

Confrontation and culture at Franciscan University

by David Schmiesing

In *The Crisis of Western Education*, first published in 1961, Christopher Dawson advocates the study of Christian culture in order to save Western higher education in particular and Western civilization in general. This study of Christian culture, according to Dawson, recognizes a dynamic historical process involving three successive phases: "(1) the confrontation of Christianity—the Church and the Gospel—with a non-Christian secular or pagan environment; (2) the process of permeation of one by the other; (3) the eventual creation of new forms of culture and thought—art, literature, institutions, and so forth—from the process of interaction."¹

The Byzantine culture that flowered when Christianity transformed the

Greco-Roman and oriental cultures of the eastern Roman Empire could be the subject of one such study, as could the

In the case of Franciscan University, one could look at the "confrontation" of "orthodox/traditional" Catholicism with a "charismatic" Catholic environment.

development of scholastic philosophy when Thomas Aquinas synthesized Christian theology with Aristotelian philosophy during the thirteenth century.

Perhaps it would be interesting to modify slightly Dawson's process and conduct a study of the unique culture at Franciscan University, a culture resulting not from the confrontation of Christianity with paganism, but rather from the synthesis of charismatic and orthodox/traditional streams of Catholicism.

Some background may be helpful. During the early 1970's the College of Steubenville was caught in a life-or-death struggle between the Franciscan Catholicism of its founders and the

secularism that was sweeping American institutions of higher education at the time. When Fr. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R. assumed the presidency in 1974, he rejected the secularism that seemed to have gained the upper hand and reaffirmed the College's commitment to its Christian heritage. The power of the Catholic faith, especially as it was being lived out in the charismatic renewal, prevailed, and the College of Steubenville entered a new phase of its history.

As the 1970s rolled into the 1980s,
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To homeschool or not to homeschool

by Joanna K. Bratten

Over the course of a four-year sojourn at Franciscan University, students can hardly help but notice two striking features of the family lives of our professors: first, the fact that most have no fewer than six children, and second, the fact that most of these children are homeschooled. The questions begin to fly, particularly among the first year students who had never before encountered anything akin to what we shall refer to as the Steubenville phenomenon. The most common questions are along the lines of: "Will they get a good

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CONTINUING CONVERSATIONS



Capitalism: a response to Dr. Graham and Regina Schmiedicke

I believe that Regina Schmiedicke, Dr. Graham and I all share the same end with respect to the type of society in which we wish to raise our children. We are all seeking one in which we can best live out our Christian values. We part company when it comes to the means chosen to achieve this end.

First, I would like to thank Mrs. Schmiedicke for clarifying what is meant by distributism. I was not aware of its historical context, and the term does have a dubious connotation. One chief reason for this is the fact that most income is *not* distributed; it is *earned*. People paying for goods and services generate income. Other “income” is distributed from a central point as social security checks, welfare payments,

unemployment compensation, farm subsidies or corporate bailouts. But that is not how most people get most income. (The term “capitalism” likewise is misleading, as I will try to show later.)

Having done some recent research on distributism, via the works of Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton, I understand that the term “distributism” originally pertained to land, as Mrs. Schmiedicke mentioned in her last article. Because each person was born into a fixed social class in England when distributism was originated, I can understand how it was viewed as a solution. I also learned that despite its name, distributism shares with capitalism the goal of reducing statism. But the way in which Regina Schmiedicke would have government implement distributism, makes me question whether that goal is taken seriously.

She writes: “distributists were calling for a voluntary distribution of land and resources, with no government coercion, just government incentives.” But later in the same article, she suggests that the government could be used “to set a tax on chains—a business that owned only one store would be given a tax break, where businesses that had several stores would be taxed accordingly, making mega-chains financially punitive.” Perhaps Mrs. Schmiedicke’s definition of government coercion is vastly different from mine, but punitive taxes certainly fits the bill as far as I’m

concerned. In the words of G.K. Chesterton: “A citizen can hardly distinguish between a tax and a fine, except that the fine is generally much lighter.”

Perhaps her war on big business is fueled by a fear that large companies with a big market share will turn evil. In this regard, she writes: “But when Wal-Mart has put all the competition out of business, will it remain so cheap—or so moral?” It is precisely in a free market that the consumer can wage the battle against the “immorality” of big businesses—by shopping elsewhere. (It is only when big business is protected by the government that it is immune to market forces. Sadly this is often the case today in our mixed economy. Unfair government protection of big business renders Washington’s bureaucrats a more fitting target of Mrs. Schmiedicke’s criticisms.)

For those who do not believe that large companies are immune to market forces, consider the plight of General Motors. For decades GM controlled the market for automobiles until Toyota, Honda and other Japanese automakers proceeded to take away substantial parts of that market. By the early 1990’s, the largest selling car in the U.S. was made by Honda, and Toyota was producing more cars in Japan than GM was in the U.S. In the airline industry, what was considered the best known of many

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airlines, Pan American, folded. And a government bailout was the only thing that saved the Chrysler Corp. from extinction. These were not isolated flukes. In a period of just ten years, nearly half of the firms in the Fortune 500 went out of existence.¹

My last point of contention with Mrs. Schmiedicke has to do with the term “capitalism.” Just as “distributism” can mislead one to think in terms of government redistributism, so “capitalism” can lead one to think in terms of material capital only. Mrs. Schmiedicke seems to couple the meaning of capitalism with “materialism” and “thoughtless consumerism.” The truth is that *laissez faire* was named capitalism by its opponents. It is misleading because it is not an “ism.” In other words, it is not a philosophy but an economy. Simply put, it is nothing more and nothing less than an economy which is not run by political authorities. In this sense, it is morally neutral. Of course, a person could choose to become materialistic in such an economy, but assigning a group of elected officials to limiting citizen’s choices is *not* the best cure for that. Should people forfeit their freedom to the state because they cannot stand up and say “No”? If the human conscience is our moral muscle, under such governmental controls it would surely atrophy.

Dr. Thomas Graham would rather call these government controls “checks and balances.”

In his article critiquing capitalism it seems he is alarmed by the division of classes a capitalist economy supposedly creates. He writes: “The poorest 20% own or control 1% of the wealth in the U.S. The top 20% of families with the highest earnings (\$64,000 plus) receive 44.6% of all income...” But what his statistics fail to include are differences in age and income, making them terribly misleading, and would have people believe there is *only* a division of class. Younger adults, for example, usually earn less than that of middle-aged people. This fact can hardly be considered startling, much

less sinister. When I was in my twenties I made far less than my father did in his forties, yet this is hardly an “inequity” to be “corrected” by the government—especially since in time I will likely earn at least as much as he, given the general rise of incomes over time in the American economy. Only by ignoring the age factor can income and wealth statistics be automatically translated into differences between classes. If a man were using a wheelchair due to a broken leg, should he be labeled handicapped even though in two months he’ll be walking again? Yet Americans are labeled “poor,” “middle-class” and “rich” based on their transient location in the income stream.

Despite the enormous influence of age on income and wealth, statistical disparities are often equated with moral “inequities” when discussing economic differences.

In conclusion, I realize that what concerns both Dr. Graham and Regina Schmiedicke are the grave injustices they see, and perhaps have experienced, in our society. As Christians, we are all striving to keep God’s commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself.” We look upon those who are suffering physically or mentally and we reach out to them with benevolence. Certainly the free market is not the solution to these problems; it does however provide the best environment for the common man’s material needs, leaving him the energy to seek out spiritual nourishment. In his book, *Masters of the Dream*, Dr. Alan Keyes writes concerning statism:

“...the welfare state has failed in the United States...the most obvious manifestations of this failure are economic. This has led many people to talk as if the reasons for failure are also economic. Yet the poor performance of the Soviet economy, for example, was not just the result of poor management or lazy workers. It resulted from the fact that the Communists tried to organize the Soviet economy on the basis of a bad concept of the human person. Similarly, the poor results of the liberal welfare state are not solely

the result of legislation poorly conceived, or programs poorly managed and organized. The welfare state is based upon the same bad concept of the human person. It is a concept that emphasized human needs while neglecting human capacities. It stresses individual helplessness and weakness, undermining the sense of personal responsibility. It justifies ever greater concentrations of power in the hands of the state, leaving people each day more powerless to effect and improve their own condition.”²

With all its good intentions, distributism, as it has been so far discussed in the *Concourse*, will only serve to increase the power of the state, thus limiting man’s freedom.

Martha Blandford

Martha (Cotton) Blandford '89 and Scott Blandford live in Ft. Thomas, Ky. where Scott is a software engineer. They have one child, Katherine.

¹ Robert L. Bartley, *The Seven Fat Years: And How to Do It Again* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 140.

² Alan L. Keyes, *Masters of the Dream* (William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1995), p.148.

A reply on feminism and masculinism

In the December 11 issue of the *Concourse* Elizabeth Magaletta published a reply to my article: “Sexism in Any Form Denigrates both Men and Women.” On a first reading it sounds like a good refutation of my article. However, closer examination reveals that it unfortunately has many flaws. At least four appear in the first paragraph:

1) She assumes that she knows what my motives are. In her words, “Michael Healy’s disagreement with me has, as it seems to me, two roots:” However, the “roots” she suggests for my disagreement with her are not my motives at all, as I show in point (2).

2) She assumes that she knows how I think. She says of me, “he does

not perceive that masculinism confers on men more than ego benefits, nor that all men benefit from living in a masculinist culture.” However, I realize these points perfectly well, and I also realize that the majority of cultures have oppressed women. None of this negates the points made in my previous article, as I shall show under point (4).

3) She seems to either misunderstand or misrepresent my article. She says of it, “...it cannot be claimed that women need defense only from ‘certain’ men and that feminism is therefore unnecessary.” Later in her article she seems to say that her impression is that in my article I was trying to prove any defense of women’s rights to be unnecessary. However, my point was not that this was unnecessary, but that the present feminist attempt to do this is insufficient to fulfill the task.

4) She may show ignorance of facts relevant to the topic, or she may have omitted them. In either case, this prevents her from dealing with my true reasons for disagreeing with her. It is not that I do not understand that oppression of women has been quite common in the past and is common today. It is not that I do not realize that the majority of human cultures have been male-dominant. It is that I do realize that there have also been female-dominant societies—such as those that the *conquistadores* found in some parts of Peru—in which women have been the dominant sex and have relegated men to a secondary role. It is also that I realize that because such societies have

existed they could very well exist again, under the proper circumstances. I furthermore realize that there are many men today who fear that feminism’s true goal may be the attainment of such circumstances and the establishment of such a society. If such fears continue to grow they may lead otherwise good men to dismiss feminism’s points as left-wing propaganda rather than to take them seriously and join feminism’s efforts to ensure justice.

Therefore, feminism must neither be continued in its present form nor eliminated. It must be broadened. A rational and just masculinism must be formed as distinct from the male chauvinistic masculinism that Ms. Magaletta so rightly protests. It must then be married to feminism in a union determined to ensure liberty and justice for all. Anything else will ultimately fail.

Regretfully, not only are some of these faults repeated in the body of the article but some other faults appear as well. First, she refers to me as a “neutralist.” However, if I have sufficiently explained my point of view it should be obvious that I do not see myself as holding a position between masculinism and feminism. Rather, I see myself as expounding a view superior to masculinism, feminism, “neutralism,” or any other view reflecting any other combination or facet of these views. This view I would prefer to call, for lack of a better term, “hominism” to indicate that its goal is to ensure the protection of everyone’s rights, even the rights of those who are not presently being oppressed but may be at some

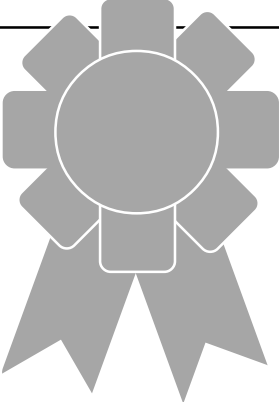
time in the future.

She goes on to misrepresent my article once again by suggesting that I might say that if a woman’s husband were not a wife-beater, she would not need to be protected from him. This I would not say. It would be skirting the real issues at stake and would furthermore be an entirely futile argument to make. No, spousal abuse must be punished, like any other crime, and its victims must be protected. However, I doubt that the feminist movement in its present form will be able to provide that protection.

Ms. Magaletta later presents a long list of crimes that she says have been “perpetrated against women considered as women.” This may be true, but the inclusion of certain things in the list must be questioned. Allow me to give two examples. First, in societies such as the Byzantine Empire in which castrated men had better chances of getting the highest-paying jobs—in this case high-ranking court positions—could it not be said that forcible sterilization was performed on men considered as men? It could indeed, for only by cutting his testicles off could a man be made eligible for many high court offices. And second, can it not be said that men are relegated to secondary roles in female-dominated societies? This too can be asserted, for the *conquistadores* tell of certain areas of Peru in which men stayed home and sewed and did other household chores while women worked in the fields. In other words, this long list looks impressive but not all of its points necessarily hold true under intense analysis.

Let me make myself clear. I do not oppose the protection of the rights and dignity of women. I agree with Elizabeth Magaletta that “the problem...is not one...of hurting people’s feelings” but “of human rights and civil liberties.” I do oppose the idea that the feminist movement in its present form provides the best way to protect women’s rights.

Michael Healy, Jr.
Sophomore, Classics



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Lay ministers of the Eucharist are supposed to be “extraordinary”

by Noelle Hiester

THE SCENARIO IS THE SAME IN ALMOST EVERY PARISH: IT IS COMMUNION TIME AND THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

OF THE EUCHARIST, commonly called eucharistic ministers,¹ are on hand to assist the priest in the distribution of Communion. Because the scene is so common, sensitivity to it has been blunted. I do not mean to imply that lay men and women may never distribute Holy Communion. However, I wish to caution against a too facile acceptance of and a too common use of a practice Church writings indicate should be strictly limited, lest we fail in obedience as well as in right reverence for the holy sacrament.



At Franciscan University, where hundreds of people receive Communion daily, dozens of lay men and women are commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers, and they are active at virtually every Mass. Clearly on our campus the constant use of extraordinary ministers has not had the disastrous effect of reduced respect for the Eucharist found in many places where it is a frequent practice, but it nevertheless does cause scandal, because of its apparent conflict with the teachings of the Church. And those who are not scandalized (because they do not know the Church directives in this area) are misled into thinking that there is nothing abnormal in lay people regularly distributing Holy Communion. This is not right.

Priests are the ordinary ministers of Communion. Pope John Paul II urges priests not to allow lay people to do their work for them. *Inaestimabile Donum*, prepared by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Di-

vine Worship and approved by the Holy Father, states that it is a “reprehensible attitude”² where priests leave their primary tasks to the laity. That he considers distribution of Holy Communion among these primary duties of priests is clear from a letter to he wrote to Bishops:

“But one must not forget the primary office of priests, who have been consecrated by their ordination to represent Christ the Priest: for this reason their hands, like their words and their will, have become the direct instruments of Christ. Through this fact, that is, as ministers of the Holy Eucharist, they have a primary responsibility for the sacred species, because it is a total responsibility: they offer the bread and wine, they consecrate it, and then distribute the sacred species to the participants in the assembly who wish to receive them.”³

Lay eucharistic ministers have become such a familiar sight in our churches that we have ceased to be

aware of their proper place. Again, *Inaestimabile Donum* states: “The faithful, whether religious or lay, who are authorized as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist can distribute Communion only when there is no priest, deacon or acolyte, when the priest is impeded by illness or advanced age, or when the number of the faithful going to Communion is so large as to make the celebration of the Mass excessively long.”⁴

It is this last condition, allowing for the length of the Mass, which is usually invoked as justification for the use of “eucharistic ministers.” And here is where the debate lies. How long is too long? Our modern American society puts a high priority on speed and convenience. Fast food chains, MAC machines and parcel delivery services all instance the increasing demand for faster service, so that we do not have to wait a second longer than necessary. Yet, how many people will gladly go to a Mass to hear Fr. Michael speak, though the homily may last close to an hour? Who would think of getting out of line at the cafeteria? The line may be long, but we put up with it because we want to eat. The point is that there are some things which we value enough to sacrifice our time. And, in most cases, waiting in line for Communion does not require much time—only a minute or two.

Frequently, especially on weekdays, the time saved by the presence of an extraordinary minister can be measured in seconds. If Communion lasts eight minutes rather than five min-

utes will it make all that much difference? Can we really call that excessive in length? Of course the definition of “excessive” will vary in particular cases, which is why the Church does not herself specify a length of time. However, we must be careful not to allow our cultural tendency to value what is expedient above what is right to govern our interpretation of the Church’s instructions.

The presence of extraordinary ministers under conditions that do not meet those set forth by the Church is clearly a form of disobedience to the Church. If we disobey the Church, how can we hope to give due respect to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is at her heart? Whether

it comes from ignorance or deliberate disregard, disobedience to the Church is disobedience to Christ, and therefore a weakening of the relationship with Christ.

Reception of the Eucharist is, among other things, a symbol of our unity with the Church. Protestants and members of other sects are not allowed to receive the body and blood of our Lord in Communion precisely because they do not accept all the teachings of the Church. While the everyday use of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist is not to be compared to the great dissension of heretics past and present, it does represent that little disobedience which opens the way for greater things. It allows a slight

separation which in time can become a great chasm. ■

Noelle Hiester is an alumna of the class of '95, and a student in the University's MBA program.

¹ The term “eucharistic minister” is misleading. Priests are the ordinary ministers of the Eucharist and therefore are Eucharistic ministers, in a fuller sense than any lay person can be. The term also gives no indication of the true nature of the ministry performed, in addition to never being used in any of the Church documents on the subject. Indeed, the term Eucharistic Minister is used in the Catechism to refer to priests.

² *Inaestimabile Donum*, Instruction Concerning worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, 1980, 8

³ “On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist,” John Paul II, 1980, 28

⁴ *Inaestimabile Donum*, 8

Homeschooling

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enough education from their parents?” or “What if the mother wants to work?” and—the clincher—“Won’t homeschooled children be socially inept?” I tend to chuckle at such concerns, because I was homeschooled from first grade on up and find that I am neither socially nor intellectually inept, and can vouch for the fact that my mother was able to be extremely active outside the home, for all her work inside.

However, since not every one has first-hand experience of the benefits of homeschooling, these questions deserve to be answered at some length. The majority of us university students will likely have children of our own in the next ten years, and the question of whether or not to homeschool is one to be considered carefully. There are several arguments in favor of home schooling, which I would like to enumerate as follows:

First and foremost is the fact that education in most schools is no longer what we would call “quality.” Children are hardly learning basic skills and are instead being instructed in social and civil issues, not to mention moral is-

sues, which should be addressed not in the classroom but in the home. Homeschooling allows the parents to shape not only their children’s moral attitude, but their attitude towards political and social concerns, both of which are important in the formation of the person.

This leads to another point in favor of homeschooling: that the parents can work with their child as an individual, apart from his peers and at his own pace. In the average classroom the child is often overlooked by the teacher or intimidated by his peers, which renders him less capable of grasping those important links in knowledge, leaving him confused and disenchanted with learning itself. Statistics indicate that the average homeschooled student reads better than the average public school student; he has better logic skills and can focus himself better. These abilities come from the combination of close attention from the parent in the early stages of education and the independence the student develops as he works his way through literature and other texts on his own, learning from reading and synthesizing his ideas and relating them properly to each other. This balance is not easily had in public

schools and its lack is apparent in the poor reading, writing and logic skills of many of today’s college students.

Still, there are certainly some disadvantages to homeschooling. While the homeschooled student may be able to tackle Shakespeare in fourth grade and work through algebra problems by the sixth grade, in other areas he is lacking the advantages of conventionally schooled children. Particularly in the scientific disciplines, the homeschooled student, unless his father or mother is a chemist and has scads of equipment, will not understand science practically; he will grasp it only theoretically. Many students complain, as well, of not being able to be involved in sports, music, drama or other group activities which public schools provide. This leads to the concern of homeschooled children being “socially inept,” which is no doubt a real concern. It is easy to imagine that children who stay at home all day reading might not learn how to interact socially, and most parents do not wish to see their children become social misfits.

My response to these objections is simply to point to the “Steubenville phenomenon.” Here you have not just a collection of individual families who

happen to homeschool, but a community in the truest sense—where people pool their resources and share each other’s burdens. The children of the Steubenville homeschool community are, for the most part, taught by their own mothers and fathers, but some subjects are taught in groups, such as literature, biology, Latin or Gregorian chant. This allows the parents to guide their children in their education as well as expose them to a large range of subjects that perhaps they themselves could not teach. It also allows the parents to have time to pursue interests apart from the education of their children. The children are not only given broader opportunities (how many children in public schools learn Gregorian chant or Latin at eight years of age?) but are able to learn to interact with their peers without the pressures of constant competition.

If the child still has a difficult time interacting with his peers who attend the public school, simply because he thinks on a level above that of most children his age, or because his interests differ from those of his peers, all the better for the child, I say. To sacrifice genuine and wholesome intellectual development for the sake of keeping pace with badly schooled peers seems a despicably unfair exchange for the child.

There are cases, however, when it would seem that a child should be sent forthwith to a good public or parochial school. These cases arise when the par-

ents are not fully equipped to properly educate their children. I have encountered individuals whose parents attempted to homeschool them, but with pathetic results, as the parents themselves were never properly educated—by this I mean a solid, liberal arts education. Such cases only prove further the need for quality education from kindergarten to graduate school.

Education, like many other things in our modern world, seems to have gotten itself into a vicious cycle from which most of my generation has not escaped.

Much more could be said in this discussion, but it seems apparent that the majority of students who are educated at home remain largely immune to the most ridiculous whims of societal evolution and have a clear understanding of themselves as individual persons. This alone indicates that it really does “pay” to homeschool.

All the pros and cons culminate in a single question, that of priority: upon what aspect of education should be the most emphasis and at which stages of education should these emphases be placed? This question must be answered by each individual parent, or potential parent, and the answer should be considered with care. Our children, after all, will one day be faced with the same decision. ■

Joanna Bratten is a senior English drama major, and Copy Editor for the Concourse.

Culture

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the College became the University. Under the leadership of Fr. Michael and others, it grew in its reputation as a center of Catholic charismatic renewal, but also as a liberal arts institution of higher education that proclaimed faithfulness to Jesus Christ and to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. This would not have been so noteworthy, except for the fact that it happened at a time when most other Catholic colleges and universities were downplaying or even denying their religious identity. So, another phase of the University’s history began as students, staff and faculty who had little familiarity with (and sometimes even hostility toward) the charismatic renewal were attracted by the University’s commitment to orthodox Catholic teaching.

The first step in Dawson’s study of Christian culture looks at the confrontation of Christianity with a pagan environment. In the case of Franciscan University, one could look at the “confrontation” of “orthodox/traditional” Catholicism with a “charismatic” Catholic environment.

As far as the University and this article are concerned, “charismatic” Catholicism refers to the spirituality that is generally marked by emphases on the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit, evangelism, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and joyful, communal, emotional worship and liturgy. “Traditional” Catholicism stresses more the intellectual understanding of the Faith, private devotion and contemplative worship, and fidelity to the Pope and the Magisterium. These distinctions are only rough sketches of the charismatic and traditional spiritualities and they refer not to absolutes, but rather to *emphases*. These distinctions are not meant to imply that charismatics are not faithful to the Pope or that traditionalists do not believe in the Holy Spirit. But, they serve to illustrate the two streams that have been in tension with each other at the University for over a decade.



Speaking of motherhood and homeschooling:

The vanSchaijik family is looking for a fulltime, live-in mother’s helper, beginning as soon as possible. We’ll be in New Hampshire from the end of February until August, and then in the Netherlands until Christmas.

If interested, please contact Jane Healy at **284-8905** for further information, or e-mail us at: **UConcourse@aol.com**.

Some may argue that using labels such as “orthodox/traditional” and “charismatic” only serve to polarize and divide, and that the University family needs to move beyond these differences. While this could be true in certain individual cases, it seems more accurate to view the traditional/charismatic tension as a healthy interaction between two legitimate streams of Catholicism, each permeating the other (the second step in Dawson’s process). The result, “new forms of culture and thought,” is Dawson’s third step. This new culture is not just the peaceful co-existence of the two elements, but is an entirely new entity with a life of its own.

Could it be that the University is the environment of a new Catholic culture: a vibrant, exciting and vital culture that is not simply charismatic *or* traditional, but charismatic *and* traditional? Is it possible that, by bringing “charismatic” Catholicism together with “traditional” Catholicism in a liberal arts institution of higher education, Fr. Michael has provided the ingredients and the setting for a new Christian culture that is flourishing in the Ohio Valley? Rather than struggling with each other for domination, simply tolerating each other, or just “learning from each other,” have the two aforementioned streams of Catholic spirituality actually fallen in love, married and produced a beautiful child? Is it possible that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts?

While the long-term effects of this unique “Steubenville culture” will become evident only with time, it does seem clear that the students, staff and faculty of Franciscan University really are witnessing a cultural birth and infancy. This culture is marked by unashamed loyalty to the Pope and the

Magisterium, and the realization that the Church’s ability to articulate doctrine does evolve over time. It is marked by a joyful, exuberant, emotional faith that seeks grounding in intellectual understanding. It reveres and practices and promulgates the traditions and devotions of the past, and is also open to the movements of the Holy Spirit now and in the future. It stresses the importance both of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and of a personal relationship with His Body, the Church. It is comfortable with praising the Trinity in strange tongues, whether it be Latin or otherwise. It is truly orthodox, but dynamically and vitally so. It worships together out loud in the open, and quietly, alone with the Lord.

The tensions that brought about its birth continue to feed its growth and maturation, although sometimes this is a painful and difficult process. This “Steubenville culture” could not have happened without both the “charismatic” and the “traditional” components. Each part balances and complements the other. If one “side” ever calls it quits and concedes defeat, the growth will stop. Creativity will no longer be necessary. And once stagnation sets in, decline will begin. The struggle is the source of vitality, provided it is a struggle marked by charity, patience, prudence and humility.

There are many other charismatic Catholic groups, and many other traditional Catholic organizations. But there is no other place that brings full-blown versions of both together into a university setting, a setting that has the luxury of working out the ramifications of both streams on its own faith and intellectual life, and then transmitting the resulting new culture to others.

One could make the case that the application of Dawson’s second step is

even now premature. Perhaps a third force is being added to the picture that is just as important and dynamic and vital as the charismatic and traditional influences: the effects of the Austrian program. In Austria, students, faculty and staff are able to witness firsthand a

culture that was, until recently, thoroughly Catholic. They discover the historical roots and the universality of Catholicism by traveling across the continent and living with eastern Europeans. And they are able to live, pray and study in a close-knit intellectual and faith community (university) where they can bring all of this to bear upon the unique Steubenville culture they carried with them from America. It is important to note that if the Austrian program were acting upon a university that was only

charismatic or only traditional, or even upon an entity that was both, but not a university, the results would not be as powerful. In fact, we may not notice any results at all.

Therefore, people of Franciscan University, do not bemoan the tension between charismatics and orthodox traditionalists. Do not attempt to quash, appease or excuse one or the other in the hope of achieving peace and unity. Rather, rejoice in the legitimate differences and the unique phenomenon that is taking place on a hilltop in the Ohio Valley. Delight in the fact that charismatic and traditional Catholicism is able to interact in a university setting, a tale that can be told of no other place in the world. After all, not everyone gets to see a culture being born. ■

David Schmiesing, who with his wife, Justine, is Design Editor for the Concourse, graduated from FUS in 1992.

¹ *The Crisis of Western Education*, (Steubenville, OH: Franciscan University Press, 1989) 164.

The students, staff and faculty of Franciscan University really are witnessing a cultural birth and infancy.

A Blessed and Holy Lenten Season ~ to all our readers