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Women and politics: Do they mix?

by Susan C. Fischer

It was the 1992 presidential election and the buzz circling in the United States political arena was the “woman” vote. Polls revealed that a large number of women voted for Bill Clinton not because of his political views, but because of his charming manner and propensity to hug. Women like huggers. In the 1996 election the woman factor, according to polling data, again played a role with the now termed “soccer moms” voting for the smiling and young Bill Clinton vs. the media-portrayed angry and old Republican candidate, Bob Dole.

Now in the year 2000 we have two major candidates vying for this “soccer mom” vote: Al Gore and George W. Bush.

Al Gore has reportedly taken great pains to attract this voting bloc, soliciting expert advice on what type of clothes to wear, how to speak, and how to become the “alpha-male.” This is a type of male that appeals to women. This male type can be recognized in the ever-popular Julia Roberts romantic movie. He is masculine and handsome, yet gentle and a ready listener to the female star. He

is there, eager to take away the difficulties of life; his love is passionate and all-consuming. A woman can throw herself with full abandon into his arms, where complete security and eternal joy is assured her. These movies are called “chick movies,” and they bore boyfriends and husbands.

Al Gore scored a major coup in his quest to be viewed as the alpha male with the now famous “kiss” at the Democratic convention last month. When Gore leapt onto the stage (vital: leaping shows vigor) after being introduced by his wife, Tipper, he planted a huge—really huge—kiss, directly on her mouth, before taking the microphone. This was not the usual politician’s polite kiss-your-wife-on-the-cheek gesture. It was an unprecedented phenomenon. “The kiss” has now been replayed on news programs everywhere, and Oprah, when interviewing Gore in September, played it twice for the woman-dominated audience. And do not think this means nothing. Polling data are showing that a large number of women are now voting for Gore because of “the kiss.”

My note: they are voting for a candidate for the most politically powerful office in the world, who will hold the lives of millions of people in his

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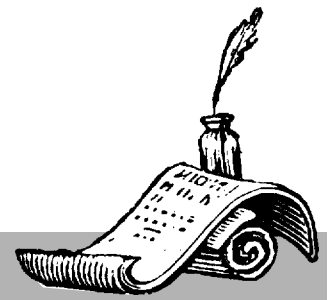
Distributism, state power and papal teachings

by Thomas Storck

Last spring an interesting dialog took place in the pages of *the University Concourse* on the subject of distributism, which is the economic system elaborated in the first half of the twentieth century by such Catholic writers as G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and Fr. Vincent McNabb. Its most complete exposition was in Belloc’s book, *The Restoration of Property* (1936). In the latest round of this controversy there seem to be several points which are especially at issue. The first is the question of the role of the government in promoting a

just economy, in particular, a distributist economy. For example, Dr. Kevin Schmiesing, in his article in the May 4 *Concourse*, advocates what he calls a “free economy,” in which a just society would be brought about by “moral suasion in a call for simpler living, more generous aid and care for the impoverished and marginalized, and more voluntary efforts to ensure that all people participate in the productive process through ownership of property,” and in which the government would have little role. And Mr. Philip Harold similarly warns against the “temptation” to rely overmuch on governmental power to

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The evil of exorcising judgement

“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life?” (I Cor. 6: 2-3)

In her thought-provoking page one article “Women and politics,” Susan Fischer points to the proclivity women have for allowing emotions to displace judgement in their political decision-making. So many seem to bracket out intelligence, and rely on *moods* to guide the hand that pulls the lever. It’s alarming to contemplate.

And that’s not the only judgment-dropping syndrome afflicting our society. There are others, which, though less obvious, are no less laden with ominous consequences. I am thinking in particular of a kind of intellectual pseudo-sophistication that eschews actual disputes, except maybe insofar as they make for entertaining conversation. It’s an “I’m above the fray” complacency that prides itself on remaining neutral or at least *disengaged* in the debates of the day.

Worldly people are inclined to this attitude by cynicism. (Nothing is really important; so why expend effort over it?) Christians fall into it for other reasons, including a warped idea of what it means to be “peace makers.” We have been so influenced by pop psychology that many of us are convinced that all disagreements boil down to “miscommunication.” We think we’re doing well if we avoid conflict. And if we come across it in spite of ourselves, we conscientiously suspend judgement and assume that both sides have equally good points in their favor. We imagine we resolve the conflict when we get the disputants to communicate more clearly, *listen* better, “validate” each other’s concerns, and work out a compromise. No judgement necessary, only technique.

Many people—even university men and women—honestly think they are doing a Christian service when they refrain from asking themselves where truth and right lie in a given dispute, and instead exert themselves to be nice to everybody involved and make sure no one’s feelings get hurt. In reality they are cooperating with a cosmic diabolic strategy to keep Truth from being *brought to bear* in the world.

Just before the semester started, Ave Maria College hosted a conference titled “Knowledge and Vital Piety: What Athens has to do with Jerusalem.” FUS professor John Crosby gave a talk; so did Fr. James Burtchaell, author of *The Dying of the Light*, a book about the loss of religious identity at American colleges and universities. Dr. Crosby spoke about a Catholic university’s being the place where the gospel meets the culture; a place where the gospel is *brought to bear* on the culture. This happens, in large part, by university men and women *engaging* the questions of the day in the light of their faith. Fr. Burtchaell, too, pointed out that Christianity provides a *fund of judgement* for us to draw on; a fund we *ought* to draw on—a set of facts and principles, a vision of reality with consequences extending from the ultimate ends to the minute details of daily living. If we believe what we say we do, then we should realize that it has *implications* for everything. If we have a proper grasp on what it means to evangelize the world, then we will know it means much more than announcing the good news. Transforming the world in Christ

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The University Concourse is an independent journal of opinion published by alumni of Franciscan University for members and friends of FUS and Catholic colleges linked to her by a shared commitment to the life of the mind and the re-evangelization of culture in the new millennium. It is designed to encourage fruitful Christian discourse among university men and women. The views expressed in this journal do not necessarily represent those of the editors, nor those of the faculty, staff or administrators of the various institutions at which it is distributed.

We welcome submissions from students, faculty, alumni, staff, administrators, parents, trustees, benefactors or friends, on any topic of interest to a general university readership, provided that they are courteously expressed and framed with a view to advancing the welfare of FUS and her sister schools and/or Catholic culture at large.

We recommend that opinions be kept to fewer than 2,000 words.

Contributions may be sent to e-mail address katieandjules@attglobal.net or through our website: www.TheUniversityConcourse.com

Please include your full name, phone number and e-mail address if you have one.

We will consider printing opinions anonymously or under a pen name; however, in general, we wish to encourage open “face to face” discussion.

In either case, the editors require the full name and phone number of each opinion.

The importance of understanding Eastern Christianity

by Anthony T. Dragani

For the past several years I have witnessed an ongoing crisis of identity within the Roman Catholic Church, which is evident even on the campus of Franciscan University. Often reduced to the battle between “Conservatives” versus “Progressives” or “Traditionalists” versus “Charismatics,” the issues involved are multifaceted and complex. I have tried to make my own contribution to this debate, with varying degrees of success. Now I’d like to address it from a new perspective, i.e. as a kind of outsider, for that is indeed what I have become.

I am an Eastern Christian. While gladly submitting to the authority of the Pope, in my spiritual and liturgical life, I strive to live out the tradition of the great Eastern Fathers: Ss. Ireneus, Nicholas, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, Cyril and Methodius, and many others. For those unacquainted with Eastern Christianity, we are the people responsible for all of the beautiful icons, such as Our Lady of Perpetual Help, which Western Christians sometimes venerate. Of course, there is a great deal more to us than just that.

Some Historical Background

Christianity originated in the East. Western Catholics should not lose sight of this fact. Jesus carried out his ministry in the Middle East, and most of the Apostles were martyred in the East. Even Ss. Peter and Paul established numerous churches throughout the East before dying in Rome. As Christianity grew and flourished, the churches planted by the Apostles in the East grew into the great Eastern Christian Tradition. It was in the East that the first seven Ecumenical Councils were held.

Unfortunately, due to political and geographic circumstances, a gradual estrangement developed between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity. The Western Tradition, which was grounded in the theology of Western Fathers such as Ss. Augustine and Jerome, developed its own distinct theological perspective. The Western and Eastern branches of Christianity developed different forms of liturgy, spirituality,

ecclesiology and theology. Nevertheless, both sides were fully “Catholic,” and remained united as one Church for a thousand years. The Eastern and Western Fathers approached theological and ecclesiological issues in very different, yet complementary ways (see the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism, nos. 14-18.) This was the era of unified Christianity when, as Pope John Paul has said, “the Church breathed with both lungs.”

Tragically, due to political, linguistic, and theological difficulties, unity was ruptured between East and West in the middle of the Eleventh Century. As the famous Roman Catholic theologian Yves Congar has frequently emphasized, this breach was the result of a progressive estrangement, as the Eastern and Western clergy and laity knew increasingly less about one another. This

situation was exacerbated by the “Roman Catholic” pillage of Constantinople in 1204, which was in reality orchestrated by greedy Italian merchants, although some Western bishops unscrupulously benefited from the conquest (cf. *After Nine Hundred Years: the Background of the Schism Between the Eastern and Western Churches*, by Yves Congar, O.P.)

Throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, large groups of Eastern Christians re-established communion with Rome, and organized themselves as Eastern Catholic Churches. These Eastern Catholics in no way saw themselves as abandoning their Eastern heritage, but as re-establishing communion with Rome as it existed during the first millenium. Hence, we have the vast array of Eastern Catholic Churches, which are sometimes erroneously referred to as “rites.” In reality, they are particular Churches with their own hierarchies, spiritualities, and theological perspectives.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church summarizes this nicely:

“From the beginning, this one Church has been marked by a great diversity which comes from both the variety of God’s gifts and the diversity of those who receive them... Holding a rightful place in the communion of the Church there are also particular Churches that retain their own traditions. The great richness of such diversity is not opposed to the Church’s unity” (CCC no. 814).

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According to the Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, the Catholic Church is actually a “communion” of Churches, composed of particular Churches such as the Melkite, Byzantine, Ukrainian, Roman, Maronite, and many others, with the Pope of Rome serving as the guardian of unity (LG 13). To refer to these Churches as “rites,” although usually done with the best of intentions, is today inaccurate and somewhat misleading.

I am a member of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh. We are the only particular Eastern Catholic Church to be based out of North America, with our leader, Metropolitan Judson, residing in Pittsburgh. Although established initially by Eastern European immigrants, we now have countless members from all ethnic and racial backgrounds. We are no longer an “ethnic” Church, but an American Church that proudly lives out our Eastern Catholic heritage.

The Eastern Alternative

Since the split of the eleventh century, despite the reunion of numerous Eastern Catholic Churches, the Roman Catholic populace has been largely unaware of Eastern Christianity. To many in the Western world, Christianity is composed of Protestants and Roman Catholics; they are not even aware that there is an entirely distinctive and legitimate Eastern tradition.

Nonetheless, by Divine Providence, there has always been an elite circle of Roman Catholic theologians and Popes who were well acquainted with the Eastern Churches. Among them is our own Pope John Paul II, who in his wonderful apostolic letter, *The Light of the East*, affirms that “the venerable and ancient tradition of the Eastern Churches is *an integral part of the heritage of Christ’s Church*” (OL 1, emphasis mine). This saintly Pontiff exhorts all Roman Catholics to become acquainted with the Eastern Tradition (OL 24). He especially calls for “appropriate teaching on these subjects in seminaries and theological faculties, especially to future priests” (OL 24).

Although millions of Eastern Catholics are currently in communion with Rome, there are over 300 million Eastern Orthodox Christians who are still separated from the Pope. These Orthodox Christians are identical to Eastern Catholics in almost every way, and also have the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The Catechism teaches that a certain communion does exist between Catholics and non-Catholic Christians, and that “with the Orthodox Churches, this communion is so profound that it lacks little to attain the fullness that would permit a common celebration of the Lord’s Eucharist,” (CCC 838).

A re-establishment of communion between

Catholics and Eastern Orthodox has been a top priority of the last several Popes. Pope John Paul II has recognized the Orthodox and Catholics as “sister Churches,” and has taught that the goal of dialogue with the Orthodox is “perfect, total communion which will be neither absorption nor fusion but encounter in truth and love,” (Declaration of the joint International Commission for theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, no. 14; cf. *Slavorum Gentes*, I., 27.)

The re-establishment of unity between Orthodox and Catholics was an important goal of the Second Vatican Council, which laid a good foundation for reunion in its documents (cf. The Decree on Ecumenism, no. 18.) Father John Meyendorff, a well-respected Eastern Orthodox theologian, made the following observation concerning Vatican II in his book *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow*:

The council documents, without solving all the problems, reaffirmed an ecclesiology based on the local Eucharistic community; a theology of the episcopate, focused on conciliarity; a conception of the laity as the “people of God.” All these were common ground for a dialogue with the Orthodox Church... The rapprochement with Orthodoxy—which undoubtedly was among the basic conciliar motivations—was swamped by a kind of new triumphalism of “modernity,” through which the (Roman Catholic) Church tended to lose its identity... As these dramatic processes were developing, the Orthodox Church appeared remote and irrelevant to most Western Christians. Its theological witness was too weak to be heard. Only some specialists were aware of the Orthodox alternative to Western trends. This absence of Orthodoxy was, in fact, as tragic as in the time of the sixteenth-century Reformation, when its presence would have helped to transcend the dichotomy between Rome and Protestantism. (Meyendorff, 1-2).

Many of the major changes in the Roman Catholic Church initiated by Vatican II were actually modeled after the practice of Eastern Christians: communion under both species, liturgy in the vernacular, permanent deacons, standing while receiving communion, a free-standing altar (apart from the wall), and increased participation by the laity in the Liturgy have all been the norm in Eastern Christianity for two thousand years. The Fathers of Vatican II were consciously borrowing from Eastern Christianity when they mandated these changes. (The great liturgical movement, which resulted in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, was largely inspired by a

renewed interest in the liturgy of the Eastern Churches. (See Klaus Gamber, *Reform of the Roman Liturgy*. Harrison, NY: Una Voce, 1993. p. 4.)

It is in the matter of liturgical change that the lack of familiarity with the East is most tragic. In the ongoing liturgy wars occurring in the Roman Church, neither side, whether “progressive” or “traditional,” is usually well acquainted with Eastern Christianity. Yet it was largely from the Eastern Christians that the Fathers of Vatican II received their vision for a renewed liturgy. Before Vatican II, in the Roman Church, the liturgy was full of beautiful sights and sounds, such as incense, chant, ornate vestments, bells, and visual images galore. But there was an acute problem, which troubled the Fathers: there was virtually no participation by the congregation. The priest performed the liturgy, but the people sat in the pews as mere spectators. Often the laity prayed the Rosary or read meditations during Mass, with little understanding of what was occurring in the sanctuary.

In the Christian East, in contrast, the laity participate actively and vocally in the Divine Liturgy. The entire liturgy is sung from beginning to end, with responses constantly going back and forth between the priest and the congregation. The laity are expected to sing all of the responses, which virtually never cease. There is never a time in the Eastern Divine Liturgy in which the congregation is a mere spectator (apart from the homily); the participation by the laity throughout the liturgy is continuous. Nonetheless, despite all of this participation by the congregation, all of the “traditional” elements of Christian liturgy remain present: the priest faces East together with the people, incense is used in abundance, icons and elaborate vestments please the eyes, and beautiful chant pleases the ears. It is a complete sensory experience. So here, in the Eastern Liturgy, we have the traditional elements that so many “traditionalists” long for, and the active participation that many “progressives” and “Charismatics” crave. It doesn’t have to be one or the other.

Pope John Paul II praises the Eastern Divine Liturgy “for involving the human person in his or her totality,” (OL 11). He comments on how “the lengthy duration of the celebrations, the repeated invocations, everything expresses gradual identification with the mystery celebrated with one’s whole person. Thus the prayer of the Church already becomes participation in the heavenly liturgy, an anticipation of the final beatitude,” (OL 11). Of course the Eastern Christian tradition has far more to offer the West than a mere model of liturgy. Western Christians could also benefit greatly from exposure to Eastern Christian theology, ecclesiology, spirituality, and culture.

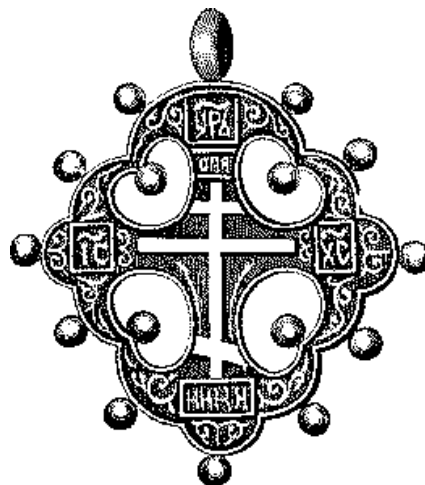
My Challenge to Franciscan University and Sister Colleges

Since my arrival at the campus of Franciscan University, I have been blessed with many wonderful opportunities. The school is truly a center of Roman Catholic renewal, with an overall excellent faculty, staff and student body. I have been deeply enriched by the positive spiritual climate present on campus. Nonetheless, I desire to see Franciscan University become a center of “Catholic” renewal in the truly universal sense, in which the future leaders of the Roman Catholic Church become acquainted with what the Pope calls “the spiritual treasures of which the Eastern Catholic Churches are the bearers,” (OL 21).

Catholicism is far more than merely the Roman Church, and the “tradition of the Eastern Churches is an integral part of the heritage of Christ’s Church,” (OL 1). With numerous Eastern Catholic parishes nearby, and a large and dynamic Byzantine Catholic community in Pittsburgh, Franciscan University has every opportunity to acquaint its students with the fullness of the Catholic Church. In summary, I am challenging the entire university community, out of a spirit of love and gratitude, to meditate on this exhortation by our Holy Father:

...conversion is also required of the Latin Church, that she may respect and fully appreciate the dignity of Eastern Christians, and accept gratefully the spiritual treasures of which Eastern Catholic Churches are the bearers, to the benefit of the entire catholic communion; that she may show concretely, far more than in the past, how much she esteems and admires the Christian East and how essential she considers its contribution to the full realization of the Church’s universality. (OL 21). ■

Anthony Dragani, who recently completed an MA in Theology at Franciscan University, is now studying for a PhD in Theology at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh.



Reconsidering the term “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”

I have a bone to pick with the term “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” which has been used in *Concourse* discussions about the charismatic renewal, most notably by Ralph Sharafinski. I think Catholics should find another term, for this one is confusing and not an accurate representation of the phenomena as explained. Catholic theology, in order to be somewhat coherent as time goes on, has long been extremely solicitous for precision in with language. Much of the 400-plus year debate over fundamental Christological issues in the early Church was over terminology. Even when the same underlying theologically orthodox position’s were held, bishop’s would engage in very heated arguments over precise terminology.

Once the Church has hammered out the particular meanings of certain theological terms used in official doctrinal expressions of the faith, they have become part of what can truly be said to be a Catholic vocabulary. To be a Catholic theologian at a later time must include embracing this theological patrimony. For the sake of clarity (keeping in mind the universality of the Church and the extremely diverse origins of her theologians around the world), the Church’s terminology must be guarded and efforts need to be made to preserve the correct understanding of the terms she uses in her official doctrines. (Consider for example the possible consequences of changing just one word in the Apostles Creed.)

The terms “Theotokos,” “person,” “nature,” and “eternally begotten” have precise, technical meanings in Church doctrine, which, if taken to mean something other than what the Church understands them to mean, can turn an orthodox statement of the faith, into heresy. In fact this is a method used commonly by dissenting or otherwise heterodox Catholic theologians to spread confusion and doubt while maintaining a surface appearance of orthodoxy. “Transubstantiation” for example is inauspiciously redefined by an author in an early part of a text. Then it is used ambiguously throughout the work in such a way as to give the appearance of faithfulness to Church teaching, when in reality it is being undermined.

This kind of coherent, Catholic universal theological vocabulary, does not exist in Protestant theology.

Only among small subgroups is there a decent degree of theological consistency. Hence my concern. (I hope you don’t mind my saying that sometimes cradle Catholics have too poor a sense of just how precious and wide ranging the blessed unity within Catholicism (including theological terminology) truly is. To step outside the Church in the world of theology is to enter into a confused morass that in many respects is stuck in disputes the Church solved—by magisterial authority—in the first millennium of her existence.)

“Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” to my understanding (correct me if I am wrong) is thoroughly non-Catholic in its origins. This is a problem. “Baptism,” being one of the seven sacraments, has a well defined meaning in Catholic theology, reaching far back in the tradition. In fact the meaning of this term underlies one of the very few instances where the Church has authoritatively defined the specific meaning of a Biblical passage. It seems to me that the Catholic meaning of “Baptism” and the Protestant originated “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” are simply not reconcilable (they have a somewhat analogous relationship at best, but this is not sufficient). I am not saying that the underlying meaning of “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” has no application to Catholic religious experience or theology. I am saying that a different term needs to be used if it is ever to add clarity rather than confusion to theological discourse, since “Baptism” is clearly a long standing term on its own having been well established in its meaning in the Catholic vocabulary for centuries.

We are not doing well for the Church when we let slide ambiguities in terminology, which are in part responsible for the lack of unity outside the Catholic Church. Only Catholicism is capable of even attempting to establish a standard theological vocabulary—for anything resembling the doctrinal unity of the Church (resting upon the magisterium and the rock of Peter) does not exist outside the Bark of Peter.

Scott Johnston

Scott Johnston is a senior at FUS, majoring in Philosophy and Biology. A convert to Catholicism, he is a member of the pre-theologate program, and hopes to serve the Church as a priest. He is a Contributing Editor of the Concourse.

The legitimacy of wealth

I would like to add a thought to Kathleen van Schaijik's short editorial note on economics in the May 2000 issue of the *Concourse* Vol. V, issue 8. One of the Sunday readings of that same week addressed a similar topic.: "For if the eagerness [to give to the support of the Church] is there, it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have; not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality your surplus at the present time should supply their needs, so that their surplus may also supply your needs, that there may be equality." 2 Cor 8:12-14

This passage perhaps doesn't speak directly of the legitimacy of amassing wealth; it deals more with not feeling pressured to give so much to the support of the Church that one's own family is unnecessarily burdened. However, I think a principle which may be gleaned from this Scripture is that it is acceptable to strive to achieve a surplus. While as Christians we should imitate Christ our Savior who completely emptied Himself, we are not morally bound to live in material poverty. ("Blessed are the poor in spirit," not necessarily poor in material goods.)

While I believe this Scripture doesn't discourage the Christian from being rich, it still presents a challenge. Imitating Christ, we are to be generous in supporting our brethren. Essentially, we should live within our means (which is actually a very broad qualification, possibly taking into account one's social status), and given out of our surplus. Whatever is left over after our needs (another potentially broad qualification) have been met, ought to be given to our poorer brethren.

Personally, I am all for hard work, personal achievement and striving to do well for oneself in this world. Our country was founded by hard-working individuals who were not ashamed of riches. The important thing to keep in mind is what they did with their wealth. Just consider all the historical monuments, libraries, hospitals and churches that have been built and continue to be maintained by wealthy people with a generous spirit. Finally, consider the history of our Western civilization—especially the period hailed by most as one of the most beautiful and creative: the Renaissance. Could the Renaissance and the Catholic Counter-Reformation have occurred in Europe without the generosity of wealthy patrons, such as the Medici family? I think not.

Genevieve Belland graduated from FUS in '98. She has recently taken a position with Robert Royal at the Faith and Reason Institute in Washington, DC. She and her fiance, Gregory Erkens ('98) will be married in November.

Philosophy department at FUS needs a better theological base

Dr. Lee's article in the last issue criticizing the view he has heard expressed at FUS that St. Thomas' philosophy/theology is basically egoistical is quite telling.

It is the case that St. Thomas, unlike Duns Scotus, is both a declared saint and a doctor of the Church. Both of these declarations are infallible Magisterial expressions. Thomas was declared a doctor on the basis of his penetrating philosophical and theological insights. Thus, to say that the philosophy and theology of this doctor of the Church is essentially egoistical is to say at least one of the following three things: 1) The philosophy/theology of the Church is essentially egoistical 2) the Church was wrong to pronounce Thomas a doctor of the Church on the basis of his philosophical/theological writings, or 3) the Church's own philosophy/theology is self-contradictory and absurdist.

Now, it is certainly the case that a doctor of the Church can be wrong on specific issues: Augustine was not necessarily correct to say that unbaptized babies go to hell, nor was Thomas correct to say that the infused soul goes through vegetative, animal and human stages during the development of the human being in utero. However, the charge Dr. Lee describes as being laid against Thomas is much more sweeping than these specific instances of error. This charge, laid against a doctor of the Church, assumes that the whole basis of Thomas's thought is not just insufficiently deep, but actually erroneous. It assumes Thomas failed to understand the theological virtue of love, which means he could not have understood in any basic sense the God, who is love, or man, who is made in the image of God. Any FUS person who lays out such a charge is essentially denigrating not only Thomas, but also the Church's understanding of and judgement on Thomas' work.

Now, it is not the case that anyone at FUS would knowingly lay such a charge at the door of the Church. In my experience, students of philosophy at FUS, both beginning and even many who are advanced in their knowledge, tend to have an inadequate grasp of theology. Thus, those who hold this position in regards to Thomas do so for two reasons 1) they don't understand Thomas and 2) their grasp of theology is so weak that they do not realize the implications of their argument. It is disheartening to see Dr. Lee confirm what many theology graduates have long suspected—the philosophy program at FUS needs stronger theological underpinnings.

Steve Kellmeyer graduated from the FUS MA Theology Program in 1999. He currently serves as Director of Adult Formation at Sacred Heart Parish in Norfolk, NE.

Women in Politics

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hands through such things as his leadership of national defense, his foreign policy decisions, and his nominations to the Supreme Court, which will determine the fate of millions of tiny babies, because of a *kiss*?

I might be accused of being concerned about this because I favor George W. Bush, but the fact is that I would be equally alarmed to discover women were favoring Bush for such reasons.

My great uncle lies in Arlington National Cemetery, having died in WW I at the age of 24. Another uncle, Buckner Creel, has served in three wars: WW II, Korea and Vietnam, giving up much of his life with his family for real service to this republic. My brother is now a Captain in the United States Army. I am alarmed at the idea that all of our gains in freedom, by the blood of others, may be threatened by the emotional appeal of a kiss. What about the political candidate's position, his aims, his means, and his true beliefs?

Peggy Noonan addressed this issue in a September 15, 2000 article for the Opinion Page of the Wall Street Journal, when she spoke of the "charm offensive" in politics and how it is taking precedence over substance. She writes:

"Have you been watching Joe Lieberman? Did you see him on Conan last night, singing "My Way"? Did you see him on Imus this morning talking about religion and culture and Hollywood? He was masterly—interesting and funny and solid. He has the authenticity and self-command of the secure, mature adult, of a man who has nothing to fear from himself. He is winning the charm offensive, the personality offensive. So is Al Gore; did you see his hip and witty self on Letterman last night? The other afternoon I was home surfing the Net and a friend instant-messaged me: 'Are you watching Oprah? Gore is winning the election.' My friend told me later that Oprah's debut show, on which Gore was the only guest for an hour, had an estimated nine million viewers, the vast majority middle-class women of all ages. From what I saw he must have impressed them all. This is the problem for Bush-Cheney. . . . George W. Bush was of course once famous for his charm. And Dick Cheney didn't need charm, so full of heft, seriousness, experience and wisdom was he. But now . . . now both seem relatively charm-free zones, and to their detriment. One of the problems is the obvious and famous one: the media tend to like the Dem and not the Rep,

and the Dem feels it and blossoms and the Rep feels it and contracts."

Thus, this political expert, a woman, notes the large role the "charm offensive" plays in politics, and she calls on her party of favor to acknowledge this and act on it in order to win.

But are women (I realize men might fall prey to the "charm factor" as well, but I am focusing in this article on the "woman vote") really so immersed in the

subjective? The ear marker of American culture, the television, bears this out. A way to gather what the "soccer mom" demographic group values is to note what daytime television offers. This time slot is noted by television executives to include a predominantly female audience, hence the proliferation of commercials for cleaning products, diapers and beauty aids. Daytime television presents the soap opera, talk shows with celebrity interviews (the predominately female audience claps and screams when the celebrity appears), and scandal shows where families and friends turn against each other without tact or taste, shamelessly exposing salacious details of their illicit relationships and love-triangles.

Another media venue marketed to and lapped up by women is the romance novel. Thousands and thousands are sold every year with the same plot, altered somewhat in character and setting, but containing the same emotional content: lovely, yet

lonely, young, headstrong maiden, finds peace, love, wealth and everlasting happiness in the arms of the alpha-male, after yearning for this alone.

And all of this media grabbing starts young. Look at the girls screaming hysterically over the "boy's groups," N'Sync and the Backstreet Boys. These are complete strangers to the female listener, and yet the girls imagine they are "in love." It must be the (relatively) innocent beginnings of something that women are prone to fall prey to, the fantasy of the alpha-male who will make them blissfully happy.

What is it in the nature of women that makes them prey to the illusion of the "prince charming"? What is it that they are truly searching for? This would be a topic for further discussion, which, it is to be hoped, could throw light on the problem, and expose it for what it really is: a dangerous illusion. It is an illusion deceptive to its core and terrifying in its consequences. Women begin to vote for presidential candidates based on their romantic fantasies.

This is precisely why it was difficult for women to

Women, of course, are not incapable of understanding politics, but something has occurred, possibly in their development and education that has led to the predominance of the subjective-type female who leads, not with the intellect, but with the passions and affections.

win the right to vote in the first place. Men thought that they might not have the capacity to examine the issues and make responsible decisions. Writing in 1932, Edith Stein noted this when she wrote in her *Essays on Women*:

Until a few decades ago, public opinion concurred that woman belongs in the home and is of no value for anything else; consequently, it was at the cost of a weary and difficult struggle that woman's too narrow sphere of activity could be expanded. It is very difficult to know what is meant by *they*. Of course, opinions and judgments originate from individuals. But we cannot explain this simply by saying that certain prominent people coin these opinions and judgements, which are gradually accepted by wider circles. The mind of the individual is formed by the mode of the time...

We all know that women do have the capacity to intelligently analyze political issues, but the question now looms in my mind: why are they not doing it? And how can they morally vote on appearances and soundbite performed behaviors?

I am not the only one voicing this concern. In fact, there are places in which sober people can be heard calling for the woman's right to vote to be repealed. Truly.

A few callers to the Rush Limbaugh show (though, not the host) have called for this radical remedy to the problem of an ill-formed woman electorate voting on subjective feelings. Nationally syndicated talk show host Neil Boortz resisted going to this extreme, but he did, jokingly, suggest that concerned store owners should advertise massive sales on election day. He begged them to call a white sale, a shoe sale, a dress sale, *any* sale. That way the ill-formed women would forget all about voting in their frenzy to catch a sale, and only the rational women would actually go to the polls.

This illustrates the core of the problem. Women, of course, are not incapable of understanding politics, but something has occurred, possibly in their development and education that has led to the predominance of the subjective-type female who leads, not with the intellect, but with the passions and affections.

Again this could be a springboard into many further articles exploring the origin of this problem and its remedies. Perhaps it is the loss of God that has led to this deep yearning for love that so easily overcomes feminine sense. Perhaps it is a poor educational system that fails to form the intellect, steady the emotions, or tame the will through objective work or study. Perhaps it is part of the fallout from the rejection of the precepts of



Humane Vitae, where a woman, rather than being objectified by her spouse, is loved in her entirety and loved for her own sake. A woman is meant to be loved with a love that sees “her,” not her exterior physical traits, though these, too, are gift, but gift in their entirety, body and soul. Woman has a deep need for love and when objectified and *used* in love, she finds herself pressing to see it outside of her realm. Thus, she may fall prey, urged by this deep, true need, to the maneuvers of others (politicians) that know this and exploit it to their advantage—like a lonely widow taken for all her money by the smooth talking con artist.

Such things have been happening across the ages, yet it seems a more pervasive problem now. A solution is urgently needed not only to aid our women but to protect our republic. The future of our freedom in every manner is not guaranteed. It can be lost, and there are those who want to take it all. It is as Thomas Jefferson once said: “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.”

Edith Stein, again showing herself a prophet wrote of her concerns regarding such similar issues as they occurred in Germany, 1932, when she wrote on women:

Those who are not interested in political affairs today must remind themselves that the whole political situation depends on how they use their political rights; and it depends on the political situation whether their husband and children will have work and bread, whether they will find opportunities to develop and utilize their intellectual gifts, whether they will be allowed to practice their faith and live.

Ten years after writing these words, Edith Stein was dead—killed in Auschwitz, a place resulting from the persuasive power of a politician, Adolf Hitler.

This is a call to action and responsibility. A vote is a moral action because of its ramifications. It is also a civic duty and a serious one. I hope it is viewed that way, by all, men and women. ■

Susan Fischer graduated from FUS in 1984. She is now studying in the MA Philosophy Program, and working as a Contributing Editor to the Concourse. She has five children.

Distributism

Continued from page 1

implement a program of economic justice. Therefore we should first look at this question of the role of the state and of state power in creating and maintaining a just economic order.

It would be easy for me and for the others who have taken part in this discussion to state our opinions about the degree and kind of governmental intervention in the economy which is justified. But in doing so we would too often be simply asserting our opinions. I suggest that the correct method of procedure for us as Catholics is to look to the entire encyclical tradition, that is, the tradition of modern papal social teaching beginning with *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 and embodied in encyclicals and other documents down to the present day. There we will find an interrelated body of doctrine addressing this very question, as well as other questions about the relationship between the moral law and the economy. In my previous articles I quoted several passages from these encyclicals, but I cannot recommend too highly to the readers of this journal that they return to the sources and read these seminal documents in their entirety, especially *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII, *Quadragesimo Anno* of Pius XI, and the present Holy Father's three social encyclicals, *Laborem Exercens*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and *Centesimus Annus*. Nor is it the case, as some have asserted, that somehow *Centesimus* represents the overturning of all the previous documents—as if the Church had suddenly disavowed all that she formerly taught. *Centesimus* is firmly in the same tradition as its predecessors.

Suffice it to say that the general attitude taken by these documents toward the role of the state in the economy is one of neither minimizing nor maximizing state power. Certainly the principle of subsidiarity, which Dr. Schmiesing cites and which Pius XI formulated in

Quadragesimo Anno—that the state should not assume tasks best left to lower groups—is of fundamental importance, but that same Pontiff in the same encyclical notes that the economic proposals of the moderate socialists of his day (1931) “often strikingly approach the just demands of Christian social reformers” (QA, no. 113) and that “certain forms of property must be reserved to the State, since they carry with them an opportunity of domination too great to be left to private individuals without injury to the community at large” (QA, no. 114).

I cite these remarks simply to show that the papal, and perforce the Catholic, approach to state power in the economy cannot be reduced to Dr. Schmiesing's principle of “less rather than more state intervention.” But I do not want to start a war of papal quotations. I would prefer that all our readers look at the encyclicals themselves, and I trust to their good sense and open minds in doing so.

Moreover, there is another aspect of the question of the government and the economy that we should keep in mind. This is that, no matter what a government does or does not do with regard to the economy, it is taking a stand. Just as a state that passed no laws condemning abortion could not take refuge in the sophistry that it was neutral on the subject, so a state that takes a hands off attitude toward the economy is taking a position on the economy just as much as the most statist regulatory regime that one can imagine. It is impossible for a government not to affect the economy, either by its laws or its lack of laws. There is no such thing as simply “allowing the economy to be itself,” for the economy, like all the other creations of mankind, must have some framework in which to function. The question is, shall this framework be one that we try to make (as much as we can) a Christian framework, or one that follows the deistic philosophy of the eighteenth century?

Another point that was raised in our discussions concerns what are often called “occupational groups” or “guilds.” These entities are not only an integral part of the distributist program, but have figured very largely in papal teaching. In *Quadragesimo Anno* Pius XI devoted a good deal of space to describing how these groups would function, and his successor, Pius XII, continued to champion them. Nor does John Paul II neglect them, as when, in *Laborem Exercens*, he refers to “intermediate bodies with economic, social and cultural purposes; they would be bodies enjoying real autonomy with regard to the public powers, pursuing their specific aims in honest collaboration with each other and in subordination to the demands of the common good....” (no. 14)

Anyone acquainted with the papal social tradition would immediately see here a reference to occupational



groups.

However, I still must answer Dr. Schmiesing's question: Would the decisions of these groups be backed by the power of the government or would they be merely voluntary organizations such as the American Bar Association?

Pius XI contrasts the occupational groups with free associations such as the ABA, and pointedly notes that he hopes that a flourishing of free associations will "prepare the way and...do their part toward the realization of those more ideal vocational fellowships or 'groups' which We have mentioned" (QA, no. 87). Generally Catholic commentators on this question see the occupational groups as analogous to the medieval guild on this point, in that in order to practice a certain trade or profession one was required to be a member of the appropriate guild and abide by the decisions of the guild. And the power of the state stood ready to enforce guild decisions, if necessary. However, the government did not set guild policy nor appoint guild officials, who were elected by the members. This sort of arrangement often puzzles those accustomed to capitalism. They understand purely private entities and they understand the government. But the notion of some sort of intermediate body, with a real role to play in bringing order to the economy, yet not a department of the government is strange to them. But before concluding that such bodies are unnecessary or harmful to the economy, I would simply urge my readers to remember that the tradition of economic thought with which we Americans are most familiar stems ultimately from the deistic tradition of Adam Smith, a bitter enemy of the Catholic Church incidentally. ²

Space unfortunately prevents me from going into detail about the role of occupational groups in the economy, but we must remember that they are not an example of state power, but of the natural grouping of those working to further the same endeavor.

Dr. Schmiesing cites various examples of the abuse of state power. I deplore them as much as he does. But it would be as easy to bring up examples of the abuses of private corporate power, beginning with *Rerum Novarum*, which speaks of "a small number of very rich men [who] have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself" (RN, no. 2). Moreover, as I set out at more length in my first article (January 28), distributism is not a statist system. Just because it rejects the unrestrained competition of capitalism (something also rejected again and again by the Popes), does not mean that it makes use of the government to regulate the economy. Distributism

calls for the wide ownership of private property, with the laws (for example, the tax code) designed to discourage the concentration of property in the hands of a few. It is hard to find anything in the Catholic tradition which is against such arrangements.

...The tradition of economic thought with which we Americans are most familiar stems ultimately from the deistic tradition of Adam Smith, a bitter enemy of the Catholic Church incidentally.

A third and very important point that is at issue in our controversy concerns the role of the law as coercive agent. Both Dr. Schmiesing and Mr. Harold warn that using the laws to promote economic justice must tend to become a violation of human freedom. And in the first place, I repeat that any attempt to establish a Christian economic order must be preceded and accompanied by a renewed preaching of the Gospel. Men's hearts must turn to God if the society is to turn to God. But this does not mean that the law can never have a punitive effect. One last quotation from Pius XI in which he refers to the laissez-faire philosophy of the nineteenth century will illustrate what I mean.

A stern insistence on the moral law, enforced with vigor by civil authority, could have dispelled or perhaps averted these enormous evils. This, however, was too often lamentably wanting. For at the time when the new social order was beginning, the doctrines of rationalism had already taken firm hold of large numbers, and an economic teaching alien to the true moral law had soon arisen, whence it followed that free rein was given to human avarice.

In most matters we recognize that the law is both teacher and restrainer of evil doers. Thus we want to prevent abortion even if we cannot convert the abortionist. Our Catholic ancestors applied the same philosophy to the economic order, and however much they strove to convert those who injured the common good by their greed, they also sought to restrain them precisely to protect the most economically vulnerable members of the society.

Probably the biggest reason that Americans today have difficulty thinking about making fundamental changes in the economy is that we are convinced that our economy is doing so well. Every day we are bombarded with positive economic statistics, from rising Dow Jones averages to increased GDP or worker productivity. But one way to put this in perspective is to ask, How many families can afford to live on the income of the father alone? If we accept that a normal family life allows a mother to devote herself full-time to the care and education of her children, what can we say about

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Mark Searl



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an economy that makes a normal family life so difficult for so many? Despite the statistics, I do not think such an economy can be regarded as healthy.

My plea and hope is that Catholics will allow themselves to ask some fundamental questions about the economy which go beyond the usual assumptions which we receive from the culture around us. Then we can look at what our Catholic tradition has said and perhaps find some surprising truths, but truths which are nonetheless part of the salvific message of Jesus Christ, as held and taught by his teaching Church until the end of time. ■

Thomas Storck's latest book is Christendom and the West : Essays on Culture, Society and History. He is a contributing editor of The New Oxford Review and a member of the editorial board of The Chesterton Review.

¹ See nos. 81-87.

² Adam Smith described the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages as "the most formidable combination that ever was formed against the...liberty, reason, and happiness of mankind...." *The Wealth of Nations*, bk. 5, chap. 1, pt. 3, art. 3.

³ *Quadragesimo Anno*, no. 133

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Judgement

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means, too, *bringing truth to bear* everywhere and in all things, beginning with ourselves and extending as far as our influence can reach.

This is what a Catholic university is all about: building and perfecting our ability to judge rightly. It's what the *Concourse* is about too: exercising judgment; taking our understanding—the light of our faith—and rigorously applying it to the situations and difficulties we encounter as we live, through our reading or our relationships, whether in small things, like dorm policies and clothing styles, or in big things, like the justice of capitalism and the genius of women. It's a genuine contribution toward making our world, as the Holy Father puts it: "more human, reasonable and free."

The devil sure doesn't want us to do it. He is just *delighted* if we get slack in our magisterial capacity; it'll prevent our being much of a force when it comes time to judge the angels.

Kathleen van Schaijik