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Essays on Theology, Politics, and Culture

FREDERICK CHRISTIAN BAUERSCHMIDT

WORD *on* **FIRE**
ACADEMIC

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Word on Fire Catholic Ministries
PO Box 97330, Washington, DC 20090-7330
or email contact@wordonfire.org.

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In memoriam
Angela Russell Christman
(1958–2020)

Fecisti nos ad te
et inquietum est cor nostrum
donec requiescat in te

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Introduction

The essays collected here represent attempts I have made over the past twenty-five years to think through how theology relates to politics and culture. They might seem like a bit of a diversion from much of my published work, which has been in large part focused on the Middle Ages, particularly the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. But I have never seen study of the past as an end in itself. Like most people, my main desire is to understand the world around me and my place in it, which is what I think Aristotle meant when he said that all philosophy begins in wonder. Moreover, I don't have a natural affinity for the Middle Ages (and suspect those who claim that they do are fooling themselves just a bit). I find it is only with some effort that I can understand how medieval people thought and felt. I have no desire to have lived in those times, and I don't particularly want to reshape my own times to be more like them.

I have spent time studying the Middle Ages not for their own sake, but because I believe that one of the most useful tools for understanding the present is to try to view it from that foreign country that we call the past. Not unlike a hitherto unknown culture encountered in some distant land, the past holds up a mirror to us in which we might catch a glimpse of our own world and how we are positioned within it. Indeed, the past can be more useful in this regard than some contemporary alien culture, because while

being different, it is also the soil from which our present grows and in which, for good or for ill, it remains rooted. Study of the past forces us to reckon with the fact that what for us goes without saying was not necessarily presumed by our ancestors; indeed, what many of us presume without argument would, in some cases, have been for them quite unthinkable (a godless world? gender as a social construct? the natural equality of all people?). To explore the past is to realize not simply how strange the past is, but how strange our present world is when viewed from the past.

This interest in the present has never been particularly hidden in my writing. After all, I wrote a book on Julian of Norwich that ended with an appeal to Dorothy Day, followed by a book on Thomas Aquinas that concluded with the question of how the theology of the past can be made relevant today. But sometimes I have tried to make the present interest of my work even more explicit, and the essays in this volume for the most part place the present in the foreground. Of course, due to the inevitable limits of anyone's base of knowledge, there are a lot of thinkers from the past who figure in these essays: Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, the painters known as the "Flemish Primitives," and so forth. But modern figures are engaged as well: William James and Max Weber, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Edward Schillebeeckx, Walter Benjamin and Michel de Certeau. And the aim of each essay is to explore present questions concerning theology, politics, and culture. How are theology and ethics related? How should we understand the secularization of the West? What political purposes do certain forms of spirituality serve? How can theology take place within the realm of the visual and literary arts? These are questions about how we live now, not questions about the past, even though glancing backward can be useful as we move forward.

The essays in this book are organized under three headings: Theology, Politics, and Culture. The essays in the “Theology” section develop positions on certain fundamental questions that provide a theological framework for the other essays.

The first essay, “Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic,” deals with issues of theological anthropology and what difference it makes if one takes seriously the claim of the Second Vatican Council that “it is only in the mystery of the Word incarnate that light is shed on the mystery of humankind.”¹ It is my attempt to give the “anthropological turn” that Catholic theology took during the twentieth century something of a Christological corrective. This essay also allows me to make some remarks on what in the twentieth century is probably the principal issue in Catholic theology: the relationship between nature and grace. I do not pretend that what I say here is the last word on the topic, which continues to be debated into the twenty-first century. It is rather an attempt to sketch a position that is compatible with what is sometimes called “evangelical Catholicism.”

The second essay, “Aesthetics: The Theological Sublime,” grapples with the claim that we live in a time that is aptly described as “postmodernity” and tries to discern what Christians can and cannot make use of in postmodern thought. In the late twentieth century (which my undergraduate students call, disconcertingly, “the 1900s”) this seemed an extraordinarily pressing question. Today, despite its connotations of futurity, “postmodernity” seems slightly passé, its genial relativism replaced by a new kind of strident moralism. Fortunately, this essay does not overinvest in the enduring relevance of postmodernity but rather presents Christianity as possessing its own sort of critique of modern thought. At the same time, I do believe that the postmodern critique of master narratives, especially the master narrative of

1. Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes* 22, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman Tanner (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2:1081.

Enlightenment modernity, retains a certain usefulness, helping to free theology from subservience to a putatively more “neutral” secular discourse. It is probably this aspect of the essay that warranted its inclusion in the volume *Radical Orthodoxy*.² And while I do not typically apply the label “radically orthodox” to myself, this essay displays my intellectual debt to John Milbank and others in this movement. It likewise shows my debt to Hans Urs von Balthasar, even if I now find dubious some of his more adventurous claims about the inner life of God and feel somewhat more kindly toward the *bête noire* of Balthasarians, Karl Rahner.

The third essay, “Doctrine: Knowing and Doing,” tries to map the relationship between ethical discourse and doctrinal discourse, suggesting that one cannot and ought not draw too sharp a line between the two. It might be thought of as an updated version of Thomas Aquinas’s claim that theology is both a speculative and a practical discipline, and that theology does not become less practical the more speculative it becomes, nor more practical the less speculative it becomes. Here the past proves useful as a mirror for the present, as Augustine’s debate with the Donatists is used to show how thinking and doing are so mutually implicating that we cannot really say where speculation leaves off and practice begins.

Essay four, “The Trinity and Politics,” in some ways continues this topic, in this case looking at the ways in which the doctrine of the Trinity has been used in various political theologies. While still holding to the simultaneously speculative and practical nature of theology, this essay puts more emphasis on the irreducibility of the speculative. That is to say, the doctrine of the Trinity first of all tells us something true about God, and we should not fall into the trap of thinking that the doctrine of the Trinity is about anything other than God—something more

2. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, eds., *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999).

“practical,” such as striking a balance among various sorts of moral knowledge or providing a blueprint for human social relations. Trinitarian doctrine orients us toward the truth of God, providing rules for ordering our speaking and thinking about how the Father saves us through the Son in the Spirit by drawing us into God’s own eternal life. This belief, like all beliefs, has practical consequences, which are at work in the doctrine itself. In other words, the doctrine of the Trinity is politically relevant because it tells us of our highest good, and how that good has come to dwell among us in the missions of Christ and the Spirit, and not because it tells us some practical thing encoded within the doctrine.

The fifth essay, “Christendom and the Marian Path of the Church,” presents another way in which doctrine and practice can intertwine by offering the perhaps odd pairing of secularization theory and Mariology. While the meaning of “secularization” is contested, it seems obvious that something has changed in the Western world, and that this something has to do with the place of Christianity in Western societies. The shorthand for this change is “the end of Christendom.” How do we understand what this change means for the Church? I suggest that if one employs something like patristic “figural” reading to the life of Mary—so that Mary’s story provides the key for reading the story of the Church—we can better understand where the Church is within the arc of her story, which might help us be more hopeful of the future and less nostalgic for the past glories that (we imagine) were Christendom.

The second section, “Politics,” focuses on the question of modernity and freedom. Essay six, “Order, Freedom, and ‘Kindness’” offers a genealogy of modern freedom and points to Julian of Norwich’s account of “kindness” as offering an alternative to freedom understood as a contentless capacity for choice. Since writing this essay, I have become more wary of such genealogies, worried that they are simply “just-so stories” that narrate the past

in such a way as to arrive at precisely the denunciation of features of the present that we have already decided on other grounds are worthy of denunciation.³ While I don't think that my claims about how the ideas of William of Ockham are related to modern notions of liberty are entirely false, I am now more interested in Julian's notion of "kindness" as a positive proposal than as a path not taken in the genealogy of modernity. I suppose what I would say of genealogies is what Reinhold Niebuhr said of biblical symbols: they should be taken seriously, but not literally. That is, they can be interesting and illuminating, but they are to history what a Hollywood biopic is to a person's life. They are more concerned with telling a compelling story than with the messy complexities of history. One should use genealogies with caution.

The seventh and eighth essays, "Making Religion Safe for Democracy" and "The Politics of Disenchantment," together offer an account of how two seminal modern thinkers, William James and Max Weber, use the category of "mysticism" to secure politics as a space that is free from the baleful effects of religion while still allowing that religion remains an important part of human experience. My interest in early twentieth-century discussions of mysticism grew out of my work on Julian of Norwich, whose work gained a broad popular audience precisely at the time that thinkers like James and Weber were constructing "mysticism" as the essential core of religion, a core that was by its very nature inward and private and therefore politically harmless. My own "political" reading of Julian was developed precisely in opposition to such accounts of mysticism, though engagement with them remained implicit in my book on Julian.⁴ These two essays make that engagement explicit and, in the case of Weber, show

3. I sketch a critique of the practice of genealogy in my review of Thomas Pfau's *Minding the Modern* in *Commonweal* 142, no. 3 (Spring 2015): 32–35.

4. Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ* (South Bend, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1999).

how his construal of mysticism is still at work in contemporary political theology.

Essay nine, “All Things Counter, Original, Spare, Strange,” is something of an olive branch to modern liberalism. It represents a bit of rethinking on my part regarding how metaphysical vision might be related to political theory. If essay two seeks to blur the line between the speculative and the practical, this essay tries to draw it back in, at least as a dotted line, by recognizing a certain looseness of fit between metaphysics and politics. I do not endorse David Hume’s view that “ought” can never be derived from “is,” and so I still think John Rawls is wrong in suggesting that one’s “political conception” can or should be independent of one’s “comprehensive worldview,” but I judge Rawls to be correct in thinking that the burdens of judgment are such that the political pie might get sliced in a variety of ways even by those who share the same comprehensive worldview. In other words, one should be wary of reading policy proposals off the Nicene Creed. Liberal democracy may not be the reign of God, but, as recent years have shown us, certain formalistic processes enshrined in liberal democracies, such as the peaceful transfer of political power, are also not nothing.

The third section, “Culture,” collects essays that attempt to find theology in unexpected places. Essay ten, “Walking in the Pilgrim City,” uses the work of Michel de Certeau to think about Christianity as a cultural practice that might find lodging in a variety of different places, but which, like Jesus himself, has no place to lay its head (Luke 9:58). This is the oldest essay in this collection (it was published the same year I earned my PhD) but seems to me to retain its value inasmuch as it attempts to work out some basic ideas that I have continued to presume in writing about theology and politics. In particular, it tries to explain why thinking of the Church as a “politics” did not involve Christians trying to lay their hands on the levers of power. The politics of the Church

can be exercised even when the Church is stripped of all power; indeed, that might be when it can best be exercised. Moreover, it shows how different sorts of cultural production by Christians can embody a politics without ever talking about elections or policies.

The eleventh essay, “The Catholic Intellectual Tradition: Medieval Lessons,” presents a high-level overview of what medieval intellectual culture can tell us about how we might think about the Catholic intellectual tradition today. It is a plea for Catholics to find a way to hold fast to that tradition without retreating into a defensive posture vis-à-vis secular culture. The Middle Ages is exemplary for the confidence with which it sought to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). But the medieval approach cannot simply be replicated today, not least because the cultural conditions that we call “Christendom” are irretrievable (if such a retrieval were even desirable). Nevertheless, there are medieval lessons to be learned, and this essay seeks to suggest what those might be.

Essay twelve, “Startling Figures and Wingless Chickens,” looks at the fiction of Flannery O’Connor in order to reflect on how one goes about proclaiming Christ in a world that believes it has outgrown him. O’Connor embraced modernist literary techniques but put them to work in service to Catholic dogma—particularly the Church’s teachings on the fallen human condition and the redemptive possibilities of grace. She did this, however, with such great artistry—never turning her stories into containers for dogmatic statements—that many of her readers had no idea that she was a deeply devout Christian. Yet her stories work a weird alchemy that unsettles modern complacencies and opens us up to the disruptive workings of grace in our world.

The thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth essays all focus on Renaissance paintings. “The Lamb of God in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” looks at Jan van Eyck’s *Lamb of God* (often called *The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* or *The Ghent Altarpiece*)

in conversation with Walter Benjamin as a meditation on what becomes of art once it is severed from its roots in ritual. The essay on Masaccio's *Trinity* explores how both iconography and spatial construction can be used to encode a rich theology of the triune God. The final essay, a brief meditation on Hans Memling's *St. John Altarpiece*, explores how even amid human suffering and the drab routine of everyday life the longed-for peace of the heavenly city is always on the verge of being revealed.

Aside from some minor tweaks of wording (in order not to embarrass the good editors at Word on Fire Academic with my sol-ecisms) and an attempt to regularize citations, I have left these essays more or less in the form that they originally appeared. They were written over the course of some twenty-five years, and it would be odd if I had changed none of my opinions in that time. We human beings are, after all, pilgrim wanderers, always moving forward. But I have not tried to update them to completely match my present views. *Quod scripsi, scripsi*. There are a few specific things I said that I would now not say. For example, I was wrong to say in the essay on William James that the young Schleiermacher was interested in religion in general but not in any specific religion, and in the essay on doctrine I now think that it is unfair to Lonergan to identify his sophisticated account of theological method with a slogan like “doctrine divides; service unites” and that his notion of “constitutive meaning” might not be all that different from what I call “theological ecology” in that essay. In terms of overall tone, I am struck by how some of the older essays display such a fierce desire to defeat intellectual opponents. This is a desire that has moderated in me over the years, and I now try to be a bit more charitable toward those with whom I disagree. I am also struck by how I have become more

chastened in what I hope for from the Church. I still believe her to be the Body of Christ and the temple of the Spirit, and I likewise believe that the gates of hell will not prevail against her. But twenty years of scandals, some involving figures that I had held up as exemplary in their witness, have left me feeling that the holiness of the Church might be much more hidden and mysterious than I had previously reckoned.

Our views change, we hope, because we grow wiser and not simply because we grow weary. Any growth in wisdom that may have occurred in me cannot be ascribed to my own effort but to those who have patiently loved me even in my foolishness. To these friends, family, and colleagues I owe a debt of gratitude. I would mention in particular my late colleague Angela Russell Christman, a scholar of the early Church, a lover of art and nature, and a true friend. Our quarter century of conversation enriched my life beyond measure. She died too young and suffered much, but she was faithful to the end. In her living and her dying she taught me many things about being a Christian. I dedicate this book to her memory.

Theology: Orienting

1

Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic

Five Theses Related to Theological Anthropology

In the final session of the Second Vatican Council, the bishops assembled issued the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, which, in the spirit of *aggiornamento*, sought to bring about a *rapprochement* between the Church and the modern world. During the debate on the Constitution—at that point called Schema 13—Gregory Baum wrote in *Commonweal* that it had found “a new method of speaking to Christians and non-Christians alike. . . . The authors of the schema, therefore, are convinced that if they announce the mystery of man and his solidarity here on earth as it is revealed in the Christian Gospel, the people of the world, called as they are by the Spirit, may well understand such language.”¹ Not the authority of the Church, nor even the natural law that is accessible to human reason, but rather “man” was assuming his place as the common ground of future dialogue between the Church and the modern world. Seemingly, in *Gaudium et Spes*, the Church was endorsing the anthropological starting point in theology, which found its

* This essay was originally published as “Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic: Five Theses Related to Theological Anthropology.” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 67–84.

1. Gregory Baum, “On the Modern World,” *Commonweal* 83, no. 4 (October 29, 1965): 117–19, at 118.

genesis in the “method of immanence” of Maurice Blondel and its chief proponent in Karl Rahner.²

Meanwhile, at just about the same time, Michel Foucault was offering a rather different assessment of “man’s” future, writing: “man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge. . . . As the archeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.” If the conditions that produced “man” as the subject of the human sciences were to disappear, “then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea.”³ Rather than being the firm basis for dialogue, “man” was at best a contested territory and perhaps only an ephemeral image, even now in the process of being obliterated by vast, impersonal historical forces.

For some, among whom I must number myself, time seems to have proved Foucault to be the more prescient prophet. Contrary to the hopes that flourished in the immediate wake of the council, the ground constituted by “man” has proved to be more contested than common. Perhaps the simple fact that some readers wince to see “man” used as a generic term for human beings indicates the difficulty today of trying to encompass the human *qua* human without arousing ideological suspicion. The modern “man” of which *Gaudium et Spes* speaks appears today to be, in fact, quite parochial: not only male but also European, bourgeois, and university educated.⁴ As the modern cosmopolitan utopia devolves into multicultural identity politics, we cast a jaundiced eye upon

2. See Maurice Blondel, “The Letter on Apologetics,” in *The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma*, trans. Alexander Dru and Illyd Trethowan (London: Harvill, 1964). For Rahner, see, for example, “Theology and Anthropology,” in *Theological Investigations IX: Writings of 1965–1967 I*, trans. Graham Harrison (New York: Herder, 1972), 28–45.

3. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1973), 386–87.

4. For a critique of what one might call the “Eurocentrism” of Dietrich Bonhoeffer that, *mutatis mutandis*, could be applied to *Gaudium et Spes*, see Gustavo Gutiérrez, “The Limitations of Modern Theology: On a Letter of Dietrich Bonhoeffer,” in *Essential Writings*, ed. James B. Nickoloff (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 35–42.

claims that beneath our differences of gender, race, language, and culture—“under the skin,” as it were—we are fundamentally the same. In the post-Foucauldian, post-humanist climate in which at least academics like me live, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, in their appeal to “man” as common ground, seem to be a day late and a dollar short.

If the Church is to speak and listen to the world today, it seems that the basis will have to be something other than the “man” of *Gaudium et Spes*; perhaps it should be what it always has been: Christ and his Gospel. If we wish to speak to the world about human existence, we do it by speaking of the man Jesus. This claim does not originate from any desire to “go back” to what some see as the dark days of the nineteen-and-a-half centuries prior to the Second Vatican Council, nor it is a retreat from theological anthropology. Rather, this claim springs from a recognition that the world has moved on and that Foucault was right: claims about what it means to be human are not neutral scientific claims but rather are shaped by highly particular beliefs, practices, institutions, and narratives. The “man” of modernity was a recent invention that has now eroded beyond recognition because of the erosion of the conditions that produced him. So, if the Church is to speak about humanity, it must not appeal to that face now washed away but to the face of Christ.

The claim that we speak about humanity by speaking about Christ, and not vice versa, is found in *Gaudium et Spes* itself: “it is only in the mystery of the Word incarnate that light is shed on the mystery of humankind.”⁵ This quotation is, of course, the key text in John Paul II’s interpretation of the Second Vatican Council, and I think that his choice of this text is an inspired one for the Church’s mission of bringing Christ and his Gospel to the world. It defines, I would argue, a certain kind of “evangelical

5. Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes* 22, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman Tanner (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2:1081.

Catholicism.” In the American context, this term has been used by William Portier and others to refer to Catholics for whom the key historical/sociological moment is not the Second Vatican Council but the dissolution of the immigrant Catholic subculture of the Church in America, the “de-ghettoizing” of the Church, often identified with the election of John F. Kennedy as president, by which Catholics were allowed fully to embrace their American identity.⁶ This dissolution caused an identity crisis for some Catholics. No longer given an identity by life within Catholic enclaves, evangelical Catholics are those who consciously choose to identify as Catholic and who often see such a choice as involving some kind of disaffiliation from American culture, particularly from the standard political spectrum of left and right, in order to live the fullness of the Catholic faith. They are inclined to look to figures such as Dorothy Day, who made common cause on questions of labor and race with the radical left of her day but who could also write, “my nature is such that gratitude alone, gratitude for the faith, that most splendid gift, a gift not earned by me, a gratuitous gift, is enough to bind me in holy obedience to Holy Mother Church and her commands.”⁷ Evangelical Catholics, rather than embracing assimilation, see the teachings of the Church as defining a distinctive, Christocentric account of human flourishing that to some degree sets Catholics apart.

While I find intriguing and helpful Portier’s suggestion that the emergence in America of this new “style” of Catholicism is connected to the dissolution of the American Catholic subculture, what I would like to focus on here is not the distinctively

6. William L. Portier, “Here Come the Evangelical Catholics,” *Communio* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 35–66. Portier mentions in his essay Catholics coming out of the charismatic movement, admirers of Dorothy Day, and Catholic students of Stanley Hauerwas (of which I am one). Robert Barron has identified his own approach to Catholicism with this term; see “The Evangelical Path of Word on Fire,” March 2, 2021, <https://www.wordonfire.org>. I would note that the term “evangelical catholic” is also used by some Protestants, particularly Lutherans, who wish to reclaim the sacramental and liturgical heritage of the churches of the Reformation.

7. Dorothy Day, *By Little and By Little: The Selected Writings of Dorothy Day*, ed. Robert Ellsberg (New York: Knopf, 1983), 172–73.

American and post-subculture qualities of evangelical Catholicism but rather how evangelical Catholicism is part of a larger theological tradition: a tradition extended both in time (beyond our present moment) and space (beyond the national and cultural boundaries of the United States). What is *theologically* distinctive about the evangelical style of Catholicism is a particular theological anthropology: one that is transformed by Christology, such that it is the humanity of Christ that is the concrete norm for all discussions of human nature. Therefore, in what follows I would like to offer five theses that I think characterize evangelical Catholicism theologically. I realize that not every Catholic who fits within Portier's more sociological definition of "evangelical Catholicism" will agree with all, or even any, of these theses. So, I offer them as the *confessio* of a self-identified evangelical Catholic, trying to explain what I mean by them and how they form a persistent thread in the Catholic tradition.

1) Rejecting a two-tiered theology of nature and grace and the ethic that goes with it does not mean that grace is everywhere in the same way.

The general trend of Catholic theology in the twentieth century was to seek a closer integration of nature and grace, rejecting the "dualist" account in which nature is a self-enclosed structure upon which grace builds a kind of superstructure and proposing instead that grace is the fulfillment of nature's intrinsic dynamism.⁸ Along with this rejection goes a rejection of the similarly two-tiered approach to the Christian life, in which the laity are expected to fulfill the precepts of the natural law as a kind of foundation to which sacramental grace is superadded, while the lives of vowed religious are called to a higher standard embodied

8. For a brief, general account of the "dualist" approach and the more integrated approach that has replaced it, see Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 47–53.

in the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. This theological shift is registered most clearly at the Second Vatican Council in the strong affirmation of a “universal call to holiness” for all Christians by virtue of their baptism.⁹

However, having said this one has not said a whole lot, because the vast majority of theologians in the second half of the twentieth century would say that they reject the dualist approach, that they believe that grace and nature are integrally related, and that they believe that holiness is not the special prerogative of the vowed religious. What matters is *how* one integrates nature and grace. Recognizing that I am risking parody via oversimplification, I would say that one can discern two different approaches to this integration while recognizing that any single person probably combines elements of both.

In one approach, the emphasis falls upon the always already graced character of the world. In such a view, the anthropological starting point for theology seems natural: when we do theology, we are articulating common human experience in a Christian way. This experience is already a graced experience, even if its graced character is as yet unthematized in Christian categories. Such things as sacraments or preaching are “causes” of grace principally in the way that they thematize, and thereby make available for conscious appropriation, the grace that is already present. As Karl Rahner put it, “Preaching is the awakening and making explicit what is already there in the depths of man, not by nature but by grace.”¹⁰ Some theologians, following in Rahner’s wake (though perhaps in a way that he himself would not have endorsed), have drawn the conclusion that, as Elizabeth Dreyer puts it, “grace flows primarily from the world to the church and not the other way around.” In this view, the world is the “primordial

9. See Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium* 5, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman Tanner (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2:880–84.

10. Karl Rahner, *Nature and Grace: Dilemmas in the Modern Church*, trans. Dinah Wharton (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964), 134.

arena” in which we experience God’s grace and the purpose of the Church and its sacraments is to “name, symbolize and celebrate the grace we encounter in the world.”¹¹

But this is not the only way in which grace and nature might be integrated. Rather than emphasizing the always already graced character of human existence, one might emphasize what the scholastics called the *potentia obediencialis* of human nature, understood not simply as human nature’s passive “non-repugnance” toward grace but as a true *appetitus naturalis* for the vision of God, which is at the same time constitutive of human nature *and* something elicited by grace. Karl Rahner can be invoked in support of this view as well: “We can only fully understand man in his ‘undefinable’ essence if we see him as *potentia obediencialis* for the divine life; this is his *nature*. His nature is such that its *absolute* fulfillment comes through grace, and so nature *of itself* must reckon with the *meaningful* possibility of remaining without absolute fulfillment.”¹² In this approach, no less than the first, there is no “pure nature” untouched by grace, yet here the touch of grace manifests itself in an elicited desire. In the concrete, historical order of things, human nature is characterized not so much by its possession of grace as by its restless yearning for fulfillment—a fulfillment that is in no way guaranteed but yet is trusted in through faith. In this approach, such activities as sacraments and preaching are efficient causes of grace. Yet, the grace they cause is encountered by the restless human spirit neither as something alien to it nor as something already possessed unthematically by it but as the arrival of the bridegroom whose presence has been anxiously awaited.

Regarding how these two different integrations of nature

11. Interview by Art Winter with Elizabeth Dreyer, “Spirituality more easily found in the world than in churches,” *National Catholic Reporter* 33 no. 7 (December 13, 1996): 9–10.

12. Rahner, *Nature and Grace*, 140–41. As Hans Urs von Balthasar noted, “there are many Karl Rahners!” (*The Moment of Christian Witness*, 3rd ed., trans. Richard Beckley [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994], 148).

and grace play out in one's understanding of the universal call to holiness, we might say that the first would take the form of an affirmation of the "secular" or "worldly" realms, while the second would take the form of a call to all Christians to let every sphere of their lives be shaped by narratives and practices of the Christian faith. In the first approach, the worldly occupations and activities of lay Christians are affirmed as just as much a path to holiness as the consecrated life. One can be a saint in a corporate boardroom or on a picket line, just as much as in a monastery. Indeed, some might argue that, in the modern world, holiness is more easily achieved *in* the world than apart from it.¹³ The Church is less a school for holiness as it is the place in which the grace that has been bestowed in our worldly callings is named and celebrated. In the second approach, Christians are not affirmed in their worldly vocations but are called to discern what is godly in them and to transform or abandon what is not godly. Indeed, this second approach begins with a presumption that our worldly vocations are in some sort of fundamental need of transformation by grace so that they might more closely approximate—or even embody, although in a distinctively "lay" manner—the evangelical counsels.¹⁴ Is sitting on the board of directors of a multinational corporation compatible with the counsel of poverty? Is participation in the entertainment industry compatible with chastity? Is climbing the corporate ladder compatible with obedience? The answer to any of these questions might well be "yes," but only if one lets the way in which one does these things be transformed by the pattern that we find in Christ and the saints.

In terms of Portier's thesis, what advocates of the first approach fail to realize is that what they take to be the workings of

13. See, for example, the correspondence between Thomas Merton and Rosemary Radford Ruether in *At Home in the World: The Letters of Thomas Merton & Rosemary Radford Ruether*, ed. Mary Tardiff (New York: Orbis, 1995).

14. One might say that the presumptions of this second approach are not unlike those found in Hippolytus and other early Christian writers regarding the "forbidden professions." See *Apostolic Tradition*, 16.9–25.

grace in the secular realm are often simply echoes of the rapidly dissipating Catholic subculture. Prior to the 1960s, Catholics in America were, in many cases, so formed by the Catholic culture in which they lived that they thought certain attitudes, dispositions, and values were simply part of human nature rather than something cultivated by teaching, preaching, and the grace of the sacraments. This kind of optimism about the concurrence of nature and grace persists in many quarters, though if Portier is correct the optimism wanes along with the subculture that engendered it. The Catholics whom he describes as “evangelical,” on the other hand, evince a much keener awareness that holiness must be consciously cultivated and that the sacramental and other practices of the Church are the chief means by which the field of sanctity is sown.

2) An affirmation of the fundamental goodness of human nature should always be accompanied by a keen awareness of the paradoxical constitution of that nature and, consequently, of the limitations of natural reason and natural law.

The view of nature as *appetitus naturalis* for the beatific vision rather than always already graced lends itself to a chastened view of the capacities of that nature. Though one could hardly reject all notions of natural law and natural reason and still claim to stand within the Catholic tradition, an evangelical Catholic theology recognizes that, as Portier puts it, “the way forward is not to jettison natural law but to re-theologize it.”¹⁵ Consequently, such a theology emphasizes our need for divine revelation and the assistance of grace in order to know and do the good that accords with human fulfillment.

In part, this is simply a matter of taking seriously the effects of sin on our capacity to know and do the good. As Thomas

15. Portier, “Evangelical Catholics,” 65.

Aquinas says, while human beings in the state of integrity, prior to the fall, were capable of doing “the good in proportion to nature,” in the state of corrupted and fallen nature “human beings fall short of what is according to human nature, so that they are unable to fulfill it by their own natural powers.” Thus, in our fallen state we can do some good actions—i.e., a carpenter does not need the intercession of St. Joseph to build a house that does not collapse—but we are, in Thomas’s example, like “a sick person [who] can make some movements by himself, yet cannot move fully, like the movements of a healthy person, unless cured by the help of medicine.”¹⁶

But this limitation of the human capacity to know and act is not simply a result of sin. It is constitutive of our nature as beings who are created and finite while at the same time called to share in the vision of God. Thus, Thomas notes that, both in the state of integrity and in the state of corruption, “human nature needs the help of God as first mover, to do or wish any good whatsoever.” And beyond this general need for divine providence, human beings also need the special assistance of sanctifying grace in order “to do and wish supernatural good.”¹⁷

Without, therefore, rejecting the Catholic affirmation of the fundamental goodness of human nature, we ought to foster, like Thomas, what might be called an “Augustinian sensibility” with regard to the human capacity for thought and action. While human reason can discern God’s existence from creation, it seems more inclined to be led astray into idolatry; while human reason can discern the moral law, we more often use our intellects to search out self-justifications. In other words, without grace, human nature in the concrete order in which we find it is inadequate for leading a truly human life, much less leading the life by which we become partakers of the divine nature. One might

16. *Summa theologiae* 1-2.109.2.

17. *Summa theologiae* 1-2.109.2.

say that our nature reveals God to us not primarily through those things that reason can discern, but through the restlessness of a reason that is perpetually unsatisfied by what it knows and a will that is perpetually unsatisfied by what it desires.

Again speaking in terms of Portier's claims, an evangelical Catholicism would grant in principle the ability of unaided human reason to have some limited knowledge of God and the good but would emphasize that even in principle this knowledge is quite limited—as Thomas Aquinas says, “only for a few, and after a long time, and mixed in with many errors.”¹⁸ And in actual practice, human sin means that reason misses the mark more often than not. Thus we ought to be dubious about attempts at “public theology,” suspecting that this is in fact nothing but a theology stripped of all substantive Christian convictions.¹⁹ Even when speaking in terms of natural reason and natural law, an evangelical Catholicism will want a robustly theological version of these, seeing natural theology and law not as an apologetic tool, nor as a neutral place of dialogue, but as a way for Christians themselves to understand how it is that human beings without the aid of revelation can come to some sort of knowledge of God and the good. It is a theological claim about the goodness of God, not an instrument for influencing public policy.

Even if one shifts from natural theology and law to the anthropological approach favored since *Gaudium et Spes*, the same concerns and emphases apply. Theological anthropology has its proper place, but that place is not as the basis for dialogue if for no other reason than the thoroughly paradoxical character of human nature, which makes it an unstable and contested foundation.²⁰

18. *Summa theologiae* 1.1.1.

19. See Michael J. Baxter, “Blowing the Dynamite of the Church: Catholic Radicalism from a Catholic Radicalist Perspective,” in *The Church as Counterculture*, ed. Michael L. Budde and Robert W. Brimlow (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2000), 195–212.

20. I do not mean to imply here simply that theological anthropology is an inadequate foundation for dialogue with the world, but rather that the very idea of needing some sort of foundation for dialogue at all is highly questionable. We speak by speaking, not by producing theories about how speech is possible.

We do not have a firm grasp on what it means to be human, since, as Pascal wrote, the human being is “equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from where he came, and the infinite in which he is covered.”²¹ We might go so far as to grant to Foucault his claims about the contingency of “man” and even to see the truth in the idea, again in the words of Pascal, “that nature is itself only a first custom, just as custom is a second nature.”²² Yet, against Foucault and nihilism in general, we must maintain the claim that the contingent events of history that produce what we take to be human nature are not simply random but have a providential pattern, discernable through the eyes of faith. So, one can affirm that there is something like “human nature”—indeed, the doctrine of the Incarnation requires it—without making it a category that is frozen in time or immediately accessible to our comprehension.

3) The practice of Jesus and the saints is the norm for Christian life and thought.

In order to discern this providential pattern that is human nature we must have recourse to Christ and his saints as the pattern of true humanity. This is simply another way of saying what I have already quoted from *Gaudium et Spes* 22: “it is only in the mystery of the Word incarnate that light is shed on the mystery of humankind.” This is hardly a new insight; once again in the words of Pascal:

Not only is it through Jesus Christ alone that we know God but it is only through Jesus Christ that we know ourselves. We know life and death only through Jesus Christ. Without Jesus

21. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, Sellier ed., §230, in *Pensées and Other Writings*, trans. Honor Levi, ed. Anthony Levi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 67.

22. *Pensées*, §159 (39).

Christ we do not know what our life, nor our death, nor God,
nor ourselves really are.²³

Such a view runs against the grain both of the older dualist account of nature and grace as well as those attempts at integrating nature and grace that stress the always already graced character of human existence. As different as these two are, they agree on this: human nature has a kind of self-transparency such that it interprets itself, whether this is because it is purely natural and can be grasped by reason apart from the illumination of grace, or because our way of knowing is already, albeit unthematically, illuminated with grace. But if human nature is neither purely natural nor always already illuminated by grace but paradoxically characterized by an *appetitus naturalis* for the beatific vision that it can in no way satisfy on its own, then it is a mystery that awaits illumination. Christ, the light of the world, is that illumination.

This means that the truly human life is one that is lived in imitation of the concrete and particular pattern manifested in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. As Thomas Aquinas said, “Christ’s action is our instruction.”²⁴ This is true not simply for some elite group of spiritual proficients—the vowed religious—but for all the baptized. The universal call to holiness is the call of Christ to follow him. When one is accepted into the order of catechumens in preparation for Baptism, she is signed with the cross on the forehead, with the words, “learn to know and follow him.”²⁵ This bearing of the cross is how Christians live the Law of Christ, which takes precedence over any other law and all purely human notions of prudence.

Of course, if grace indeed “perfects and does not destroy nature,”²⁶ then there ought to be some continuity between the

23. *Pensées*, §36 (10).

24. *Summa theologiae* 3.40.1 ad 3.

25. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* 55.

26. *Summa theologiae* 1.1.8 ad 2.

Law of Christ and the natural law; the path of Christ ought to follow in some sense the bent of our nature. The emphasis, however, ought perhaps to fall on the phrase “*in some sense*.” There is truth in Irenaeus’s oft-quoted phrase, “the glory of God is the living man”: God wills that our natures be fulfilled through grace. But the second half of what Irenaeus wrote is somewhat less-oft-quoted: “and the life of man is the vision of God.”²⁷ And this vision, Irenaeus makes clear, is given to us in Christ the Word, the revealer of the Father. So, while the path of Christ does follow the bent of our nature, we must reckon with the paradoxical and fragmented character of that nature. We ought not assume that what first occurs to us when we think of human flourishing *is* in fact true human flourishing.

Though it is absolutely true that Christ came so that his followers might have life in abundance (John 10:10), the road to Calvary is not likely to fit easily into prevailing cultural notions of abundant life. Paul, therefore, calls upon Christians to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds” (Rom. 12:2), and this renewing takes the form of imitating the pattern of self-sacrificing love “that was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). This pattern is the heart of Scripture as *norma normans non normata* by which we interpret both human wisdom and ecclesial doctrine. This is not, however, simply a matter of asking, “What would Jesus do?” In claiming the normativity of Jesus for Christian life and thought, I am not proposing that we can naively read doctrinal and moral instruction directly out of the New Testament. While I am more inclined than some theologians to think that the doctrine of the Trinity is at its heart a “scriptural” doctrine,²⁸ we must recognize that ecclesial teaching

27. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.20.7, trans. Robert M. Grant, in Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (London: Routledge, 1997), 153.

28. That is, I think it is a faithful articulation of the identity, as rendered in Scripture, of Jesus, the one he calls Father, and their Spirit. For a defense of this view, see David S. Yeago, “The New Testament and the Nicene Dogma: A Contribution to the Recovery of Theological

on such matters develops over time. Likewise, we must realize that we face moral questions today that were undreamt of by the human authors of Scripture. However, while recognizing the reality of development, the Church must never take its eyes off Christ or replace his normative role with a philosophical or scientific theory.

This is why we should stress the crucial role of the saints as what we might call “canonical extensions” of the pattern of thought and action we see in Jesus. Of course, any Catholic theology must assign some role for tradition as the medium through which we understand Jesus Christ. But within tradition, the saints should have preeminence because they offer us an image in motion of the ongoing work of the Spirit. Philosophical and scientific discourses have a place in the Church, but they must not displace the discourse that is the saints, for, unlike various philosophies and sciences, the saints engage us in an ongoing process that is at the same time *aggiornamento*, because they like us live in the last days that are the time of the Church, and *ressourcement*, because their holiness consists entirely in pointing us toward Jesus Christ.

4) *The Church must think through the consequences of its identity as the pilgrim people of God.*

If human nature is something historically *produced* and not something simply “there,” then the Church serves the world precisely by producing a particular kind of humanity—one that takes Christ’s humanity as its pattern. Christians believe that this humanity is the true humanity to which we are called, but this is a matter of faith, not knowledge (is there any reason to think that the true humanity of Christ is any more knowable by reason than

Exegesis,” in *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, ed. Stephen E. Fowl (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 87–100.

his true divinity?). To be a Christian is to wager that the truth of the humanity of Christ will exert a force of attraction upon human beings if it is convincingly presented by being embodied in the preaching, sacraments, and saints of the Church and in the formation of the *plebs sancta Dei*—the common holy people of God. This task of the Church has become perhaps more apparent today.²⁹

Here we engage most explicitly with Portier's central thesis: evangelical Catholicism is a response to the changed social situation of the Church. As he puts it, "In a completely voluntary situation where the only boundaries between Catholics and other Americans are the ones we make, the Church needs to be more clearly the Church." In other words, the Church is "in diaspora" and must live accordingly. And what it means to "live accordingly" is not to take up a stance of anonymous servility toward the world but rather to serve the world boldly by living Catholic Christianity in all its fullness. As Gerhard Lohfink memorably put it, "*Precisely because the church does not exist for itself, but completely and exclusively for the world, it is necessary that the church not become world, that it retain its own countenance.*"³⁰

Portier's thesis might be extended beyond the borders of contemporary Catholicism in America. First, the Church has *always* lived in diaspora, whether it has recognized this or not. It has always been the case that "here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come" (Heb. 13:14). Like its Lord, the Church has no place to lay its head as it travels through history. The author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* knew it when he said of Christians that "they dwell in their own fatherlands, but as if sojourners in them; they share all things as citizens, and suffer

29. For an argument, plus more theses, about how we should think about formation and initiation today, see Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, "Baptism in the Diaspora," in *On Baptism*, ed. Gerald W. Schlabbach (Kitchener, ON: Pandora, 2004), 16–61.

30. Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus and Community: The Social Dimension of Christian Faith*, trans. John P. Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 146, emphasis in the original.

all things as strangers. Every foreign country is their fatherland and every fatherland is a foreign country.”³¹ Origen knew it when he wrote to the pagan Celsus, “we know of the existence in each city of another sort of country, created by the Logos of God.”³² Augustine knew it when he spoke of Christians as “*redempta familia domini Christi et peregrina ciuitas regis Christi* [the redeemed household servants of the Lord Christ and the pilgrim city of Christ the King].”³³ Thomas Aquinas knew it when he spoke of us as having the knowledge of “wayfarers” so long as we are in this life.³⁴ The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council knew it when they spoke of the Christians as “making our pilgrimage on earth . . . in tribulation and persecution.”³⁵

But if the pilgrim nature of the Church has been remembered in principle throughout its history, it has in practice been more often forgotten. Like Peter at the mount of Transfiguration, the Church has too often wanted to pitch camp on the site of glory rather than journey with Christ to Jerusalem and the cross. However, the Church’s “homelessness” in the world has become increasingly difficult to ignore since the beginning of the nineteenth century. As the worldly power and prestige of the Church has declined, the contours of the line between the Church and the world have reappeared with glaring obviousness. Despite this obviousness, some have chosen to ignore this shift, whether by pretending that any day now confessional states will be re-established or by stressing the worldly vocation of Christians as “men for others,” fully immersed in the business of the world. Where the changed status of the Church has been recognized,

31. *Epistle to Diognetus* 5, in *The Apostolic Fathers*, trans. Kirsopp Lake (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), 2:361.

32. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8.75, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 510.

33. *De civitate Dei* 1.35.

34. See, e.g., *Summa theologiae* 2-2.8.7.

35. *Lumen Gentium* 7, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2:853. The description of the Church as a “pilgrim” pervades the documents of Vatican II. See *Dei Verbum* 7; *Lumen Gentium* 48; *Dignitatis Humanae* 12; *Ad Gentes* 2.

the response has sometimes been a defensive retrenchment and a nostalgia for past glories. More often, however, I believe the response of the Church has been a positive desire of Catholics to rediscover our distinctive identity as a community called by God to be light for the world. We are discovering ourselves to be what we have always been: God's pilgrim people who live in the midst of the world for the sake of the world.

If the diaspora of the Church is not confined to our contemporary situation, neither is it confined to America. The Church in Europe, no less than the Church in North America, finds itself increasingly in a dispersed minority situation. Though the Church in Europe was not, in most places, a subculture but rather an integral part of the dominant culture, the current situation is essentially the same: Catholics no longer dwell in a cultural milieu that transmits and reinforces Catholic beliefs and practices. But because the patterns of church-state relations in Europe differ from those in the United States so that the Church and its institutions are often financially supported by the state, the Church in Europe has perhaps, on some levels at least, been slower to recognize this fact. There persists among some European Catholics a tendency to see the Church still as a branch of the state, like the Post Office, providing services like Baptism, First Holy Communion, Marriage, and Burial for those who desire them. At the same time, the cultural legacy of the aggressive secularism of the French Revolution has saved many European Catholics from the illusion that there is some natural fit between Catholicism and the "civil religion" of the state, an illusion to which many Catholics in the United States fall prey.

There is much that European and North American Catholics can learn from each other about how to live in the diaspora. Americans have the benefit of long experience of having had to run their churches without assistance from the state; they are not likely to confuse the Church with the Post Office. But they might

confuse it with the UPS: a private enterprise that they opt into as individuals. European Catholicism, unlike Catholicism in the United States, has tended to respond to its diaspora with a proliferation of new ecclesial movements. Movements such as the Community of Sant'Egidio or Communion and Liberation reflect a more communal and perhaps less voluntarist understanding of being Catholic, from which Catholics in North America can learn.

5) The Christian understanding of history is apocalyptic rather than progressive.

In his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, John Paul II wrote that “*life is always at the center of a great struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness.*”³⁶ This sort of apocalyptic language makes some uncomfortable, striking them as “Manichean” in its stark opposition of good and evil, light and darkness. But the loss of the apocalyptic perspective brings with it the loss of a proper understanding of human history and the Church’s place within it.

First, the apocalyptic perspective does not mistakenly see humanity’s pilgrimage through history as fundamentally one of “progress.” We can, of course, speak of progress in a certain sense: human knowledge increases, and with technological advances, things become possible that were not possible before. And one should not slight such things. But the apocalyptic perspective asks whether an increase of knowledge is the same as an increase in wisdom. Do technological advances necessarily correlate with human flourishing? Most importantly, do these sorts of progress hasten the consummation of history? What we have here is something of a replay of the debate in the 1950s and ’60s between the “incarnational” and the “eschatological” approaches to history,

36. Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life [Evangelium Vitae]* (New York: Random House, 1995), 104, emphasis in the original.

debates that were important in the drafting of Schema 13.³⁷ Put no doubt oversimply, the question is whether the fulfillment of history develops gradually from within history via human activity or whether history's fulfillment comes crashing in upon it with the return of Christ in glory. The latter view does not deny that Christians must act to alleviate suffering by attending to both the sources and the effects of injustices, yet it maintains, as Louis Bouyer put it, "that all this work will, so far as we can judge from the hints of divine revelation, never be successful in the sense of establishing any lasting and universal Christian state of things."³⁸

Second, the apocalyptic perspective reminds us that we are in the midst of a struggle between cosmic forces of good and evil. It is crucial, however, that such a claim be accompanied by a nonprogressive view of history, for we ought not to think that the evils of today are any greater or less than the evils of the past. John Paul's statement that life is *always* at the center of a struggle between good and evil serves as a salutary warning against those who would claim that our historical moment presents a unique opportunity and that we must act now to implement some scheme that would bring about a comprehensive elimination of evil. Evil is something that must be endured until it consumes itself. But at the same time, John Paul's emphasis on *struggle* indicates that the endurance of evil is not the same as passive acceptance. Indeed, the Letter to the Ephesians is at pains to remind us that it is *because* "our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness" that our proper means of combat is "to take up the whole armor of God," which consists

37. "The Incarnationalists, stressing the Person of Christ and His Mission and His Church, include among their ranks de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin, and Père Paul Henry, SJ. The eschatologists, stressing the Parousia, the last days of Scripture in which the human race is now present, fix their gaze upon Christ who is to come. These latter number Père Feret, Louis Bouyer and, preeminently, Jean Danielou" (James M. Connolly, *The Voices of France: A Survey of Contemporary Theology in France* [New York: Macmillan, 1961], 149).

38. Louis Bouyer, *Liturgical Piety* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1955), 260.

not in swords or guns or five-year plans but in truth and righteousness and whatever will make us ready “to proclaim the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:12–15). As the book of Revelation makes clear, Christians are not called to success but to perseverance, and faithful Christian endurance in the time-between-times *is* resistance to evil.

No doubt these theses will one day seem as dated as the optimistic predictions about the fruit issuing from the Church’s embrace of the modern world that were penned in the years following the Second Vatican Council. Portier points out well that evangelical Catholicism is a response to a particular set of historical circumstances and, as Foucault would no doubt wish to remind us, if the forces that produced evangelical Catholicism were to disappear, then it too would be erased, like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea. However, inasmuch as it is an attempt to be faithful to the Gospel of Christ by fostering faith, hope, and love—that is, inasmuch as it is *truly* evangelical—then I believe that it has enduring value.

Catholics emerging from their ecclesiastical subculture rightly felt liberated from narrow intellectual, cultural, and social confines. But among some Catholics, particularly those who have known nothing but life outside the subculture, it is beginning to appear that we have simply exchanged one set of intellectual, cultural, and social confines for another—the confines of the postindustrial bourgeoisie. Some of us wonder if the real choice is not whether we should choose confinement or liberation, as if human life were not always lived under some form of discipline, but rather which form of discipleship will lead to true freedom, which form of life is truly a human one.