero's Demise, From Prized Startup to Fire Sale" (September 2017), available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-09-08/inside-juicero-s-demise-from-prized-startup-to-fire-sale>.

¹⁶ C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (London: HarperCollins, 2002).

individual characters, the “ghost people,”¹⁷ and their vices. They are confronted with opportunities to live in the way of the so-called grey town.¹⁸ This includes being challenged by people (the “bright,” “solid” people¹⁹) that were part of their lives who have passed through the grey town, often with whom they struggled to be in communion while they were alive. The bright people had come back to meet the ghosts and help them along in their journey.

In the majority of cases in the book, the ghost person pushes back on the “rules” of the grey town and prefers to get back on the bus to hell. To stay in the grey town and move “further up and in,”²⁰ they must overcome whatever faults in themselves made their encounters with the bright person (or idea) a challenge. For example, the “big ghost” wants “his rights,” and his obsession with rights is the reason he gets back on the bus. For him to stay in the grey town, he would have to accept that people do not always get the things they believe they deserve. Throughout the book, it becomes clear that the people choosing to return to the bus are choosing hell. They are choosing to pass up the opportunity to better themselves on the path to heaven and live a life of glory in God.

In another case, a woman named Pam is greeted by her brother, Reginald. When Pam arrives in the grey town, Reginald explains that Michael, Pam’s son, is “further up and further in,” and that she could reach him by desiring God. Pam is laser focused on her dead son and will do whatever it takes to get to him. However, she only wants to use

¹⁷ These characters are referred to as the “ghosts” because they are still in an in between phase where they are not “solid” in their path to heaven.

¹⁸ The grey town will come to represent purgatory, and the place where people will determine their path. Should they choose to conform to the rules of the grey town, they will move closer to heaven, and in contrast move closer to hell if they want to reject the rules.

¹⁹ The bright/solid people are those who have “become real” through their purification in purgatory and are now the souls who are attempting to help those in the grey town themselves to approach heaven and reality.

²⁰ “Further up and further in” refers to approaching heaven.

God as a means to reaching her son. Reginald tries to help her see that she needs to want God for his own sake, not for the sake of anything that can be acquired through him. But Pam fails to see how her selfish love of Michael and his memory has completely blinded her; “Michael is mine,” she claims. Her obsession with Michael obstructs her ability to love God above all things, barring her from working on herself and staying in the grey town. Instead, she bows to her obsession with her son and gets back on the bus.

In both these examples, those who operated outside of important constraints or rules found failure. In the design case, Juicero failed to develop constraints that could have led to a successful product. Instead, they indulged in excess and continued to add complexity without adding value, resulting in a misguided product and ultimate failure of the company. Similarly, the people in *The Great Divorce* who get back on the bus are effectively choosing to live according to their own norms and standards, which is a life devoid of God. It is clear that by rejecting the requirements and constraints of the grey town, they are turning down the opportunity to better themselves and make themselves worthy of the kingdom of God. In both cases, the parties under consideration have neglected constraints that would have allowed them to flourish.

IV

Embrace. While the examples above show how neglecting rule-based constraints detracts from flourishing, a counterexample is also helpful. Traffic laws, while limiting, help to organize roadways safely and efficiently, helping communities to thrive as people not only avoid accidents but also spend less time in traffic en route to work, school, errands, and so on. Everyone has stopped at a stoplight, gone through an intersection, and walked through a crosswalk. All these activities are governed by rules or laws – for drivers and pedestrians alike. While these inhibit one’s freedom to cross the road as one pleases, or speed

through a light, they obviously also promote the safety of individuals and the overall flourishing of the community. They encourage a more efficient transportation system that requires people to consider “the other” more often than they would otherwise. For example, when a driver sees an upcoming crosswalk, he is required to consider the fact that there may be pedestrians who need to cross the street. This encourages the driver to be more aware of his surroundings in that moment, but also serves as a reminder in other areas.

In his book *Love and Responsibility*, Karol Wojtyła reminds readers to think of the other, hence the “responsibility”²¹ in the work’s title. Wojtyła focuses on the themes of chastity, love, and marriage, and in so doing makes it clear that there are certain rules a person must subject himself to in order to be rewarded with the fullest gift that each of these offer. He explains,

Love consists of a commitment which limits one’s freedom – it is a giving of the self, and to give oneself means just that: to limit one’s freedom on behalf of another. Limitation of one’s freedom might seem to be something negative and unpleasant, but love makes it a positive, joyful and creative thing. . . . For love to attain its full personal value, and truly unite a man and a woman, it must be firmly based on the affirmation of the value of the person.²²

The full gift of marriage is predicated on the full gift of self in a proper context, one that is based on the good of the person. This idea is countercultural, and poses additional “restrictions” in relationships. Affirming the good of the other person is incompatible with activities that reduce the other to an object of use. Many common practices today, however, such as artificial birth control, premarital relations, and abortion, fall into that category. Affirming the good of the other means

²¹ Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993).

²² *Ibid.*, 135, 145.

thoughtfully considering the long-term good of that person, rather than the short-term enjoyment of both parties, as the latter often motivates actions in which someone is treated as a means to another's personal ends. For example, a couple may use artificial birth control to delay having children, but their means of doing so are disordered. When they choose to prevent the conception of new life, they are often opting for short-term pleasure without regard for long-term consequences. When they fail to embrace their actions as an open expression of love and view it exclusively as a means to the end of pleasure, they have also used one another as a means to that end. In so doing they deliberately exclude God from the conversation, for instead of being cocreators with God, they make themselves into gods who decide when and when not to create. This has harmful consequences for all involved, including negative effects on the "general well-being" of the women who take it.²³ The use of birth control can even negatively affect partner choice, subsequent relationship satisfaction, and the immune health of the pair's offspring.²⁴ As explained in the encyclical *Humane vitae*,

A man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his

²³ Niklas Zethraeus, Anna Dreber, Eva Ranehill, Liselott Blomberg, Fernand Labrie, Bo von Schoultz, Magnus Johannesson, and Angelica Hirschberg, "A first-choice combined oral contraceptive influences general well-being in healthy women: a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial" (May 2017), available at [https://www.fertstert.org/article/S0015-0282\(17\)30247-9/fulltext](https://www.fertstert.org/article/S0015-0282(17)30247-9/fulltext).

²⁴ Sheer Birnbaum, Tsachi Ein-Dor, and Gurit Birnbaum, "Can Contraceptive Pill Affect Future Offspring's Health? The Implications of Using Hormonal Birth Control for Human Evolution" (November 2016), available at <https://www.idc.ac.il/he/schools/psychology/research/Documents/MSSheerContraceptiveHealthEvoPsyFin.pdf>.

own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection.²⁵

The toll taken in such a relationship is grave and may be irreparable.

Alternatively, a couple engaging in Natural Family Planning has the same desire to delay the expansion of their family but does so in a way that still honors both their marital bond and their fundamental relationship to God. This method is a way for them to become cocreators and cooperate with God's plan and design for human love, rather than attempt to take control of it. They work together to monitor the possibility of pregnancy and abstain at certain times to achieve this goal. However, because they are abstaining rather than using contraceptives, they are still affirming the good in the other by not using them as a means. Embracing the "limitations" of a relationship that is based on the affirmation of the good of the person ultimately allows a couple to thrive as spouses and parents.

The details of these examples are different, but in important ways the outcomes are not. If people fail to follow traffic laws, that failure will affect the safety of the community because both drivers and pedestrians will be harmed. Similarly, there is harm done to society when people fail to follow the moral laws governing family life, which are based on the affirmation of the good of the person. When people do not follow these rules, marriages and families suffer. The collapse of families necessarily impacts the community as a whole, with serious consequences for society in general. Research sponsored by the Family Research Council has shown that the decline in marriage is correlated with a negative impact on the economy, education, and even crime.²⁶ While traffic laws may have a more immediate impact on a community,

²⁵ *Humanae vitae*, 17.

²⁶ Pat Fagan, "Society Cannot Escape Negative Outcomes of Marriage's Decline" (April 2015), available at <https://www.frc.org/op-eds/society-cannot-escape-negative-outcomes-of-marriages-decline>.

the moral law governing family life has just as much of an impact on how people live and act in a society.

V

Rules and Conscience. However, sometimes there is not always a clear set of rules to follow. To further explore the relationship between rules and flourishing, it is important to understand how a conscience must be formed in light of existing rules when there is a lack of clear guidelines. In 2014, General Motors issued a recall for their vehicles that used a faulty ignition switch. A GM engineer approved a new ignition switch design in 2002, despite the fact that the design did not meet the minimum torque specifications for rotating the key. This low torque requirement allowed the car to stall, even on highways, when the key could easily rotate to the off position.²⁷ The new design had already necessitated the redevelopment of the electrical system incorporating the ignition switch. In an effort to avoid another redesign, the switch was approved, despite cautions from suppliers and problems that were apparent during testing. Despite the fact that a “clear safety consequence of the stall-outs was that they prevented the front-seat airbags from deploying in a collision,” the problem was categorized as one of “customer convenience” rather than safety, and it was deemed to be a collection of isolated incidents rather than a systemic problem.

Four years later, the same engineer authorized a new part that would fix the defect without changing the part number so as not to raise any red flags. After the deaths of two teenagers in 2007, an investigation involving the airbags of the vehicle was started. Months later, the company had received 1,371 claims, fifty-two of which the

²⁷ Art Pine, “The Switch from Hell” (November 2014), available at <http://www.asee-prism.org/the-switch-from-hell-nov/>.

company deemed eligible for compensation,²⁸ twenty-seven of which were for wrongful deaths.

The great problem of the GM ignition switch is that the engineers decided that simplifying their own lives was more important than the potential lives of their customers. They ignored the fact that their design posed a threat to human life and instead focused on how the redesign to fix the problem would negatively impact their profit.

While moral reasoning needs to be actively incorporated in engineering practices, it also needs to be formed more fundamentally in each person. A classic case is St. Augustine, who also struggled in the development of his conscience, especially in relation to rules. He focused entirely on his own pleasure when he was young, rather than on his salvation. In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine recounts a time when he and some friends “carried off a huge load of pears, not to eat . . . but to dump out to the hogs, after barely tasting some of them. . . . Doing this pleased [them] all the more because it was forbidden.”²⁹ Eventually, he learned to discipline himself and follow the Lord’s will, rather than his own. After his conversion, he turned himself over to God,

But thou, O Lord, art good and merciful, and thy right hand didst reach into the depth of my death and didst empty out the abyss of corruption from the bottom of my heart. . . . And it was now a joy to put away what I formerly feared to lose. For thou didst cast them away from me, O true and highest Sweetness. Thou didst cast them away, and in their place thou didst enter in thyself – sweeter than all pleasure, though not to flesh and blood; brighter than all light, but more veiled than all mystery; more exalted than all honor, though not to them that are exalted in their own eyes. Now was my soul free from the gnawing cares of seeking and

²⁸ Other claims still being evaluated.

²⁹ Augustine, *Saint Augustine’s Confessions*, trans. William Watts (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 2:4.

getting, of wallowing in the mire and scratching the itch of lust.³⁰

Through this, Augustine learned how his life benefited from discipline and turning to God. This skill and practice helped him to become the saint that we know today. We can learn from his example to understand that discipline and being conscious of and following God's will in our lives, even when that means we must be constrained in certain ways, will ultimately make us happier.

As the examples detailed in this essay illustrate, living well is not simply following a list of rules. Living well involves using one's well-developed judgment to make decisions. In the case of GM, there was no established rule forbidding the approval of a different ignition switch design, but it quickly became clear that the priorities that drove that decision were misguided. Engineers focused on expediency and profit rather than the well-being of customers. In the subsequent cover-up, GM should have known, based on previous cases, that the way they handled the situation would reflect very poorly on them as an organization.

St. Augustine formed his conscience to be able to make good decisions even in situations where explicit rules do not exist. In the same way in modern life, people must work to form themselves so that they can use existing rules and extrapolate to make judgments and choices in unique situations for which there may not be clearly established norms or standards.

VI

Conclusion. Through these various examples showing how constraints are useful in engineering and personal decision-making, it should be clear how they can be seen in parallel with one another, rather than in tension. By providing a basis for thinking about

³⁰ Ibid. 9:1.

problems of engineering and Catholic moral theology side-by-side, I hope to have laid a better framework for discussion and understanding of the significance of rules and laws for the successful engagement of human freedom.

Millennial Burnout and What Needs to Change: How Leisure and Receptivity Dignify Work

*Anne LoCoco**

EVERY GENERATION EXHIBITS distinctive traits because of various social, political, and economic influences. The millennial generation (people born between 1981 and 1996¹) is distinct not only in its cultural trends, but also in its relationship to work, which continues to be associated with new social problems. This generation differs from its predecessors, especially the Baby Boomer generation, particularly in levels of reported work “burnout.” A recent study found that 28 percent of the millennial generation claimed feeling frequent or constant burnout at work, compared with 21 percent of individuals in older generations.² Burnout in the workplace is characterized by prolonged stress that entails emotional or physical exhaustion, a sense of ineffectiveness, and feelings of lost personal identity. Because millennials will make up 75 percent of the workforce by 2030, understanding the causes of this problem and ways to remedy

* Anne LoCoco is a 2019 graduate of the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, where she majored in business and Catholic studies. She is currently working at a Catholic high school as the Associate Director for Admission. She is in the process of applying to the religious order of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist and plans to enter the order within the next year.

¹ Michael Dimock, “Millennials,” *Pew Research Center*, 17 January 2019, available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>.

² Ryan Pendell, “Millennials Are Burning Out,” *Gallup*, 19 July 2018, <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/237377/millennials-burning.aspx>.

it is important, for the sake of creating both an engaged workforce and a society with flourishing citizens.³

Though the problem of burnout likely has many causes, I argue that the lack of millennial engagement can be primarily attributed to the absence of the experience of leisure. In order to avoid work exhaustion, people must understand and experience true leisure as the foundation of work. Furthermore, within the workplace, failure to integrate the active and receptive nature of work leads to dissatisfaction. The receptive nature of work is described in Genesis, and understanding it is essential to an appreciation of the dignity of work.

In his encyclical *Laborem exercens*, St. John Paul II illustrates how work is essential to human nature and, therefore, must be viewed as more than mindless activity. Though work allows man to transform nature to fit his own needs, the pope explains that work is dignified because it allows man to “achieve fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, ‘become more a human being.’”⁴ Millennials struggle to embrace that truth, however, due to lack of leisure, resulting in exhaustion and a lack of fulfillment in the workplace. The absence of true leisure, coupled with a failure to grasp the receptive nature of work, undermines an appreciation of the dignity of work and in turn gives rise to millennial burnout.

Millennial Burnout: What It Is and Why It Matters

In 2012, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation stated that millennials are likely the most studied generation in history, especially regarding their relationship to the workplace.⁵ Though every

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Laborem exercens*, 9.

⁵ U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, “The Millennial Generation Research Review” (2012), available at <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/reports/millennial-generation->

generation has struggled to understand the role of work in society, it is clear that millennials are struggling to stay motivated in their work. In a study of over 7,500 full-time U.S. employees, 28 percent of millennials claimed to feel frequently or constantly burned out at work (compared with 21 percent of workers in the past generations), and 45 percent stated that they sometimes feel burned out at work.⁶ Burned out employees are nearly three times more likely to leave their current employer, making this generation more prone to job-switching than any other generation.⁷ Furthermore, research shows that this is the least “engaged” generation in the workforce, with 55 percent of millennials not engaged at work.⁸ Employees who are not engaged at work experience feelings that their tasks seem to have a small or seemingly nonexistent impact on the company, their personal lives, or society in general. This lack of engagement may look like boredom, exhaustion, or simple disconnection, yet it has profound impacts on companies and individuals.

Millennial burnout is more than just a mere inconvenience. It profoundly affects individuals at a deep, personal level, but also has detrimental impacts on workplace productivity. Some of its effects include the following: employees are 63 percent more likely to take a sick day, 2.6 times as likely to be actively seeking a different job, and typically have 13 percent lower reported confidence in their performance.⁹ In order for organizations properly to take care of their employees as individual persons, as well as to increase the productivity of their workplace, this problem of burnout must be addressed.

research-review.

⁶ Ryan Pendell, “Millennials Are Burning Out,” *Gallup*, 19 July 2018, available at <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/237377/millennials-burning.aspx>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

The Necessity of Leisure

Millennial burnout can be attributed to the constant tension associated with viewing work exclusively as an activity, and not finding meaning in the mechanistic aspects of work. Having a view of the world as united and integrated, rather than as a set of fragmented parts working independently, is the necessary framework for a happy and satisfying life. To adopt this holistic view one must understand two distinct types of knowledge: *ratio* and *intellectus*.¹⁰ Ratio is simply the activity of learning facts and developing certain skills, and it can be achieved only if one has a strong work ethic. In contrast, *intellectus* is the received knowledge of faith and intuition. Not actively achieved the way *ratio* is, *intellectus* is found in and received through leisure. Ratio is for learning facts, while *intellectus* is necessary in order to grasp the bigger picture, so to speak. Take chemistry, for example: Memorizing facts about atoms is fruitful only if one understands how atoms bond and work together to make molecules. Ratio and *intellectus* are both necessary and complementary, and in order for millennials to view work holistically, it is necessary to reflect on leisure and how it promotes *intellectus*.

When millennials do not experience true leisure outside of work, they become members of the so-called proletariat, who struggle in the workplace and eventually burn out. As defined in Josef Pieper's *Leisure, The Basis of Culture*, the proletariat includes people who are confined to a life of work; they own nothing but their ability to work, and their whole life is entirely framed in terms of utility.¹¹ A main cause of being among the proletariat is one's succumbing to the economic coercion of a job. Rather than viewing a job based on the job's potential to better

¹⁰ Lee Trepanier, "Leisure, Philosophy, and Liberal Education in Josef Pieper's Thought," *Anamnesis*, 6 July 2012, available at <http://anamnesisjournal.com/2012/07/lee-trepanier-3/>.

¹¹ Josef Pieper, *Leisure, The Basis of Culture* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 57.

society, the personal fulfillment it brings, or the fruits of being disciplined in a profession, a job is seen purely a means to make money. Another cause is the corporate coercion associated with the expectation that employees work long hours. Arguably the most damaging cause is the lack of spiritual fulfillment that a person experiences and the disintegration of his work from the rest of his life. My suggestion here is that millennial burnout can be attributed to these very same factors identified by Pieper.

Pieper argues that experiencing activities of leisure will combat the proletariat lifestyle. As he describes it, at the heart of true leisure is festival, and at the heart of festival is communal worship.¹² Festivals and celebrations help us to see fully and to appreciate our nature and the goodness in the world. This perspective on goodness, achieved through worship and intellectus, brings a deeper understanding of the reality of work as that which allows a person to participate in the activity of creation. Pieper acknowledged that man is born to work, yet that is not all: our destiny is an endless day of celebration.¹³ And so it is no coincidence that, as religion becomes less important among millennials, their understanding of work suffers.¹⁴ However, though the fullest form of leisure can be found through worship, intellectus can be achieved through many other activities of leisure.

Ultimately, the intensity and hard work that the millennial generation demonstrates is not inherently disordered. These must be correctly placed in relation to leisure, however, in order to be sustainable. Furthermore, leisure cannot be approached as something to be experienced in order to make work more fruitful; instead, it must happen for its own sake. Though there may be a tendency for millennials to “use” leisure in order to be more productive at work, Pieper stresses

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 60.

¹⁴ Allison Pond, Gregory Smith, and Scott Clement, “Religion Among the Millennials,” *Pew Research Center*, 17 February 2010, available at <https://www.pewforum.org/2010/02/17/religion-among-the-millennials/>.

that the activities of intellectus “cannot be put at the disposal of useful ends.”¹⁵ For example, a young professional may try to integrate prayer in his daily routine, but if that prayer is only meant to help him relax so that he achieves “better numbers” at work, then the prayer loses its meaning. The prayer must be included in his daily schedule for its own sake. Yes, leisure helps to bring about a balanced, happy life; however, leisure loses its value if it is viewed through a utilitarian lens. When leisure is another item that needs to be checked off the to-do list, it brings only further exhaustion and frustration to an already crowded day.

The remedy for the proletariat lifestyle is what Pieper calls deproletarianization. Millennials will need to work toward deproletarianization, principally by introducing genuine activities of leisure into their lives, in order to combat work exhaustion. Pieper describes deproletarianization as adding space in a heart and time in a life, which can be accomplished only when one carves out time for leisure.¹⁶ With a deep sense of leisure one overcomes the spiritual impoverishment of the proletariat,¹⁷ and the activities of leisure are those involving intellectus. Because this knowledge is received, not achieved, through faith, contemplation, and grace, it brings about a well-ordered sense of humility. Silence and stillness, celebration and worship, and valuing leisure as nonutilitarian are all ways to discover true leisure. Work itself is not bad, but it must be complemented by activities of leisure.¹⁸

Receptivity in the Workplace

Along with the foundation of leisure outside of work, the millennial generation must understand that receptivity is as necessary

¹⁵ Pieper, *Leisure*, 59.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

in the workplace as action, in order to engage in good and fulfilling work. The two accounts of the creation story from Genesis help us to understand the active and receptive nature of work. Though seemingly similar, Adam in the first account of creation proves to be quite different from Adam in the second, and this difference illuminates the dual nature of work. As explained by Joseph B. Soloveitchik in his *The Lonely Man of Faith*, both Adams are willed by God to live out the vocation to be the father of mankind, yet they take different approaches to the task.¹⁹ Both Adams are intrigued by the mystery of being and strive to obtain a greater understanding of humanity, yet Adam I works toward understanding this concept by creating and being active. Adam II works to understand humanity by being receptive to God and faith and by cultivating a covenantal community. Their difference in method is not due to “diverse objectives but . . . diverse interpretive approaches to the one objective they both pursue.”²⁰ Adam I is utilitarian and technical, and he works to accomplish many goals, while Adam II shows interest in being responsive to the will of God and trying to understand nature and humanity as it is, without seeking to change it.

In the context of the millennial generation, we may apply this insight to conclude that there is disorder in work because individuals are too much like Adam I, the active worker, and not enough like Adam II, the receiver. An Adam I employee is overly concerned with productivity and efficiency. Furthermore, he will not try to understand why he works hard or the greater impact of his job.

When millennials take the Adam I approach to their work, burnout is a clear and inevitable result. Adam I aspires to be like God. He sees the act of God’s creation and wants to accomplish similar achievements. He uses his “inner charismatic endowment as a creative

¹⁹ Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

being” by acting and working.²¹ Adam I was called to fill and subdue the earth, and so his “motto is success, triumph” over the natural world.²² He uses the “functional and practical aspects of his intellect” and plays an active role in the working world.²³

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace explains in the document *Vocation of the Business Leader* (2012) that when a business is operating well, it creates three interdependent goods: good goods, good work, and good wealth.²⁴ Adam I’s vocation enables him to produce good goods and good wealth well. Good goods occur when an organization produces goods that are truly good and services that truly serve. A company creates good goods when it seeks innovative products and services for the world. Adam I is successful in creating good goods because he works hard and resourcefully in order to maximize production. His vocation also allows him to create good wealth. Good wealth is produced when an organization uses resources well, has socially responsible financial practices and investments, and creates sustainable wealth for society as a whole. Adam I’s practical and utilitarian vocation makes him well suited to produce good goods and good wealth.

Notwithstanding his gifts to produce good goods and good wealth, however, Adam I lacks the ability to produce good work. His connection with God is not as deep or personal as Adam II’s, and therefore he struggles to find meaning in his actions. This prevents Adam I from being able to produce good work, that is, work by which he develops his skills and talents. Thus, if one follows the model of Adam I, there is undue focus on productivity, to the exclusion of concern for the mission or meaning of one’s work. When a person lacks a sense of the deeper meaning of his work, the monotony and

²¹ Ibid., 12.

²² Ibid., 17.

²³ Ibid., 12.

²⁴ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Vocation of the Business Leader* (2012), 13-18.

daily grind that work necessarily entails become overwhelming and exhausting.

In order to bring meaning to Adam I's active nature of work, millennials must integrate the receptivity of Adam II. Adam II's vocation is to cultivate a garden and tend it, rather than to control it. Because he was "formed from the dust of the ground" and has the "knowledge of the humble origin of man," he views the world as a gift ready to receive.²⁵ Adam II's view of the world as a gift motivates him to focus more on the mission of his work, rather than on profit or efficiency. Adam II's vocation as a leader comes from his receptivity and his ability to "behold the world in its original dimension."²⁶ His strong mission-centered vision enables him to produce good work, something that Adam I lacks. Good work can be found where people are encouraged to develop their gifts and talents. Good work is produced when companies use mission-driven hiring practices and emphasize employee development and humane job design. Such aspects of work life, cultivated through the receptivity and care for the other found in Adam II, are necessary in order for millennials to find meaning in work. If millennials combine the efficiency and work ethic of Adam I with the relational and human component of Adam II, quite likely they will find work to be meaningful and fulfilling. Moreover, burnout and disengagement would occur less frequently.

The Dignity of Work

Owing to the loss of leisure and the lack of receptivity in the current working world, millennials tend to view work as undignified and meaningless, and in turn they lack motivation and have a tendency to burn out. St. John Paul II witnessed generational shifts in attitudes and experiences of work and understood the urgency of more effective teaching on the dignity of work. In *Laborem exercens*, for example, he

²⁵ Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, 35.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

wrote of the mundane, monotonous cycle of work familiar to many. Experienced this way, work fails to be a means for persons to express their humanity. More important, in order to cultivate a sense of work as more than a repetitive cycle of action, the intellectus knowledge that leisure brings is essential.

Leisure allows a person to understand both the objective and the subjective nature of work, and thereby reveals the proper dignity of work. As St. John Paul II describes, the objective dimension of work refers to the actual job performed.²⁷ It encompasses the external aspects such as the tools and machines associated with the job. By contrast, the subjective dimension of work refers to one's view of himself as worker, as the one performing the work. The pope writes, "[A]s a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process." In addition to the objective ends of the job performed, "these actions must all serve to realize his humanity, to fulfill the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity."²⁸ In this way, the pope urges us to understand that work is more than just a job. Indeed, work is a foundational part of human experience.

Absent a grasp of the subjective dimension of work, and thus the profound dignity of work, people will necessarily experience exhaustion, lack of motivation, and disengagement in their professional lives.

Conclusion

Work is dignified because it can have a profound impact on who an individual is as a person. One important factor contributing to millennial burnout, I argue, is a lack of space and leisure to contemplate the true role of work. Furthermore, there seems to be a clear connection between the decrease in religious affiliation among younger

²⁷ *Laborem exercens*, 5-6.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

people and the increase in workplace burnout.²⁹ Without religion and religious practices, they are no longer engaging in activities that have traditionally provided opportunities for contemplation, rest, and leisure. If cultivated, both leisure and an attitude of receptivity may go a long way toward changing how people perceive the role of work in their lives. More broadly, an understanding of the dignity of work will also help to promote human flourishing.

²⁹ Pond, Smith, and Clement, “Religion Among the Millennials.”

Globalization of the Workforce: A Catholic Perspective

*Grant Suddarth**

IN 2016 I FOUNDED a startup software company that specializes in developing tools for agricultural land appraisers. Starting a software business is a difficult endeavor because developing the product requires a large amount of up-front capital. Once the product is at a sellable point, however, the business can sell as much of the product as possible without worrying about supply issues. When my business idea originated, this model for software sounded great. I would scrape together \$50,000, the product would be ready in less than a year, and I would become a wealthy 20-year-old.

In reality, however, we are now going on three years since I started my business, two of which have been spent developing the software. I quickly realized that \$50,000 wasn't a reasonable estimate, as I have spent five times that and the software still is not entirely complete. Since founding the business, I have been in a position to make a lot of decisions, some with obvious moral implications and others that carry no moral weight. I have found my Catholic faith helpful as I deliberated, but one particular dilemma has kept me searching for answers.

When first starting my business, I had no background or connections in the software development industry. One of my mentors introduced me to a local developer named Sourabh. Sourabh became my connection to the software ecosystem, and we spent a year talking to potential customers and clarifying how our software would help the

* Grant Suddarth is a 2019 graduate of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, where he majored in agricultural economics and minored in entrepreneurship. He is currently working full-time on his agricultural appraisal software startup, Terrace Ag.

industry. The following year we were ready to begin developing the software, and we hired two local freelance developers. While Sourabh and the two local freelancers made a lot of progress, by the end of the second year the product still was not ready for the market. In addition, capital was running thin. This put me in a tough position, as I had to figure out how to continue development of the product while also cutting costs. I weighed several options and came to the conclusion that the most cost-effective solution was to let the local developers go and to find foreign freelancers with similar experience and skill sets who demand less pay. It is important to note that I was making this decision not for the sake of raising the profit margin, but simply for the sake of staying in business.

The Possibility of a Global Workforce

The largest global freelancing site, Upwork, was founded in 1999¹ with the goal of connecting freelancers and businesses in need of skilled laborers. Today, Upwork has 16 million freelancers² from around the globe with skills in 5,000 areas.³ Businesses around the world have noticed these talented freelancers, as evidenced by the billions of dollars annually spent hiring them on the platform.⁴

It may seem counterproductive or inefficient to look halfway across the world when there are skilled laborers right across town, but the skilled laborers across town are highly sought after and demand high wages. In the United States, there are currently over 200,000 software developer jobs that are unfilled, and the average annual salary

¹ Bill Murphy, "Upwork Just Made a Surprising Decision That Will Change Everything for Freelancers," available at www.inc.com/bill-murphy-jr/upwork-just-made-a-surprising-decision-that-will-change-everything-for-freelancers.html.

² Ibid.

³ Upwork, "Our Story," available at <https://www.upwork.com/about/>.

⁴ Murphy, "Upwork Just Made a Surprising Decision."

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for those jobs is over \$100,000.⁵ Freelancer rates are even higher since benefits and taxes are covered by the freelancer. The hourly rates for a freelance junior developer in the U.S. could be between \$95 and \$101. Latin American and Eastern European rates are only \$25 to \$35, and Asian rates are even lower at \$20 to \$30.⁶ I was fortunate enough to find local developers charging \$60 per hour, which was arguably the best deal in town. The price difference between local and foreign developers is significant, but the importance of proximity should not be underestimated when it comes to communication, working hours, and monitoring quality of labor. Local freelancers also share a native language and can meet in person to collaborate more easily. Every business must weigh the pros and cons of hiring foreign versus local labor because both are possible options today.

The Decision Made

I was weighing the option of hiring foreign developers in the summer of 2018. I appreciated all of the work the local developers had done for my business, but their rates were putting me in a tough position. After creating a position on Upwork and receiving applications from all over the world, Sourabh and I decided that our best applicant was a development agency in Russia with an hourly rate per developer of \$30. We ultimately decided to use this agency to hire two foreign freelancers, one in Russia and the other in Ukraine, and we let go of our local freelancers. This decision cut our weekly expenses in half, helping us to stretch our limited capital a little further.

⁵ “Story Map Journal,” available at <http://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=b1c59eaadfd945a68a59724a59dbf7b1>.

⁶ “Software Outsourcing Rates,” available at <http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/396606/Ebooks/Software%20Outsourcin g%20Rates.pdf?t=1492023577622>.

Globalization of the Workforce

This decision to transition from local to foreign freelancers was a difficult one and left me questioning whether I had any moral responsibility to stay with the local workforce. I began digging into the resources of Catholic social teaching but did not find anything explicitly addressing this issue. At that time I stopped searching, but I have since pursued the question further and broken it down into these key areas of analysis: the Catholic view of globalization, responsibilities of the business leaders, and profit.

The Catholic View of Globalization

The concept of the world economy, or globalization, was first mentioned in 1967 in Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum progressio*. In the 1960s, the economies of developed countries such as the United States were booming. As the decade progressed and economies grew, President Lyndon B. Johnson was quoted as saying that the United States was evolving into a "Great Society," or a nation of abundance where poverty could be eradicated.⁷ Just three years after this statement, Pope Paul VI issued *Populorum progressio*, in which he directly addressed developed countries, calling them to extend their attention beyond their own borders.

President Johnson was preaching about creating a "Great Society" in the U.S., and at the same time the U.S. was investing a record of \$49.2 billion overseas.⁸ The paradox had begun: countries were trying to grow their own economies by using other countries' knowledge and resources. Paul VI noted these issues and wrote, "In the present day, however, individual and group effort within these countries is no longer enough. The world situation requires the concerted effort of everyone, a thorough examination of every facet of the problem –

⁷ Lyndon B. Johnson, "The Great Society," available at <http://www.umich.edu/~bhlumrec/c/commence/1964-Johnson.pdf>.

⁸ M. Y. Demeri, "The Rise and Decline of the American Empire Revealing the Truth," Archway (2015), 111.

social, economic, cultural and spiritual.”⁹ Although the pope did not use the word “globalization” to describe this paradox, it can be inferred that he was addressing the trends toward globalization that were occurring in the 1960s, and that he was emphasizing the need for the nations to be intentionally humane and moral amid such developments.

Throughout the papacy of John Paul II, the term “globalization” surfaced and was explicitly and extensively discussed, providing the faithful with further insights into Catholic social teaching. In 2001, while speaking to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, John Paul II calling globalization a “complex and rapidly evolving phenomenon” with roots in the removal of obstacles keeping people, capital, and goods from moving around the world.¹⁰ In this context of a world market economy, the pope was clear in his assertion that globalization, in principle, is neither good nor bad. Instead, he maintained, it should be critically examined on a case-by-case basis to determine whether or not it serves the human person. The pope highlighted the central principle that the human person should always be the end, and never merely the means, of any socio-economic system. In addition, globalization should respect the diversity of culture or religious beliefs and not threaten these, as had been the practice in the context of colonialization.¹¹ John Paul II clarified that globalization as a socio-economic trend was not something that needed to be avoided by the faithful, but instead should be harnessed to better serve persons.¹²

Pope Benedict XVI continued this conversation John Paul II had begun. In the encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, Benedict called globalization “the explosion of worldwide interdependence” and noted that

⁹ *Populorum progressio*, 13.

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Globalisation: Ethical and Institutional Concern*, 2, available at <http://www.pass.va/content/scienze-sociali/en/magisterium/johnpaulii/27-april2001.html>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, 5.

globalization could bring economic emergence to underdeveloped nations.¹³ This great opportunity of linking people, capital, and goods has facilitated the distribution of wealth throughout the world. As the average income of a region rises, the income of the poor rises proportionately, ultimately helping to reduce the pressing issue of poverty.¹⁴ Benedict XVI wrote about the benefits of globalization more than his predecessors, but he continued to affirm the truth that globalization is a process that ought always to serve the person and the family. In his words,

Fundamental ethical criterion are given by the unity of the human family and its development towards what is good. Hence a sustained commitment is needed so as to promote a person-based and community-oriented cultural process of world-wide integration that is open to transcendence.¹⁵

In the last fifty years, each pope has been more specific in his approach to the issue of globalization, owing to the accumulation of economic observations over time. Unlike his predecessors, Benedict XVI witnessed a technology boom that enabled things like international video conferencing, internet commerce, and software to facilitate instantaneous global banking transactions. While Paul VI could not have foreseen any of that, he did begin the conversation about the need to put the human person at the forefront of the global market economy. When the human person becomes less important than profit, the downsides of globalization surface rapidly. Low wages, long hours, and poor working conditions violate the dignity of the human person and can lead to further inequality, increased poverty,

¹³ *Caritas in veritate*, 33.

¹⁴ William McGurn, "Pulpit Economics," *First Things* (April 01, 2002), available at <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2002/04/pulpit-economics>.

¹⁵ *Caritas in veritate*, 42.

and even worldwide crises.¹⁶ The drawbacks of globalization have already been manifested as businesses in developed countries have treated workers in underdeveloped countries as cheap efficiency machines rather than as human persons who demand respect. These are the issues that the popes have been addressing and that have become clearer over the past fifty years.

The Catholic View of the Business Leader

To understand the dilemma at hand fully, it is also important to consider the Catholic Church's teachings on the responsibilities of business leaders. In 2014, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace compiled a reflection on what it means to be a Catholic business leader. Within this text, there are three overarching concepts, which are further broken down into six practical principles. Quoting directly from the document, the concepts and principles are laid out as follows:

Meeting the Needs of the World through the Creation and Development of Goods and Services

1. Businesses that produce goods which are truly good and services which truly serve contribute to the common good.
2. Businesses maintain solidarity with the poor by being alert for opportunities to serve otherwise deprived and underserved populations and people in need.

Organizing Good and Productive Work

3. Businesses make a contribution to the community by fostering the special dignity of human work.

¹⁶ Ibid.

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4. Businesses provide, through subsidiarity, opportunities for employees to exercise appropriate authority as they contribute to the mission of the organization.

Creating Sustainable Wealth and Distributing It Justly

5. Businesses model stewardship of the resources – whether capital, human, or environmental – they have received.

6. Businesses are just in the allocation of resources to all stakeholders: employees, customers, investors, suppliers, and the community.¹⁷

These premises apply universally, whether the workforce is in the same town and meets in a conference room every day, or whether they are scattered across the world and meet via the internet on a weekly basis. It is obviously more difficult to foster community within a company when employees are six time zones apart, but a business leader should have the same desire to serve the whole person by building community in the work setting, rather than simply exchanging monetary capital for human capital.

The Catholic View of Profit

Before we analyze the Catholic view of profit, we must understand the nature of profit. In the simplest terms, profit is the difference between money earned and money spent. Therefore, profit can be created only if the cost to buy or produce is less than the selling price. Once a company creates profit, it has the freedom to use that profit as

¹⁷ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, “The Vocation of the Business Leader,” 18, available at <https://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/ryan/publications/publicationpdfs/vocationofthebusinessleaderpdf/FinalTextTheVocationoftheBusinessLeader.pdf>.

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it chooses. The best business leaders find a good balance of satisfying current company needs (owners and employees) and investing in the future growth of the company to create a healthy business now and in the future. At the other end of the spectrum, a business that is operating in a profit deficit cannot survive in the long term. It will not have the resources to satisfy present and/or future needs of the company. When profit is viewed this way, it is obvious that profit is the key factor determining whether a business will be around in fifty years.

Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Centesimus annus*, was the first Church leader explicitly to discuss the role of profit. He affirmed that the Church recognizes profit as a legitimate indicator to assess the health of a business. The pope also acknowledged that profit can be reached only when factors of production are appropriately aligned. He added that, although profit is one measure of a business, it cannot be the sole indicator of its worthiness. More important than profit is the dignity of workers, which should always be the first priority in a business and is something that may never be compromised for the sake of profit. The pope also emphasized that business leaders should not look at profit alone as the objective of the business; instead, he maintained, they should view fostering a healthy community of persons as the end goal. So clearly the Church does not dismiss the importance of profit but instead affirms the proper role of profit in businesses.

Analyzing the Decision

The Catholic Church has never commented on platforms such as Upwork or even the idea of foreign freelancers, but it has given the faithful a body of teaching that can inform decision-making in this area. Given the encyclicals addressing globalization, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace's reflection on the role of business leaders, and the Church's view regarding profit, I believe that my

decision to transition from local freelancers to foreign ones was just. I reached this conclusion because the foreign developers I now work with are genuinely respected as human persons, and the local developers I had previously employed were let go in a fair way.

When applying what the Church teaches on globalization to my decision to transition to foreign developers, it is fair to say that my actions were not in tension with Church teaching. Although some people make arguments for hiring local employees, I cannot say that I have a greater obligation to a person one mile away than I do to a person 5,000 miles away. As a Christian I affirm that both are my “neighbor,” and I have a moral obligation to respect the dignity of all human persons. Reflecting on Benedict XVI’s *Caritas in veritate*, I consider that the decision to hire foreign developers may actually be one way of helping solve world issues such as poverty.¹⁸ Take, for example, one of the foreign developers we hired, who lives in Ukraine. In Ukraine the average worker brings home 10,000 Ukrainian hryvnia per month, which is roughly \$400.¹⁹ But through our current arrangement, I am able to pay our Ukrainian developer \$3,500 monthly, almost nine times the average in Ukraine. That wealth brought into Ukraine was not previously there and could not have been organically generated. While my primary goal of hiring the Ukrainian developer was not to help a struggling economy, private foreign aid was a valuable secondary effect. This fact alone is not sufficient to justify my decision, but it does highlight how real good can come from globalization.

As a Catholic in business, I take seriously the reflections of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, which emphasize the need for business leaders to respect the dignity of all workers. One group of workers that might be overlooked are the two local developers who were let go. I was no longer able to provide for their livelihood, but

¹⁸ *Caritas in veritate*, 42.

¹⁹ Jon Stotz, “Average and Minimum Salary in Kiev, Ukraine,” available at <https://checkinprice.com/average-minimum-salary-kiev-ukraine/>.

looking back on the way their situation was handled, I believe their dignity was still respected. They were made aware of the budget constraints and given notice that we were considering other options. In the end, one has used his talents to freelance for other companies, while the other has stepped away from full-time work to focus on other personal goals. Since making the decision, my cofounder Sourabh has stayed in contact with both developers, and the one who stepped away from full-time work has continued to collaborate with us on a few smaller projects.

When examining the role of profit in my decision-making, it is important to note the reality that my business is not making a profit. Development costs have far surpassed the revenue that has been generated. I am morally responsible for the way I distribute the company's profit and spend personal income, but absent both of these things, there is no way to be selfish or morally irresponsible. If there are profits in the future, I can use them intentionally, in ways that foster human community, as John Paul II encouraged. For now, however, I need to focus on generating profit to create a sustainable business.

Leading a business is complex and difficult. Some days it feels like a hundred different decisions need to be made. I want to figure out exactly what the Church teaches that is relevant to each of those decisions, but the fact of the matter is that the Church does not always have exact answers to our questions. Instead, it provides the framework of Catholic social teaching, which gives Catholics a lens through which to view problems. This lens becomes clearer the more we educate ourselves and reflect on the earlier decisions we have made in our concrete circumstances. I started digging into Catholic social teaching when thinking about transitioning from local developers to foreign ones, and I have analyzed that decision in more detail in this essay. My ability to deliberate about business decisions from a Catholic perspective is improving, and I feel better equipped to continue this process in the future.