

## Documentation

This year's documentation section contains three items: first, the schedule itself of the 2003 annual conference of the *Society*; an *In Memoriam* for Fr. Ronald D. Lawler, O.F.M. Cap., by William E. May; and third, a paper from Joseph Varacalli that will be of special interest to readers reflecting back on the election year in our country.

In the next issue (2005) we will present a sampling of some of our members' publications and accomplishments spanning the time period of May 2003 through December 2004. Please send your items to Dr. Mark Lowery by Feb. 1, 2005 (address in the following paragraph).

Anyone wishing to submit articles, reprints, announcements, or short materials for publication consideration in the Documentation Section should submit a Word or Wordperfect file to assistant editor Dr. Mark Lowery, Department of Theology, University of Dallas Irving, Texas 75062, phone 972-721-5357, fax 972-721-4007, e-mail Lowery@mail2.udallas.edu. All materials will be reviewed by the associate editor, Dr. Patrick Foley, 1113 Idlewood Ave., Azle, TX 76020-3647, fax 817-515-7007, phone 817-237-9602.

Patrick Foley, Associate Editor for Documentation  
Mark Lowery, Assistant Editor for Documentation

### **Society of Catholic Social Scientists Eleventh Annual Meeting Friday-Saturday, October 24-25, 2003 Franciscan University of Steubenville, Steubenville, Ohio**

#### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24**

8:30-9:45 a.m. *Catholic Social Science Review* Editorial Board Meeting

10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. SCSS Board of Directors Meeting

1:15-1:25 p.m. Invocation - Fr. Edward Krause, C.S.C., Gannon University; SCSS Chaplain

Welcome and Announcements - Stephen M. Krason, SCSS President

#### **1:30-3:00 p.m. Sessions**

A. "Developing a Faith-Based Social Science in the Integral Tradition, Part I: Foundational Perspectives"

1. Lawrence T. Nichols, West Virginia University - "Integralism Updated: The Progress of an Incipient Paradigm"
2. Barry V. Johnston, Indiana University Northwest - "Towards an Integral Sociology: A History of Science Approach"
3. Ryan T. Barilleaux, Miami University of Ohio - "The Restoration of Political Science"  
*Moderator:* Vincent Jeffries, California State University, Northridge

B. "Pro-Life Questions"

1. Keith M. Cassidy, University of Guelph - "The Treatment of Abortion in U.S. History Texts: Limitations and Biases"
2. Christopher J. Beiting, Ave Maria College - "Transhumanism: the 'Brave New World' Challenge to the Catholic Conception of the Person"  
*Moderator:* Joseph M. Scheidler, Pro-Life Action League

**3:30-5:00 p.m. Sessions**

A. "Developing A Faith-Based Social Science in the Integral Tradition, Part II: Disciplinary Applications"

1. Dcn. Gerald E. DeMauro, New York State Education Department - "An Integral Perspective in Developmental Psychology"
2. Carmine Gorga, Gloucester Community Development Corporation - "Integralism in the Context of Concordian Economics"  
*Moderator:* Vincent Jeffries, California State University, Northridge

B. "Social and Political Thinkers and Commentators"

1. Philip Harold, The Catholic University of America - "The Place of Politics in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas"
2. John F. Quinn, Salve Regina University - "Why *Is* He a Catholic? Garry Wills' Spiritual Odyssey"  
*Moderator:* Joseph Almeida, Franciscan University of Steubenville

**5:15-6:15 p.m. - Disciplinary Section Meetings**

1. Economics/Business Section (Philip Crotty, Chmn.)
2. History Section (No current Chmn.)
3. Law and Jurisprudence Section (Nicholas Lund-Molfese, Chmn.)
4. Philosophy/Theology/Health Care Ethics Section (Mark Lowery, Chmn.)

5. Political Science Section (Kenneth L. Grasso, Chmn.)
6. Psychology/Psychiatry/Mental Health/Social Work Group
7. Social Communications Section (Richard Cain, Chmn.)
8. Sociology/Anthropology Section (Stephen R. Sharkey, Chmn.)

**6:30-7:30 p.m. - Dinner**

**8:00-9:30 p.m. - Plenary Session**

Franciscan University's annual Christopher Dawson Lecture, co-sponsored with and funded by the University's Humanities and Catholic Culture Program.

Dr. Warren H. Carroll, eminent Catholic historian and founding President of Christendom College, spoke on "John Paul II: History Maker."

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25**

**7:45-7:55 a.m.** Group Prayer led by Fr. Edward Krause, C.S.C., SCSS Chaplain

**8:00-9:30 a.m., Sessions**

"Developing a Faith-Based Social Science in the Integral Tradition, Part III: Contemporary and Empirical Applications"

Vincent Jeffries, California State University, Northridge - "Integralism as a Social Movement"

Moderator: Joseph A. Varacalli, Nassau Community College-SUNY

"The Thought of Pope John Paul II"

1. Msgr. George P. Graham, Diocese of Rockville Centre - "Toward the Fullness of Truth: John Paul II on Faith and Reason"

2. John H. Walsh, *Emeritus*, California University of Pennsylvania - "'Sex' and 'Romance' in Context in Pope John Paul II's *Love and Responsibility*"

Moderator: Fr. Edward Krause, C.S.C., Gannon University

Panel on "Different Worlds: Traditionalists, Conservatives, Liberals, and the Life of the Church"

G. Daniel Harden, Washburn University of Topeka; Thomas E. Woods, Jr., Suffolk Community College-SUNY

Chairman: G. Daniel Harden, Washburn University of Topeka

**10:00-11:25 a.m. , Sessions**

"Reconstructing a Catholic Sociology"

1. Stephen R. Sharkey, Alverno College - "Framing a Catholic Sociology for Today's College Students: Historical Lessons and Questions from Furfey, Ross, and Murray"
2. G. Alexander Ross - "Detecting the Fingerprints of God: The Intelligent Design Movement and Catholic Sociology"

Moderator: Michael Coulter, Grove City College

"Catholic History and Social Questions"

1. G. Daniel Harden, Washburn University of Topeka - "The Agrarian Tradition, Fr. Luigi Ligutti, and the Catholic Rural Life Conference"
2. Richard J. Rolwing, Rolwing, Inc. (ret.) - "Did Roger Taney Violate the Natural Law?"

Moderator: Christopher J. Beiting, Ave Maria College

"Social Dimensions of the Thought of Great Catholic Theologians"

1. Robert Fastiggi, Sacred Heart Major Seminary - "Ecclesiastical and Temporal Power in Vitoria, Suarez, and Bellarmine"
2. Fr. Bevil Bramwell, OMI, Ave Maria College - "The Theology of Society in the Work of Hans Urs von Balthasar"

Moderator: Theresa K. Gerson, St. Joseph's Morow Park High School

"The Family, Religion, and Society"

Dcn. Gerald E. DeMauro, New York State Education Department - "The Father, from Whom Every Family is Named: God, Fatherhood, and the Family"

Moderator: Keith Cassidy, University of Guelph

**12:30-1:45 p.m. - Luncheon**

At the luncheon, Keith Cassidy, University of Guelph, discussed the SCSS's project on "The Causes of Contemporary Secularization" and Professor Jose Lapuz, University of Santo Tomas spoke about the recent UNESCO meeting which he attended focusing on the international genome draft agreement. There was also an SCSS membership open forum and business meeting.

**2:00-3:30 p.m. Sessions**

Roundtable (Panel) on "Robert Kraynak's Book *Christian Faith and Modern Democracy*"

Participants: Robert P. Hunt, Kean University; Gary D. Glenn, Northern Illinois University; Gregory Beabout, St. Louis University; Kenneth L. Grasso, Southwest Texas State University; David Crawford, John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family; Robert Kraynak, Colgate University.

Chairman: Kenneth L. Grasso, Southwest Texas State University

"Critiques of Modern Economics"

1. John Pisciotta, Baylor University - "The Implicit Moral Malformation of Modern Economics"
2. Carmine Gorga, Gloucester Community Development Corporation - "From Mainstream Economics to Concordian Economics"

Moderator: Andrew Yuengert, Pepperdine University

"Psychology and Counseling"

1. Dcn. Gerald E. DeMauro, New York State Education Department - "Determinism and the Influence of Grace on Human Choice"
2. Kathryn M. Benes and Fr. Joseph M. Walsh, Catholic Social Services, Diocese of Lincoln - "Psychology and Spiritual Counseling: Toward a New Model of Collaboration in Catholic Pastoral Care"

Moderator: Andrew P. Hrezo, Franciscan University of Steubenville

"Darwinism in Social Thought"

Fr. Edward Krause, C.S.C., Gannon University - "The Holocaust and Social Darwinism"

Moderator: Mario Ramos-Reyes, Kansas City, Kansas Community College

**4:00-5:30 p.m., Sessions**

"St. Thomas Aquinas and Social Thought"

1. Andrew Yuengert, Pepperdine University - "Aquinas in the Marketplace of Ideas: Teleology and Market Exchange"
2. Maurizio Ragazzi, World Bank - "Thomistic Roots of the Concept of Social Sin"

Moderator: Kevin E. Schmiesing, Acton Institute

"Catholic Reflection on Political and Social Developments Elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere" - Mario Ramos-Reyes, Kansas City, Kansas Community College - "*Centesimus Annus* and Latin America: The Missing Factor"

Moderator: Andrew M. Essig, DeSales University

"Moral Philosophy"

1. Fr. Thomas Berg, LC, The Westchester Institute - "The Value-Language Phenomenon and the Imminent Task of Catholic Moral Philosophy"
2. Robert F. Gorman, Southwest Texas State University - "What Athens Has to Do with Jerusalem: Ethics in the Ancient Greek and Judeo-Christian Traditions"

Moderator: Robert Fastiggi, Sacred Heart Major Seminary

"Great Twentieth Century Catholic Social Thinkers"

Donald J. D'Elia, State University of New York-New Paltz - "Frederick D. Wilhelmsen: Citizen of Rome"  
Moderator: Stephen R. Sharkey, Alverno College

**Ronald D. Lawler, O.F.M. Cap.  
A saintly priest, dedicated scholar, superb friend**

**William E. May**

On November 5, 2003, one of the holiest priests I have ever known, Ronald Lawler, died. He was not only a saintly priest but he was also a magnificent and dedicated scholar and one of the best friends I ever had.

Father Ronald was born in Cumberland, Maryland in 1926 and as a young man entered the Capuchin Friars in the mid 1940s and studied for the priesthood at St. Fidelis Seminary in Butler, Pennsylvania. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1951 and after his ordination studied philosophy at St. Louis University, receiving his doctorate in 1958.

He devoted his life from then on to teaching, writing, and spreading the good news of our redemption through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I got to know this wonderful man first in the mid 1960s when I was working as an editor for the Bruce Publishing Company, for we published one of Father Ron's first books, an excellent volume called *Analytic Philosophy and Ethics* in a series of philosophical works under the general editorship of Jude Dougherty. In this fine book he gave an excellent critique of the ethical views of such influential figures as A.J. Ayer and R. M. Hare.

I really got to know Father Ron well after I began teaching moral theology at The Catholic University of America, where this great priest was also teaching from 1976-1980. We soon became fast friends, and in him I found a person who could strengthen me in my efforts to show that the Church's teaching on moral issues is not only true but also liberating. Father Ron, who was so filled with love of God and neighbor that he radiated goodness, wanted to help everyone realize that the Church's moral teaching is in no way the imposition of arbitrary rules meant to burden us and keep us from having fun but that to the contrary it is a sure way to live a good, rich, and happy life.

He had by that time served as rector of his alma mater, St. Fidelis seminary, where he had had as students Charles Chaput and Sean O'Malley, to whom he had succeeded in

communicating his love for the Church and for the truth. He had also been dean of theology at the Josephinum in Columbus Ohio and had taught for a spell at Oxford University in England, where he became a close friend of people like Elizabeth Anscombe, Peter Geach, and John Finnis. Later, after leaving CUA, he was to become the first director of the Center for Thomistic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, then Msgr. George A. Kelly's stalwart associate at St. John's University in Jamaica, NY, still later rector of Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, CT, and then ending his years in Pittsburgh, PA doing wonderful work in religious education for Bishop Donald Wuerl.

In 1977 Father Ronald became the founding president of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, a wonderful organization that came into being primarily because of dedicated Catholic scholars like Father Ron, Msgr. Kelly, Germain Grisez and others. He gave himself unreservedly and unremittingly to the task of presenting, defending, and explaining the truth of the Catholic faith and to do so in a cheerful, friendly way. In order to carry out this commitment he did a lot of great writing. Among his most notable works is *The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, which he wrote with the help of Donald Wuerl, his brother Tom, and others. It was first published in 1976 and in the years to come he revised this marvelous work several times and produced as well a shorter and more compact catechetical work, *The Gift of Faith*.

I had the great privilege of cooperating with Father Ron and Joseph Boyle in writing *Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation and Defense*. This was a truly collaborative effort. Joe and I drafted chapters on topics in which we had some competence because of our work, and Father Ron then submitted these drafts to careful scrutiny, offering excellent criticism and great suggestions for improving them, while writing a wonderful chapter of "pastoral" reflections. He in effect served as the supervising editor of the volume, and a demanding editor he was. Whatever value the volume, originally published in 1985 and revised in 1998, has owes much to his criticism, insights and contributions.

Father Ron was the only American named by the Holy Father to the prestigious Pontifical Roman Theological Academy, a group of some 30 experts. He was appointed to this Academy in 1982 along with Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar.

During the final years of his life, in addition to his scholarly and pastoral work, Father Ron was appointed by the Holy See as a "spiritual assistant" to the Poor Clare nuns, visiting 13 monasteries to assist them in their life. The Holy See could not have appointed a better "spiritual assistant."

To me the most memorable thing about Father Ron was his radiant joy in being a Christian. He had a wonderful appreciation of the glory that is ours because we have become, through baptism, brother and sisters of Christ, children of God, members of the divine family, given the wonderful mission of carrying on Christ's redemptive work in the world in which we live, summoned to become saints by loving as God loves us in Christ Jesus. He was truly a saintly priest, dedicated scholar, and the best friend one could have. May he rest in peace!!

The Cultural and Political Impotence of Catholics in Contemporary American Life  
Joseph A. Varacalli, Ph.D.

(An earlier version of this paper, under different title, was presented for “Faith on Tap, Inc. of Long Island” at the Wantagh Inn, in Wantagh, New York on Monday evening, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2004)

*Introduction*

The United States of America is fast approaching yet another important referendum in the form of the 2004 national elections that will pit the remnants of America’s Judaic-Christian/natural law heritage against the forces of modern secularism/social constructionism and which will impact on the direction of the present culture war. This important event necessarily requires that the Catholic community must broach seriously, again, the perennial issue of Catholic political involvement in American life.

A recent “Catholic identity” poll conducted by John Zogby and as reported by Patricia Zapor of Catholic News Service (January 21, 2004) bodes ill for those hoping immediately for a united Catholic community capable of shaping significantly both the American public square and American civil society with an authentic application of Catholic social teaching and natural law thinking. Zogby’s data indicate that the “Catholic” identity of Catholic citizens, especially but not exclusively among the younger generations, is either secondary, tertiary, or non-existent as a rationale or motivating factor in explaining why they vote for a particular candidate or support a particular issue. Conversely put, the overwhelming percentage of Catholics are voting out of what sociologists would term some non-Catholic “sub-cultural” attachment, whether it be to some abstract commitment or ideology (e.g. feminism, capitalism, socialism, new age, therapeutic mentality, etc.) or more primordial interest or entity (e.g. one’s ethnicity, geographic region, occupation, family, etc.). As Archbishop Sean O’Malley makes clear, the kinds of reasons that many Catholics use to determine their voting behavior is clearly unacceptable. As he states in his “Election Reflection” (*Catholic Exchange*, February 25, 2004): “If I were ever tempted to vote for simply selfish reasons, tribal allegiances, or economic advantages rather than on the moral direction of the country, I should beat a hasty retreat from the curtain of the polling booth to the curtain of the confessional.” Applying Zogby’s realistic--but to serious Catholics, dour-- analysis to the previous 2,000 presidential election, one can perhaps point out not only that slightly less than half of the Catholic population voted for George Bush but many of those who did pull the lever for the Republican candidate did not do so completely in support of those aspects of his agenda which were pro-life or consistent with a Catholic worldview.

On the other hand, some orthodox Catholic commentators are cheering the recent orthodox thinking/actions exhibited on the part of such prelates as the new Archbishop of St. Louis, Raymond Burke, against nominally Catholic politicians like Senator John Kerry for their anti-life voting

records and the new Archbishop of Boston, Sean O'Malley, in leading the fight in Massachusetts against same-sex marriage and a run-away State Supreme Court. For his part, writing in the diocesan newspaper, *The Tablet* (March 6, 2004), the new Bishop of Brooklyn, Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, stated clearly that all Catholics must participate in political life with "a properly formed conscience" and "may never promote laws which are incompatible with the faith and with natural law." Likewise, serious Catholics are heartened by the news that the Bishops of Michigan, in conjunction with Michigan Right to Life, have garnered the signatures of 325,000 registered Michigan voters in the attempt to overturn pro-abortion Michigan Democrat Governor Jennifer Granholm's veto of a bill to ban partial birth abortion (Oswald Sobrino, *Catholic Analysis* website, March 10, 2004). And in a letter to Congress, ( March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004), the Catholic Bishops of the United States reaffirmed their support for a federal amendment to the Constitution of the United States preserving the traditional definition of marriage.

As laudatory and salutary as such recent responses from episcopal authority are, one cannot help but sympathize with the reaction of those who observe that the Bishops are now *starting* to think about closing the barn door way after the horses have taken off for the races. Indeed, in a news report ("Bishops May Punish Politicians: Pro-Abortion Position of Catholic Lawmakers A Source of Frustration," *The Boston Globe*, November 11, 2003) recounting a discussion about Catholic politicians that was held at the Fall, 2003 Annual Meeting of the American Bishops, Michael Paulson observed that "frustrated that so many Catholic politicians support abortion rights, the Bishops of the United States said...that they will begin evaluating whether they can impose sanctions against elected officials who vote contrary to Church teaching. In a freewheeling discussion reflecting years of concern, some Bishops suggested that the Church should consider punishments ranging from denying honorary degrees to elected officials, refusing to allow them to speak at Catholic institutions, or even excommunicating them." Put crudely, the Bishops are, again, *starting* to articulate the Catholic arguments and *starting* to consider imposing sanctions to a Catholic population now overwhelmingly nominal in their religious allegiance and not in tune with the "mind of the Church." Robert George and Gerard V. Bradley put it even more bluntly in a *National Review* commentary (January 29, 2004): "Many...(believe)...that it is *long past time* for religious leaders to show that they are serious about their commitment to the sanctity of human life" (italics added).

This essay intends to more fully explain the causes of the present day political impotence of Catholics in the United States and offer some suggestions to correct the situation which, by virtue of the contemporary situation that the Church finds herself in America, are mostly and necessarily "long range" in nature. They are long range but "doable" if the Church hierarchy has the commitment and vision and is willing to work cooperatively with those elements of the Catholic laity who have devoted themselves to what Pope John Paul has referred to as "the new evangelization." First, however, it is important to restate just how political participation fits into the overall Catholic vision and, then, to lay out some basic Catholic principles for political involvement in what some have referred to as "the art of the possible."

#### *The Catholic Vision*

For Catholicism, the ultimate destiny of each human being is not to acquire worldly success,

but to reach heaven. This is expressed beautifully in St. Augustine's prayer and acknowledgment to God in his *Confessions* that "our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." For the Church, reaching eternal salvation requires the person accepting God's gratuitous gift of grace, primarily through active participation in the sacramental life and, relatedly, exercising many virtues including some demonstrated commitment to the social apostolate. The social apostolate includes both *individual* (i.e., good works and charity) and *structural* (i.e., the attempted institutionalization in society of social justice) dimensions.

Regarding the latter, more systematic commitment, the 1971 statement, *Justice in the World*, declared that "a concern for social justice...is a *constitutive* feature of the preaching of the Gospel" (italics added). "Constitutive," however, must not be confused with "definitive;" herein lies one important incongruity between an orthodox understanding of the faith and the vision of secularists and most present day Catholic "liberationist" and "progressivist" thinkers for whom an all-consuming this-worldly political involvement represents a be-all and end-all of human existence. To the contrary, the reconstruction of society along authentic Christian principles and lines at least compatible with Catholic social thought, while a *good in and by itself*, nonetheless is not the *raison d'être* of the Catholic faith. Rather it is a lesser good; it is both secondary to and derivative of the primary mission of assisting individuals in the quest for eternal salvation. In the final analysis, from a Catholic perspective, individuals are seen stumbling to the Cross in a this-worldly "vale of tears." But as we stumble, we are also commissioned by Christ to do so in solidarity with, and concern for, all of His children and for all of His human creation, the political and civil order included. In short summary: Catholic involvement with governmental and political issues is intended to serve what are, for the Church, the ultimate and penultimate ends of human existence, that is, respectively, the salvation of souls and concern and activity for the realization of the common good.

#### *Catholic Principles for Political Involvement*

Before proceeding to analyze empirically the actual contemporary state of Catholics in American politics, it is perhaps useful to briefly review some of the basic and generic Catholic principles for political involvement. One key principle is the positing of different realms of competency between, on the one hand, Bishops and the clergy concerned as they are with articulating and enforcing doctrine internal to the life of the Church institution and, on the other hand, the laity whose mission involves the "Christianization of the temporal sphere" of society. As *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 2442, declares: "It is not the role of the Pastors of the Church to intervene directly in the political structuring and organization of social life. This task is part of the vocation of the *lay faithful*, acting on their own initiative with their fellow citizens." Many other Catholic principles for political involvement can be profitably taken from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's 2002 *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life*. My reading of the *Doctrinal Note* derives the following eight principles:

- 1) Given that morality cannot be separated from politics, it is a religious duty for Catholics to participate in the political process in the attempt to promote the common good. Such participation must be conducted ethically, can take many forms, is contingent upon socio-historical contexts and

circumstances, and is shaped by the particular responsibilities, specific competencies, and personal situations of individuals actualizing different social roles.

2) In a democracy, all citizens are free to base their political decisions on their own religious and philosophical traditions; such a position does not constitute a violation of the “separation of Church and State.”

3) Authentic Catholic political participation is based on the premise that all moral choices made must be compatible with the Catholic faith and the natural law.

4) The Catholic Church endorses no specific political party or program and acknowledges a wide role for the Catholic citizen in applying prudential judgements as long as such judgements do not violate the fundamental dignity of the human person. And even on issues involving direct attacks on innocent human life, Catholics are still free to make prudential judgements as to what policy (e.g. an attempted Right to Life Amendment to the Constitution versus a state rights approach to banning abortion state by state) is most likely to protect human life at a particular socio-historical moment and place.

5) It is not, religiously or morally, possible for any Catholic citizen to promote or vote for any law that attacks human life such as abortion, euthanasia, and human embryonic stem cell research. Likewise, the *Doctrinal Note* includes the fundamental and inalienable ethical demands of defining marriage as between one man and one woman, of defending the freedom of parents regarding the right to educate their children, of protecting children from such modern forms of slavery such as drug abuse and prostitution, of defending the right of religious freedom, and of promoting forms of economic life that are at the service of the human person and the common good.

6) The Catholic must support the whole array of issues addressed by the social doctrine of the Church although some issues, by their very nature, are more contingent and allow more room for the prudential application in terms of means (e.g. privatization vs. government as a means of securing retirement benefits, home-schooling vs. the elementary school as a means for securing the primary grade education of children) while others, like those involving direct attacks on innocent human life, do not admit of moral latitude.

7) Catholic participation in political life should be based on realism. This means rejecting both a) the attitudes of a self-imposed “Catholic inferiority complex” in a non-Catholic social context like the United States, especially in light of the fact that numerous non-Catholic political programs have proved to be so ruinous for American civilization and b) the utopian perspective, typical of influential left-wing political thought in the United States, that fails to see the inevitability of men and women living in imperfect social situations.

8) That active, intelligent, and faithful Catholic political participation in society is consistent with the call for coherence between faith and life and the Gospel and culture.

The distinguished Catholic commentator, Richard Hinshaw, in a Nassau Community College “Catholic Alternative” radio interview (WHPC 90.3 F.M., July 23, 2003), usefully summarizes the various obligations that, respectively, both Catholics in public life and the average Catholic citizen should take from the *Doctrinal Note*. For the former, the obligations are: 1) to be guided by Gospel values and Catholic social teaching in public policy deliberations, 2) to promote

the absolute moral prohibition against laws permitting the destruction of innocent human life, and 3) to reject the attempt to separate one's religious faith from public conduct. Regarding the latter, the obligations are 1) to be actively involved in civic affairs, 2) to bring Gospel values and Catholic social teaching consistently to bear on the issues of everyday political and civic life, and 3) to utilize one's vote, one's voice and one's voluntary organization participation to promote the common good and to reject narrow self-interest.

It is painfully clear that, overwhelmingly, both the Catholic politician and the average Catholic citizen have failed to implement Catholic principles in public and civic life. The immediate question is "why is this the case?" How much of it is willful and conscious rejection of a well-understood religious and moral obligation? And how much of the latter is out of calculating self-interest? Conversely, how much of the failure to apply faith to political life is out of ignorance of the Catholic principles themselves? And if ignorance is at least a major cause of the failed implementation of Catholic political principles, why is this the case? Who and what is responsible for such a gross failure? The Bishops? Those in charge of Catholic formation and catechesis? The present system Catholic of higher education? A passive, dependent, and doctrinally illiterate/disobedient laity? Or all four?

#### *Cultural Impotence, Political Impotence*

Human beings, in contradistinction to the other members of the animal kingdom and by their very constitution, are "cultural creatures." Born into the world "incomplete;" i.e., "instinctually deprived," the human baby is "completed" through the process of socialization into symbolic culture (e.g. language, values, norms, etc.). Crudely put, for the "socialized" human being, culture replaces instincts as a guide for behavior; culture, in other words, serves as the major shaper of human consciousness and activity, including most definitely, political activity.

Even the natural law, written into the very constitution of the human being, is affected and mediated by the conceptions of internalized culture, thus making it easier or harder for the individual to either unselfconsciously (i.e., co-naturally) or more consciously follow the imperative to "do good and avoid evil." Put another way, whether Catholics in the United States, as such, "think" in a Catholic way and, derivatively, politically act in a Catholic way depends, *in part*, on the nature of the broader cultural message. In a society like the United States, the mainstream or dominant culture has never been Catholic, influenced variously and, at times, simultaneously, by versions of capitalism and "soft" socialism, and by Protestantism and liberal secularism. Furthermore, the present broader cultural movement in the United States is progressively in the direction of accepting and accentuating values that are antithetical to the Catholic vision such as hyper-materialism, utilitarianism, moral relativity, and autonomous individualism. Following the logic of Pope John Paul II as presented in *Centesimus Annus* (1991, sec. 46), the long term viability of the American experiment in democracy is thus thrust in doubt given that democracy requires a solid moral base in order to function properly.

The key issue for Catholics, then, remains as to whether or not the Catholic Church, qua institution and community, has the resources, skill, and commitment to construct an internally coherent and consistent Catholic subculture or set of social institutions (e.g. parishes, schools,

seminaries, newspaper and other mass media outlets, hospitals and other health care facilities, professional and academic associations, and other Catholic voluntary associations) capable of socializing her sons and daughters into a willing acceptance of the basic tenets of the faith and general Catholic worldview. The purpose of such a Catholic subculture is not merely to shield the religious community from the outer culture, as is typical of a counter-culture like the Amish, but to create a mechanism of mediation whereby Catholics can selectively accept elements of the broader culture which are life affirming while simultaneously critiquing the culture and, eventually, shaping it from the logic of its own heritage.

The political impotence of Catholic America to which John Zogby refers is rooted primarily in the defilement and severe weakening, during the post-Vatican II period in the United States, of a once distinctively Catholic subculture or, more sociologically, of a Catholic “plausibility structure.” This defilement and weakening was, to a significant degree, orchestrated by a gnostic-like group of dissenters from authentic Catholic teaching who successfully situated themselves within key locations in the Church’s bureaucracy and organizations. Like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, what I’ve previously termed a “new Catholic knowledge class,” led the the once faithful to an acceptance of such secular commitments as socialism/Marxism, radical feminism, bourgeoisie materialism, new age, sexual liberation including homosexuality, the therapeutic mentality and radical individualism all proceeding merrily under the guise of authentic religious development or, failing that, required religious innovation. With the defilement of the Catholic plausibility structure during the immediate post-Vatican II period, the Catholic Church, qua institution, lost whatever modest political influence and status it had gained during the previous decades—witness a string of defeats from *Roe v. Wade* to human embryonic stem cell research. As one of many influential and nominal Catholic politicians, the former Governor of California Gray Davis, put it in signing a decree approving human embryonic stem cell research: “I am not going to see religious or political opposition prevent ground-breaking research that can improve peoples’s lives” (*Zenit*, October 7, 2003). Secular forces have now advanced their agenda to issues of cultural normalization of homosexuality and the legalization of same-sex marriage. The next major secularist advance will most probably be in the area of the increased promotion of essentially unrestricted biological and genetic engineering. It is important to point out the result of the unhappy dialectic taking place between the increasingly secularist monopoly in the American public square and the advanced state of religious corruption caused by dissenters and existing within Catholic institutional life. The result is nothing less than the uncritical assimilation of Catholics into a mainstream culture itself moving further away from one both Judaic-Christian in nature and accepting of the natural law to one basically secular in orientation that promotes unrestricted human freedom in every aspect of life.

The dramatic increase in the cultural impotence of the Catholic faith naturally has its corollary in the realm of politics. Despite significant Catholic representation in both houses of Congress and among viable presidential candidates since World War II concomitant with their rising educational, occupational, and income characteristics, Catholics have been anything *but* successful politically, if one defines success in terms of the ability to bring Catholic social thought into the public sphere from which national social policy is forged. The social scientific evidence is that the

Catholic politicians have not voted either consistently from a Catholic perspective and that Catholics have failed to vote as a discernible bloc.

Mary Hanna's 1979 analysis, *Catholics and American Politics*, is probably still the best available in explaining the inability and unwillingness of Catholic politicians to make an impact *qua Catholic*. She notes three reasons. First and foremost, the Catholic faith was not a significant factor in the value orientation of many "Catholic" congressmen. Second, even when Congressmen claim an allegiance to their faith, internal Catholic pluralism militated against a single vision and concerted activity; for Hanna, "there is indeed no one way to be Catholic; it seems clear that the Catholic Church with its rich and complex history, traditions, and teachings provides a variety of reference points for its adherents...There is then no single thrust that Catholic religious influence takes in the lives and thinking of the Catholic sector of Congress" (pp.86-87). Thirdly, Hanna cites the American normative conceptions of the "separation of Church and State" and the need to stress the public interest and not the interests of any particular sub-grouping as a reason for the lack of a united Catholic political presence.

Hanna's first explanation provides, sadly, evidence of the fact the Catholic Church simply has lost the hearts and minds of many through an outright secularization. Hanna's second explanation is more subtle and fascinating. It is indicative of an *internal* secularization that reveals what is *really* operative in the thought and activity of many "Catholic" politicians is some form of non-Catholic allegiance (e.g. socialism, capitalism, feminism, pragmatism, etc.) which selectively chooses what elements of Catholic social doctrine are to be utilized *ideologically*. The Catholic politician, as such, "can have his cake and eat it too," satisfying some non-Catholic ideological interest which is of primary importance while simultaneously legitimating his/her action to the Catholic citizenry by clothing it superficially in the trappings of the faith. For instance, nominally Catholic Democratic politicians with their statist orientation oftentimes suggest that dramatic increases in the role of the welfare state are *always* consistent with the Catholic response in addressing the social question while some nominally Catholic Republican politicians with their worship of the market might be tempted to argue the reverse, i.e., that a severe reduction in welfare state activity is *always* consistent with the Catholic principle of "subsidiarity." Three reactions are in order in responding to Hanna's third explanation. The first is to note the *false* understanding of Church-State separation, i.e., one that attempts to separate religiously informed thought and action from the political process, that is conveniently assumed by many Catholic politicians. The second is the ignorance of Catholic politicians of the natural law tradition whose principles are both universal in thrust and applicable for the good of all mankind. The third is the blatant "interest group" politics that characterizes much of American political life which, apparently, is acceptable as long as one isn't a Catholic or a member of the so-called "religious right."

Unfortunately, the situation regarding the lack of authentic Catholic inspiration for the Catholic citizen in American life is not superior to that of the Catholic politician and, actually, serves the function of allowing Catholic politicians to get away with their infidelity to, and ignorance of, the faith. The religious values held by the average Catholic citizen varies across the "orthodox-heterodox" spectrum with no more than perhaps twenty percent of the Catholic population being

“orthodox-across-the-board,” combining a healthy respect for all aspects of the Catholic faith including, simultaneously, a liturgical and social Catholicism. The rest of Catholic America must, unfortunately, be categorized as different variations of a selective, cafeteria-style Catholicism termed by Father Andrew Greeley as “communal Catholicism.” Communal Catholicism, whether ultimately driven by socialism, capitalism, feminism, new age, sexual liberation, or some other non-Catholic ideology has, furthermore, dramatically and especially increased among the younger cohorts of Catholics in the United States, testimony to the effects of the destruction/weakening of the internal integrity of the plausibility structure of the Church. Similarly, sociological studies comparing pre-Vatican II, Vatican II, and post-Vatican II generations clearly show a general trend downwards in terms of, most basically, knowledge of, and derivatively, assent to, Church teachings. It should surprise no one, then, to find less behavior (including political behavior) on the part of Catholic citizens shaped by Catholic social thought.

Much of the individual success of Catholics in contemporary American society in terms of the sociological trilogy of power, wealth, and status has come, as such, at the expense of either abandoning or privatizing the Catholic faith, or in other cases, redefining it to mean something else, as in the case of much of what passes for as “liberation theology.” Such an abandonment and weakening constitutes a serious offense against a Catholic religion positing that the ultimate goal of all individuals is to reach Heaven in the next life. The common folk wisdom that “all that glitters is not gold” is perfected in the rhetorical question asked in the Bible, that is, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world but lose his soul?” (Mt. 16:26).

*What Can and Should Be Done ?*

If my analysis of the present state of American civilization and of the Catholic Church in the United States is even close to being correct, there is no “quick fix” that can immediately reverse the situation. However, there are things that can be done that can improve the present situation and that can lay the foundation for the restoration of the Church in the decades to come. For one thing, those orthodox Catholic Bishops with some “fire in their bellies” (to refer to one of Monsignor George A. Kelly’s many colorful phrases) should start to implement a disciplinary policy regarding all baptized Catholics that ranges from excommunication to the firing of dissenters from their Church employment, to the relentless public correcting of those who have manifestly denied Catholic doctrine. Such a policy regarding the *decimation of dissent* would quickly address the issue of clarifying to all just what Catholic teachings are and what they are not. To refer to the phrase of one of the more famous general managers of baseball, Branch Rickey, institutionalizing such a policy within the Church would represent a case of “addition through subtraction,” in terms of both personnel and worldview.

In conjunction with implementing this disciplinary policy, the Catholic community—from Bishops, intellectuals, Catholic organizations and apostolates, to individual members of the faithful—can step up their public critiques both of secular social policy on issues that clearly and unambiguously violate the faith and the common good (e.g. abortion, euthanasia, human embryonic stem cell research, etc.) and of degenerative cultural developments spreading and institutionalizing themselves throughout the fibers of American society (e.g. the “normalization” of homosexuality,

corporate and governmental corruption, sex and violence promoted through the mass media, etc.). While such critiques, in the short run, may have a limited impact in the present situation, they do serve two useful purposes. The first is to put the Church “on record” as standing for what will eventually be recognized as solid reason and sound morality. The second is that it will start the process of laying the seeds of doubt about the ever more apparent false promises of secular modernity and, conversely, lay the seeds of the Catholic vision within the hearts and minds of those nominal Catholics and non-Catholics alike in American society who are searching, ambivalent, open-minded, and increasingly disenchanted with what Eric Voegelin has aptly referred to as living “the contracted existence.” Over time, many of these individuals may find their way, respectively, either back or to the Catholic Church as the mutually influencing processes of a) witnessing the self-destructive tendencies of a Godless world and b) discovering the truth, logic, beauty, and utility of the Catholic alternative, reinforce each other.

However, the basic, sound, and enduring solution to the Catholic Church in this country righting herself and, derivatively, satisfactorily addressing the issue of Catholic participation in political life lies neither with the punitive actions or public declarations. Rather, the key issue in reorienting the Church back on her mission commissioned, and constantly reaffirmed, by Jesus Christ involves what sociologists call “socialization,” what religionists term “evangelization,” and what the man in the street simply refers to as “education.” In general, the answer is long term and requires painful sacrifice and patience: it is the rebuilding-- brick by brick, person by person, organization by organization, and by the grace of God-- of the “plausibility structure” of the Catholic Church. More specifically, and after the faithful administration of the sacraments, there must be a heavy emphasis given to Catholic education and catechesis. Only when the future generations of Catholics in America start to “think with the mind of the Church” will they then act—including politically act—like faithful followers of the Church founded by Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And only then can one expect to see a substantial rise in the number of Catholic politicians and civic leaders inspired by the model of Saint Thomas More, recently conferred with the title of “patron of politicians” by John Paul II, and who, in the Pope’s words, understood that “man cannot be sundered from God, nor politics from morality.”

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