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Catholic Intellectual Hospitality: An Application to Catholic Higher Education

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Catholic Intellectual Hospitality:

An Application to Catholic Higher Education

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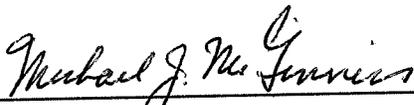
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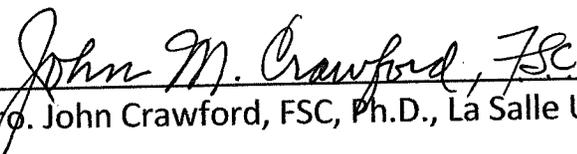

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Preface

The topic of Catholic institutional identity in higher education is a fascinating one, and can be approached from numerous angles, drawing insights from various disciplines. This dissertation represents a contribution from theology, and will necessarily cover a great deal of ground as it argues for an intentional retrieval of the virtue of hospitality and application to the Catholic intellectual life broadly but also Catholic higher education in particular.

Chapter One will set the stage for what follows by examining the challenge of Catholic institutional identity in light of developments of the past half century within the life of the Church, with particular attention given to the buildup to, content of, and impact following the promulgation of Pope John Paul II's *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* in 1990. The chapter will also note instances when hospitality has been given as a justification for a number of decisions, sometimes controversial, on Catholic campuses.

Chapter Two will follow with an investigation of hospitality as a virtue. The Scriptural testimony and early Christian witness to the practice of hospitality will be explored. Efforts in the past four decades to retrieve hospitality will also be surveyed with the hope of constructing some notion of what Catholic hospitality might entail in the intellectual life. Additionally, the relationship of hospitality and friendship will be examined with the intention of further clarifying the nature of hospitality, but also in an effort to prepare for at least one of the three practitioners of Catholic intellectual

hospitality to be covered later in the dissertation, who uses friendship as a term for how he understood his practice of hospitality.

That thinker, Thomas Merton, is the subject of Chapter Three, which studies the apostolate of friendship which Merton pursued in the final decade of his life. The chapter will seek to understand exactly how Merton's commitment to Catholicism impacted that apostolate.

Chapter Four suggests there is a kind of hospitality latent within the Catholic tradition's tendency to seek a synthesis of knowledge, even if that hospitality did not always surface clearly in practice. The place of the neo-Scholastic synthesis in Catholic higher education in the early to mid-20th century will be described before the chapter moves toward its primary focus, the intellectual hospitality of Bernard Lonergan. In particular, the chapter will look to Lonergan's work on human cognition to find a basis for a new path toward greater hospitality among the disciplines.

Chapter Five will explore the work of the third and final practitioner of Catholic intellectual hospitality, John S. Dunne. Dunne's unique method of theological reflection, which he called passing over, will be shown to be a clear demonstration of precisely the kind of hospitality that this dissertation contends can move the discussion on Catholic identity forward.

Chapter Six concludes the dissertation with a series of recommendations, predominantly modest in nature, for Catholic universities seeking to cultivate hospitality on campus. The intention is not so much to advocate a brand new approach to Catholic higher education so much as to invite institutions, and even the individuals who work

within them, to consider how the things they are already doing might be reflections of the

hospitality which is, rightly understood, a virtue.

ABSTRACT

Catholic Intellectual Hospitality: An Application to Catholic Higher Education
by Paul Schweigl, directed by Br. Michael J. McGinniss, FSC

Catholic higher education has been the focus of discussion concerning institutional identity in the face of contemporary challenges. This discussion has been especially vibrant since the promulgation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* in 1990. Faculty hiring and invitations to guest speakers have been perceived as challenges to identity, despite a growing awareness that Catholic universities are called to practice a distinctive welcome to people of various backgrounds and worldviews. This dissertation will contend that hospitality is crucial to the successful orientation of a Catholic university, as well as to the integrity of the Catholic intellectual life.

The nature of Catholic intellectual hospitality will be examined from biblical and historical (Chapter 2) perspectives. To practice hospitality requires openness to the other, but it also requires a home. The difficulties associated with practicing hospitality directly parallel the ongoing debates regarding the legitimate role of Catholic higher education and the Catholic intellectual life. Namely, Catholic individuals and communities seeking to practice hospitality have always struggled to strike a balance between remaining rooted in the Catholic tradition while being open to the needs of the other.

The modern perspectives on intellectual hospitality will primarily come from three highly-regarded writers who exemplify that virtue, Thomas Merton, Bernard Lonergan, and John S. Dunne. All three of these thinkers were able to remain faithful to their Catholic grounding while engaging persons from outside Catholicism. Merton's

apostolate of friendship (Chapter 3), Lonergan's theory of cognition (Chapter 4), and Dunne's method of passing over (Chapter 5) will each be examined and surveyed for insights into the nature of intellectual hospitality that might be applicable to Catholic higher education. The dissertation will conclude with recommendations for how institutions might cultivate hospitality in the campus community. These recommendations will be modest in that they will align closely with regular university practices, but could prove effective strategies in helping a Catholic university remain grounded in its Catholic identity while also pursuing the critical engagement with all ideas that is proper to a university

Chapter 1: Catholic Higher Education and a Place for Hospitality

Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore the reasons behind the current need for greater understanding of, and emphasis on, hospitality in the Catholic intellectual life. While such an endeavor could likely treat with the vocation of the Catholic intellectual in general, the focus here will instead be on trajectories in Catholic higher education. While there certainly are many Catholic scholars doing fine work in non-Catholic institutions (or even outside an institution altogether), an assumption of this chapter will be that Catholic universities are especially responsible for the stewardship of Catholic intellectual life. As the role of the Catholic university vis-à-vis the Church has evolved or the past half a century, what the Church requires of Catholic intellectuals has similarly developed and perhaps even expanded. Though Catholic scholars today are, much like their forebears, engaged in the work of teaching, researching, and writing, there is an entirely distinct ecclesiological function of the Church's intellectual life today. Unquestionably, the Second Vatican Council did much to signal, encourage, and define this ecclesiological shift, which will be described below. Even the past three decades, though, have witnessed intensive discussion on the obligations of the Catholic intellectual.

This is largely because the proper role of Catholic intellectual life is an integral part of the debate over Catholic institutional identity in Catholic higher education. In 1990, Pope John Paul II promulgated the apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which intended to clearly define the nature and mission of Catholic higher education

throughout the world. This document set off a flurry of discussion, particularly in the United States, where the majority of the world's Catholic institutions are located. Initially, this centered on issues of particular concern to American academics; namely, institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The middle of the 20th century was a tumultuous time in American history generally, but particularly so in the history of American Catholic higher education. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was the culmination of decades of dialogue, and has done much to bring order to what could easily have become chaos. The Catholic university represents the setting wherein the content of the Catholic intellectual tradition is brought into conversation with the content of human culture more comprehensively and critically than anywhere else.

Church and the Modern World

Wrestling with the nature of a contemplative vocation in the midst of a troubled society, Thomas Merton warned that "It is all too easy to retire into an ivory tower of private spirituality and let the world blow itself to pieces."[1] For Merton, the contemplative perspective was necessary for making sense of the way human history had progressed in God's world, but the solitude necessary to acquire that perspective could be dangerous. If isolation became an absolute, a goal in and of itself, it was little more than an immoral abdication of responsibility. In Matthew's Gospel, the final task Christ gives his followers, the Great Commission, exhorts the church to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of

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1. David J. O'Brien, *From the Heart of the American Church: Catholic Higher Education and American Culture* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 32.

the Holy Spirit…"[2] Clearly, the church is intended to look beyond itself, always with an eye toward sharing its wisdom and capacity for unity in Christ with the rest of the world. The Roman Catholic Church into which Merton converted, however, had an approach to this task predicated on the idea that it, as a perfect society, possessed the means to facilitate salvation by encouraging in its members a proper response to God's grace. Dialogue, then, in the pre-Vatican II church, required non-Catholic participants to approach a Catholicism that had, in many ways, become the very kind of ivory tower against which Merton warned. Christianity, with its eschatological vision of the Kingdom of God, has had to struggle against contempt of 'the world' in any context. The Reformation of the 16th century had initiated a defensive posture in Roman Catholicism, and that mentality was given fresh energy in the church's conflict with modernism in the 19th and 20th centuries. Merton's lifetime, however, would witness a drastic reorientation of Catholic perspectives, embodied most substantially in the Second Vatican Council.

In an earlier era, the Catholic university was able to exist and operate as an extension of the church as 'perfect society.' Operating under the assumptions that the Roman Catholic church possessed all that it needed to complete its mission and that it was, by and large, a visible institution, Catholic higher education was often held in low regard by non-Catholic observers of academe (think of the quip, often attributed to George Bernard Shaw, that the very notion of a Catholic university was an oxymoron). Though intensive instruction in neo-Scholastic philosophy may well have provided students an academically rigorous experience, there was rarely much call for active

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2. Matthew 28:19 (New Revised Standard Version).

engagement with contemporary cultures of the world that were not distinctively Catholic. With Tridentine ecclesiology still holding sway throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Catholic university campuses were often places where the handing on of tradition was the primary (and perhaps sometimes the only) concern.

The Second Vatican Council rendered such an orientation of Catholic higher education not only unhelpful, but also untenable. Vatican II represents, amongst other things, a clarion call for Catholic universities to redouble their efforts in helping the church learn in addition to helping it teach. As Stephen Bevans has observed, Pope John XXIII "called for *aggiornamento* in the church, but not for its own sake. Any renewal the council would bring was for the sake of a more intelligible and effective preaching of the Gospel."[3] Though the Roman Curia may well have sought initially to minimize the potential for anything groundbreaking to occur at the Council, a clear indication of the Council's ecclesiological direction was to take place early on in the first session: Cardinal Lienart's famous call for additional time for the Council Fathers to reconsider a list of names provided them by the Curia for voting on members of each of the council's ten commissions. Archbishop John Quinn has highlighted the importance of Lienart's intervention: "What might, otherwise, have seemed a secondary moment, was, in fact, a moment of great significance. It was a turning point, marking the world episcopate as conscious of its collegial role."[4]

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3. Stephen Bevans, SVD, "Beyond the New Evangelization: Toward a Missionary Ecclesiology for the Twenty-First Century," in *A Church with Open Doors* ed. Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015), 5.

4. Archbishop John R. Quinn, *Ever Ancient, Ever New* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 41

Thomas Rausch points to a suggestion made by Cardinal Suenens as having possibly even a greater impact on the ecclesiology set forth by the Council. Rather than following the somewhat frenetic proposal provided by the Council's Theological Commission for a document on the church, Suenens proposed a two-pronged approach that would eventually yield two separate documents: "First, (the Council) should look at the Church in its inner life. This would allow a treatment of the Church as the mystery of Christ living in his mystical body, as well as of its missionary, sacramental, and worship life. The second statement should address the Church in its relations with the outside world."[5]

The first part of Suenens' proposal, dealing with the church's inner life, culminated in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. In this document the Council Fathers "gave unprecedented attention to defining the role of the laity, opening the door to previously unheard of levels of participation in the ministries of the church by laypersons. Rather than defining the laity negatively (as people who are not ordained), the Council gave a powerful affirmation of the lay claim to be "sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ."[6] *Lumen Gentium* made significant use of the 'people of God' image of the church, while also emphasizing the sacramental nature of the church. This marked a significant departure from the emphasis on the external structures of the church favored in much of pre-Conciliar ecclesiology.

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5. Thomas P. Rausch, *Towards a Truly Catholic Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 16.
6. The Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," in *The Documents of Vatican* II, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 57.

The second part of the vision put forth by Cardinal Suenens, a consideration of the church's relationship to the rest of the world, would culminate in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church and the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*. While he notes the contribution of Suenens, Rausch gives "ultimate credit" to Pope John XXIII for the development of the document.[7] Regardless, it is safe to conclude that *Gaudium et Spes* was a culmination of numerous forces at work within the church that were pressing for a different kind of engagement with the world than that with which Catholicism had recently been accustomed. Rausch also notes that part of the discussion of the document by the Council Fathers occurred while Pope Paul VI addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York. Rausch contends that the Pope's speech and appearance were "widely understood as symbolic of a reforming Church's desire to put itself at the service of the world it had so long described only in negative tones."[8]

This document continues to be a major force in Catholic thinking on the mission of the church. In particular, *Gaudium et Spes* demonstrates a profound awareness on the part of the Council of the importance of culture. Noting Christ's linkage of love for God and love for neighbor, the Council Fathers recognized the social nature of all people and sought to devote more of the church's attention to the common good. Instead of attempting to co-opt culture through an imposition of Catholic thinking, *Gaudium et Spes* admits instead that the church "'does not always have a ready answer to every question,' but 'is eager to associate the light of revelation with the experience of humanity in trying

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7. Rausch, 34.
8. Ibid, 35.

to clarify the course upon which it has recently entered.'"[9] The church was never robbed of its supernatural functions by the Council, especially considering its continued willingness to use language such as Mystical Body and sacrament in thinking of the church. Nevertheless, *Gaudium et Spes* makes it clear that the church was no longer content thinking of itself as separate from the world in the same way that it once had; the world was capable of being redeemed by God and this demanded a different posture on the part of God's church. The inductive approach of the pastoral constitution, in particular, serves as a reminder that the church was a pilgrim alongside the rest of humanity. The church wrestled with many of the same issues that non-members did, and asked many of the same questions. The church could never again be complacent with its own isolation.

Gaudium et Spes defined culture as "all those things which go to the refining and developing of humanity's diverse mental and physical endowments."[10] This definition, in Vincent Miller's interpretation of the document, "unites the developmental understanding of culture with Catholic theological notions of creation, nature, and grace. Humankind 'can achieve true and full humanity only by means of culture, that is through the cultivations of the goods and values of nature' understood here both as human nature and the broader natural world in which we live."[11] While the Council was cognizant that culture could sometimes exist in tension with theology, there was in *Gaudium et Spes* a call to strengthen and make more efficient both the study of theology and the

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9. Ibid, 38.
10. Ibid, 40.
11. Vincent Miller, "Ecclesiology Cultural Change, and the Changing Nature of Culture," in *A Church with Open Doors* ed. Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015), 67.

communication of doctrine. With the church rather suddenly very eager to learn and a world with which it was eager to engage, the need for Catholic universities of high quality was perhaps never felt more acutely. As Miller summarizes, the Council's "vision of engagement with culture is grounded in the bedrock dogmatic principles of creation, incarnation, and soteriology." The confidence with which the Council believed the church could work toward a new Catholic synthesis in the midst of "the modern proliferation of knowledge" was "ultimately rooted in faith that God's saving presence is at work in human history in a way that makes the historical and ethnographic diversity of culture both intelligible and redeemable."[12]

Gaudium et Spes seemed almost an about-face from church policy of the pre-Council era. This document strongly identified the "joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age" with the "joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."[13] Indeed, the previously taken for granted distinction between the church and 'the world' seemed to be drastically diminished by the Council's call to transform the world. As Yves Congar notes in a commentary on *Gaudium et Spes*, "The 'world' is not simply the power of the State, it is mankind at work; it is capable of becoming Church…"[14] There have been widely-divergent schools of thought regarding the interpretation and application of the Council, but there is no contesting that the church could no longer downplay the Great Commission's demand for dialogue and evangelization befitting the 20th century. As Congar observes, the Council "several times

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12. Ibid, 70, 71.
13. The Second Vatican Council, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," in *The Documents of Vatican* II, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 199-200.
14. Yves Congar, "The Role of the Church in the Modern World," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* vol. 5, ed. Herbert Vorgrimmler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 212.

states that our eschatological vocation in no way diverts people from their earthly tasks but rather imposes an obligation on them to perform them"[15] Echoing the Council, Joseph Komonchak has pointed out that the decision to follow Christ is "a distinctive way of being in the world…But this distinctiveness should not be purchased at the price of a withdrawal from the world, but should rather be a distinctive way of being in and for the sake of the world."[16]

Ecclesiological Justification for Catholic Higher Education

It is, perhaps, a bit ironic that the Second Vatican Council advocated a position that made the Catholic university a vital setting for the Church's dialogue with the world just as those same institutions were experiencing something of an identity crisis. Even a decade before the Council, it would have seemed exceedingly peculiar to ask questions about the Catholic identity of a Catholic college or university in the first place. Indeed, into the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, Catholic identity was something that was for all intents and purposes taken for granted. With plenty of vowed religious filling faculties and administrations, well-defined juridical relationships between schools and the hierarchy, and a robust (though not uniform) Catholic sub-culture throughout the country, there was ample reason not to question whether the institutions of higher learning that claimed to be Catholic actually were. While much could be said to describe how the situation changed throughout the middle of the century, it is sufficient for the purposes of this chapter to note that the complacency regarding

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15. Ibid, 206.

16. Joseph A. Komonchak, "Mission and Identity in Catholic Universities," in *Theological Education in the Catholic Tradition*, ed. Patrick W. Carey and Earl C. Muller (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 40.

Catholic identity was in no small part a function of complacency regarding ecclesiology. Up until shortly before the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church's understanding of itself was still dominated by the ecclesiology of the Council of Trent (or the Catholic Reformation as a whole), and Vatican I. Given that both of these councils took place in times of unease and pessimism regarding the broader world, Catholic thinking on the church tended to promote the notion of the church as a fortress providing shelter (and eventually salvation) from the fallen aspects of human culture gone awry.

Avery Dulles suggests an ecclesiological definition from Robert Bellarmine as indicative of this earlier Catholic mindset: "The one and true Church is the community of men brought together by the profession of the same Christian faith conjoined in the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of the legitimate pastors and especially the one vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman pontiff."[17] Clearly, Bellarmine's preoccupation with opposing Protestantism led him to concentrate on visible delineations for where the Church ended and the rest of the world began. Indeed, it is not difficult to see how a Catholic university operating under such an ecclesiological perspective might similarly rely on visible criteria for demonstrating its Catholic identity. While such an ecclesiology might support at least the illusion of certainty, Dulles hastens to point out that "This clarity…was bought at a price. It tended to lower the Church to the same plane as other human communities and to neglect the most important thing about the Church:

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17. Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 16.

the presence in it of the God who calls the members to himself, sustains them by his grace, and works through them as they carry out the mission of the Church."[18]

For his part, Dulles relied heavily on the notion that "The Church never fully achieves itself as Church, at least not in the conditions of this world. It is true Church to the extent that it is tending to become more truly Church."[19] This striving on the part of the church must be seen as reliant on God's grace, but it can also be expressed only within the concrete realm of history. To be set within history implies a need for the church—and the intellectual tradition it safeguards and seeks constantly to develop—to engage with culture in whatever forms and contexts it finds itself. Miller concurs when he posits that "The relationship of religion and culture is unavoidable for Catholicism because of its understanding of the communal, ecclesial nature of salvation."[20]

Historical Background

Though the Council clearly affirmed Catholic higher education, it did not create it. Within the United States alone, there were well over 200 Catholic institutions before the Council, which were, in some ways, extremely diverse. Catholic institutions of higher learning included universities, colleges, schools founded by religious orders, diocesan schools, or even, in one case, a school founded by Pontifical charter. Despite this diversity (which was certainly not superficial), Alice Gallin has asserted that they nevertheless had a "common culture. Their mission statements were almost interchangeable, and their commitment to liberal arts, character formation, and a sense of

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18. Ibid 16-17.
19. Ibid, 71.
20. Miller, 64.

campus community…was openly proclaimed as rooted in their Catholic faith."[21] Academic freedom, already a highly-cherished virtue for secular American academics, meant something decidedly more restrictive in Catholic institutions before the Council; namely, freedom to teach and learn the truth. Illustrative of this point of view is a faculty handbook from Duquesne University, published in 1940, which claimed that "no man is free to teach objective falsehood simply because subjectively he fancies it to be the truth. In questions of fact there is no such thing as academic freedom."[22]

The curriculum at many Catholic institutions, then, was confidently based on the idea that the Catholic tradition had already thought things through, and students were to be brought up to speed with what the church already knew. The bedrock of this confidence was the neo-Scholastic revival which had been underway since the middle of the 19th century. Drawing heavily from the thought of Aquinas (as well as, to varying degrees, the other schoolmen), neo-Scholasticism offered a synthesis of faith and reason that was part philosophical and part theological in its orientation. Asserting that God's existence was provable by reason and that the human mind was fully capable of "(arriving) at objective truth through the direct intuitions of the intellect and the exercise of discursive reason," the quasi-official status of neo-Scholasticism ensured that Catholic higher education would often seem (especially to outsiders) to be little more than indoctrination.[23] Rather than promoting innovation, the general approach to education by Catholic scholars "in the first half of the twentieth century was one of apologetics; every

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21. Alice Gallin, O.S.U., *Negotiating Identity: Catholic Higher Education since 1960* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 1.
22. Ibid, 5.
23. Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 118.

new scientific or literary discovery had to be reconciled with an already defined 'truth.'"[24]

The 1960's, however, saw both a new understanding of freedom as well as the collapse of the neo-Scholastic synthesis on Catholic campuses. This collapse, described by Walter Kasper as "the outstanding event in the Catholic theology of our century," was, in retrospect, inevitable.[25] Though there had been, in various intervals, a good deal of criticism leveled against Catholic institutions for the prevalence of neo-Scholasticism on its campuses, Philip Gleason argues that "The changes that mattered most were internal to the Catholic subculture…"[26] Such changes were no doubt accelerated at least in part due to the significant increase in the accessibility of a college education for Catholics welcomed home from the Second World War by the G.I. Bill. Already in the 1950's, Catholic dissatisfaction with the synthesis steadily rose. Gleason lists "the way Neo-Scholasticism was taught; tensions arising from the diversity of Neo-Scholastic schools of thought; and increasing discontent at ecclesiastical authoritarianism" as the factors that led to the collapse.[27]

This last factor was not limited to dissatisfaction with neo-Scholasticism. Gleason rightly posits that "freedom became the central theme in American Catholic higher education in the early 1960s."[28] Catholic scholars in many disciplines brought their understanding of academic freedom, gained at the (probably) secular institutions where

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24. Gallin, 3.
25. Robert Imbelli, "Theologians and Bishops," in *Theological Education in the Catholic Tradition*, ed. Patrick W. Carey and Earl C. Muller (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 223.
26. Gleason, 298.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid, 305.

they earned their advanced degrees, to the Catholic campuses where they taught. Truly, freedom was very much a theme of the 1960s in general, as demonstrated by the potency of the Civil Rights Movement in that decade. Combine this emphasis with the anti-authoritarian sentiment that was helped along significantly by American involvement in Vietnam, and it is easy to see looking back that many of the elements needed for a shift, or even a showdown of sorts, were in place. The opening of windows initiated by Pope John XXIII at Vatican II seemed to many to be an official sanctioning of a new understanding of freedom by the very top echelons of the Church.

Though there was no single moment in the 1960s that represented the end or beginning of a new era, it is nevertheless possible to trace a series of events that are representative of the changing climate on Catholic campuses. One of the key turning points was no doubt the decision made in 1963 by the rector of Catholic University of America, Monsignor William J. McDonald, to restrict four liberal theologians from speaking on campus. In a short period of time, McDonald received criticism from within and without the Church. There was already in 1963, then, a growing expectation on Catholic campuses that decisions affecting freedom on campus would not be made behind closed doors, whether administrators were clergy or not.[29]

Faculty concerns regarding their perceived lack of influence over institutional decision-making (which seemed contrary to the spirit and letter of Vatican II) came to a head in several highly-publicized encounters, notably at St. John's University in 1965 and at Catholic University of America in 1967. The case at Catholic University revolved

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29. Ibid, 306.

around the moral theologian Charles Curran, whose contract would be allowed to lapse in August of that year as a result of a vote by the board of trustees. In what has been described as a *coup*, the various faculties of Catholic University (except the School of Education) refused to teach until Curran's contract was renewed. In a move inconceivable even a decade earlier, the board of trustees, which consisted entirely of bishops, relented, reinstated Curran, and even promoted him to the rank of associate professor.[30] Unquestionably, Catholic higher education had entered something of an identity crisis. Booming enrollments, energy that was high as a result of the Second Vatican Council, and subsequent efforts to increase lay participation in the governance of Catholic universities all contributed to it.

Also in 1967 were the first steps taken to lessen the influence of the religious orders that had founded many of the Catholic institutions in the United States. As enrollments grew and administrative challenges increased, it became apparent that these challenges often required talent and experience that many of the religious orders could not provide. Only by increasing the number of laypersons on boards of trustees, laypersons with significant track records in business, law, and other professional disciplines, could these schools hope to secure a brighter future. Any canonical complications with this process were bypassed (or ignored) due to the persuasiveness of John McGrath, a canon lawyer at Catholic University, who asserted that religious communities were not the legal owners of the properties and other assets of the colleges. Since these things were held in trust by the boards of trustees, these institutions were

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30. Peter M. Mitchell, *The Coup at Catholic University: The 1968 Revolution in American Catholic Education* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015), 55.

simply not ecclesiastical property.[31] Armed with the so-called 'McGrath Thesis,' Notre

Dame and St. Louis each initiated the process of separate incorporation, thereby limiting

the influence of their founding congregations, in January 1967.[32]

Such innovations were undoubtedly demonstrations of a strong lay commitment

to Catholic higher education, and the decrease in clergy and religious on boards of

trustees made it easier for Catholic institutions to justify their reception of federal aid,

without which many Catholic schools may have disappeared in the leaner years of the

early 1970s. They were also, however, causes of consternation to those who questioned

an institution's ability to maintain a vibrant Catholic identity with laypersons at the helm

(though many schools maintained roles, sometimes prominent ones, for their sponsoring

communities). Additionally, there were also more basic questions of whether the term

Catholic could be a meaningful descriptor for an institution of higher learning in the first

place. Such questions had been raised often enough by non-Catholics and could therefore

be shrugged off as the products of anti-Catholic prejudice, but it was much harder to

ignore these questions when the people asking them were Catholic themselves. In 1967,

John Cogley questioned the future, and perhaps even the legitimacy of a Catholic

university, claiming that a day would come when they would "seem as anachronistic as

the papal states."[33] Acting along similar assumptions but unwilling to passively let

Catholics secularize in due course, Sister Jacqueline Grennan, S.L., president of Webster

College, not only handed control of the college to a lay board of trustees, but left her

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31. Gallin, 46.
32. Gleason, 314.
33. Gallin, xi.

religious order so as to focus on running the "secular or semi-secular institution."[34] With

such perspectives being circulated publicly, if not popularly, steps needed to be taken in

order to discover what a Catholic institution might be in a post-Council, post-separate

incorporation context.

Build-up to Ex Corde Ecclesiae

That a pope in the late 20th century should write an apostolic constitution on

Catholic Higher Education should hardly be surprising, given what has been described

above. Indeed, what would eventually be Pope John Paul II's *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (*Ex*

Corde) can be seen as the culmination of more than two decades of dialogue among those

interested in and responsible for the Catholic identity of Catholic higher learning, within

the American context but also everywhere else. The American contribution to the

discussion was never monolithic, but an excellent place to begin surveying the history is

the Land O'Lakes Statement of 1967. Meeting at a property owned by Notre Dame in

northern Wisconsin were "twenty-six persons representing nine major Catholic

universities, members of the episcopacy, and well-known scholars and leaders of

religious communities."[35] The statement released by those present is famous for its claim

that "institutional autonomy and academic freedom are essential conditions of life and

growth and indeed of survival for Catholic universities as for all universities."[36] Just as

Vatican II blurred the boundary between the church and 'the world,' Land O'Lakes did

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34. Gleason, 315.

35. Alice Gallin, O.S.U., "Toward a Universal Statement of the Nature of the Catholic University 1965-1973," in *American Catholic Higher Education: Essential Documents, 1967-1990*, ed. Alice Gallin, O.S.U. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 5.

36. "Land O'Lakes Statement: The Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University," in *American Catholic Higher Education: Essential Documents, 1967-1990*, ed. Alice Gallin, O.S.U. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 7.

something to lessen the distinctions between Catholic and secular higher learning.

Gleason has described it as "a declaration of independence from the hierarchy…"[37] The

Land O'Lakes Statement gave assurances that the Catholic university would remain

"specifically Catholic in profound and creative ways for the service of society and the

people of God," but this brief document certainly raised as many questions as it

answered.[38]

The 1968 meeting of the International Federation of Catholic Universities in

Kinshasa can be seen as a foreshadowing of the tensions to come between the American

experience and the desire of Catholics elsewhere (including but not limited to Rome) for

a clearly-defined, juridical relationship between Catholic institutions and the church

hierarchy. Whereas Kinshasa echoed Land O'Lakes in its emphasis on the importance of

theology, noticeably absent were any mention of autonomy or academic freedom.[39] A

subsequent meeting in Rome the following year, hosted by the Congregation for Catholic

Education, explored the very issues of freedom and autonomy left open by Land O'Lakes

and ignored by Kinshasa. This meeting had a significant impact on the dialogue up to and

including *Ex Corde*, and in the discussions "we can almost hear the American delegates

trying to explain the independence of their institutions, newly reflected in the transfer of

governance to boards of trustees no longer directly linked to the authority of the religious

community."[40] Though the American insistence on autonomy and freedom no doubt

sounded dangerous to Rome, and the Roman insistence on straightforward definitions of

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37. Gleason, 317.
38. "Land O'Lakes," 11.
39. Gallin, *Negotiating Identity*, 129.
40. Ibid, 132.

juridical clarity may have sounded like little more than a power grab to Americans, the vigorous dialogue taking place certainly indicates some willingness to learn on both sides.

Making it difficult to speak of a clear division between the American and Roman 'sides' of the conversation, however, was the lack of uniformity behind what is meant by both 'American' and 'Roman.' Though an organization like the National Catholic Education Association might legitimately represent the mainstream of American Catholic thinking, equally articulate voices took a very different perspective, which ensured that, oftentimes, "Rome received contradictory messages from these two groups."[41] Similarly, 'Rome' cannot be reduced to any single office or Congregation, either. The face-to-face conversations between church delegates and American educators were often warm and productive, but these delegates may not have had any more influence over official church positions than canon lawyers, who might fairly be expected to insist on stricter definitions of the relationship between religious orders and institutional governance, bishops and theologians, etc.

Another meeting held in Rome, this time in 1972, under both the Congregation for Catholic Education as well as the International Federation of Catholic Universities, did much to relieve American concerns, acknowledging the great diversity amongst institutions of Catholic higher learning throughout the world, as well as the importance of both autonomy and academic freedom. Realizing a particular sticking point was theologians' academic freedom, this meeting's final document, "The Catholic University

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41. Ibid, 143.

in the Modern World," quoted Paul VI: "The Magisterium knows that without the help of theology it could no doubt preserve and teach the faith, but it would hardly attain to that degree of richness and depth which it needs in order to accomplish its task fully."[42] Perhaps even more importantly, this document also gave a powerful affirmation of the freedom of theologians, saying that they "must be free to question, to develop their hypotheses, to search for more adequate interpretations and formulations, to publish and defend their views on a scholarly level, and to study theological sources, including pronouncements of the teaching Church, with the full freedom of scholarly research."[43] As Monika Hellwig has observed, "no subsequent official document has explicitly acknowledged such a clear statement of the academic freedom of the theologian."[44] Also examined at this meeting were when and how a local bishop might challenge the work of an individual theologian. Any intervention on the part of "ecclesiastical authority should respect the statutes and regulations of the institution as well as accepted academic procedures."[45] It seems occasionally, at least, America and Rome could reach an understanding.

Such moments of mutual respect and understanding, however, seemed destined to be temporary. In 1974 Cardinal Garrone of the Congregation for Catholic Education wrote a letter to the American bishops, expressing concern over the trend toward separate incorporation amongst American Catholic institutions, asking why these schools were

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42. "The Catholic University in the Modern World," in *American Catholic Higher Education: Essential Documents, 1967-1990*, ed. Alice Gallin, O.S.U. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 54.

43. Ibid, 55.

44. Monika Hellwig, "The American Catholic University and the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*," *Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education*, v20 n1 (Fall 1999), 24.

45. Gallin, *Negotiating Identity*, 55.

being 'given away,' and whether their lay boards of trustees meant that they were, in fact,

not Catholic anymore. After the conference in Rome in 1972, this letter was insulting to

some American Catholic educators.[46] For others, any scrutiny of American Catholic

higher education was a welcome development. Individuals such as Dr. S. Thomas

Greenburg of the Institute for Catholic Higher Education "believed that the Catholic

colleges were indeed on the way to the loss of their Catholic identity and had absorbed

the secularist philosophy surrounding them in American higher education."[47] The

formation of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars in 1977 similarly signaled the existence

of a significant bloc of Catholic thinkers who dissented from the NCEA's optimistic

assessment of the situation (regarding Catholic identity) on Catholic campuses.

Therefore, the dialogue continued, alternating between periods of respectful productivity

and stalemate driven by suspicion.

Pope John Paul II, elected in 1978, determined early in his papacy to bring clarity

to the discussion through the issuing of an official papal document on Catholic higher

education. In 1980, the Congregation for Catholic Education began the project that would

culminate a decade later with *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The pope's own career as a university

professor gave him a good understanding of the issues being discussed, but the 1985

schema sent to Catholic professors, presidents, and bishops nevertheless sparked

significant discussion. Gallin asserts that the high number of norms proposed in this early

version of the apostolic constitution (49 separate injunctions) "indicated the overriding

concern of the Roman hierarchy for particular ways that bishops could control the life of

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46. Hellwig, 25.
47. Gallin, *Negotiating Identity*, 142.

the university."[48] An additional draft, circulated in 1988, was highly touted by many in American Catholic higher education. Hellwig states simply that "There was nothing in this draft that would be unworkable in the US context." In particular, noticeably absent was any mention whatsoever of the canonical requirement for teachers of theology to receive a mandate from the local bishop. Interestingly, by the finished product of *Ex Corde* in 1990, this 1988 draft had "disappeared without a trace."[49]

In the meantime, the pope had certainly given American Catholic academics reason for optimism regarding the impending apostolic constitution. In September 1987, Pope John Paul II had addressed a gathering of leaders of Catholic higher education at Xavier University of Louisiana, expressing a profound respect and admiration for the work being done in American Catholic institutions. Especially noteworthy was the pope's praise of American Catholic universities specifically in the area of Catholic identity: "…let us be thankful for the special strengths of your schools—for their Catholic identity, for their service of truth, and for their role in helping to make the Church's presence felt in the world of culture and science. And let us be thankful above all for the men and women committed to this mission…"[50] The pope's gratitude and his apparent understanding of the uniqueness of the American context did much to allay fears regarding the upcoming apostolic exhortation.

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48. Ibid, 154.
49. Hellwig, 33-34.
50. John Paul II, "Address, Pope John Paul II to Leaders of Catholic Higher Education," in in *American Catholic Higher Education: Essential Documents, 1967-1990*, ed. Alice Gallin, O.S.U. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 285.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae

The long-anticipated apostolic constitution was promulgated in 1990, after years

of build-up. The document is divided into two parts, with the first being a description of

and reflection on the nature and importance of Catholic higher education. Rejecting the

idea that Catholic universities are inherently hampered by any claims to unique access to

truth that the church might make, John Paul II asserted that "a Catholic University is

distinguished by its free search for the whole truth about nature, man and God."[51] In a

similar vein, though much closer to the questions about freedom that many American

Catholics were asking, was the pope's promise that a Catholic university "possesses

institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively and guarantees its

members academic freedom," with the understanding this freedom must necessarily be

understood in the "confines of the truth and the common good."[52]

The initial reaction to *Ex Corde* was decidedly positive. In her initial response to

the constitution, Gallin stated that "There are no surprises. We were not anxiously

looking for any document, but if there had to be one, this is as good as we could get."[53]

At the very least it is clear that *Ex Corde* did much to stimulate discussion on Catholic

higher education, despite the vibrant dialogue that had taken place on precisely that

subject since at least the Second Vatican Council. As Hellwig notes, in the wake of the

promulgation, "conferences were held about the Constitution, lectures were given, groups

studied it, all with considerable enthusiasm...The general consensus was that the

philosophy of Catholic higher education and of the research potential of the institutions

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51. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, August 15th, 1990, 4, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html.
52. Ibid, 4.
53. O'Brien, 65.

as presented in Part I was very positive and inspirational and would be helpful...There

was also an optimistic sense that the General Norms posed no threat to the

institutions…."[54]

The misgivings that remained were focused primarily on the second part of the

apostolic constitution, the General Norms. Particularly troubling was the cautionary

statement that "Catholic theologians, aware that they fulfil a mandate received from the

Church, are to be faithful to the Magisterium of the Church as the authentic interpreter of

Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition."[55] The notion of a mandate (or *mandatum*) as a

requirement for Catholic theologians teaching Catholic theology in Catholic institutions

became law for the universal church only as recently as 1983, when a revised edition of

canon law stipulated that "It is necessary that those who teach theological disciplines in

any institute of higher studies have a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical

authority."[56] Though the concept of the mandate had already evolved throughout the

process of the canon law revision as well as the drafting period of *Ex Corde* itself, it

remained unclear exactly how well it would mesh with the American Academy's

cherished value of academic freedom. Overall, however, the stipulation in the General

Norms that all of the norms "be applied concretely at the local and regional levels by

Episcopal Conferences and other Assemblies of Catholic Hierarchy…"seemed to account

for the uniqueness of the American context.[57]

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54. Hellwig, 34.
55. John Paul II, 2.4.3.
56. John Paul II, Note 50.
57. John Paul II, 2.1.2.

Ex Corde *in America*

With the responsibility for implementing *Ex Corde* in America squarely on the shoulders of the American bishops, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops set up a committee consisting of bishops and college presidents to create a list of guidelines to be voted on by the NCCB general assembly, and subsequently sent to Rome for final approval. David O'Brien suggests that "the sigh of relief" immediately following the promulgation of *Ex Corde* "was followed by renewed alarm," however, significant efforts were made to bring bishops and administrators of local Catholic institutions together.[58] Such meetings, Hellwig observes, "seemed to add warmth and reduce the tension…"[59]

Though there were legitimate reasons for uncertainty regarding the mandate, the American bishops have oftentimes demonstrated a keen understanding of Catholic higher education in America as it is distinctive from Catholic higher education elsewhere. It is hard to find any serious indication that an episcopal takeover of Catholic institutions was forthcoming. O'Brien relates how, at a 1994 discussion at a meeting of presidents, Bishop John Leibrecht (Springfield-Cape Girardeau) "reported that the bishops had no desire to interfere in the internal governance of the schools. They hoped to preserve the 'informal and dialogical' relationship of the recent past."[60] This sentiment is far more a nod to the status quo than it is an example of the bishops' unwillingness to fight over *Ex Corde*. Even in the dynamic era of the Council American bishops had recognized a level of autonomy in Catholic institutions.

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58. O'Brien, 65.
59. Hellwig, 35.
60. O'Brien, 66.

In 1963, Francis Cardinal Spellman began an argument with the Sacred Congregation in Rome over the awarding of honorary degrees that would take two years to resolve. Spellman affirmed the Catholic identity of institutions in the United States while simultaneously acknowledging that "they should be free to follow their own traditions and in common with other universities, govern their institutions in accordance with their own rules."[61] Even in the midst of a relatively highly-publicized inquiry regarding possible heresy in the philosophy department at the University of Dayton, "ecclesiastical authority did not intrude into the working of the structures within the university."[62] With such precedents in mind it is easier to understand that, when the bishops overwhelmingly approved a draft of ordinances in 1996 that tabled the mandate for further discussion, they were, by and large, recognizing legitimate concerns of American Catholic institutions. The passing of the 1996 draft was celebrated as a "conclusion of the process in a manner that would not prejudice the standing and survival of the US Catholic institutions."[63]

The back and forth between Rome and America, however, was not finished. Rome's response, which came to the NCCB in the summer of 1997, was critical of the American ordinances, largely for not being juridical enough. The issue of the mandate was, again, center stage. With mounting pressure from Rome, the American bishops set up a committee to explore "how the Roman requirements might best be met with the least

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61. Gallin, *Negotiating Identity*, 19.
62. Ibid, 66.
63. Hellwig, 36.

damage to the status of the US schools."[64] Despite O'Brien's observation that "the American hierarchy was changing as Pope John Paul appointed more conservative men to key sees,"[65] the bishops' reception of the committee's proposal again showed great sensitivity to the specifics of the American context. The American bishops, it seemed, were required to find some synthesis of the Roman and American positions.

In November of 1999, the NCCB approved *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*, with the expectation that it would become law in May of 2001. This approval came after a full year of spirited discussion, both within and without the Bishops Conference. A proposal discussed by the bishops the previous November had been heavily criticized, with Bishops D'Arcy (Fort Wayne-South Bend), Weakland (Milwaukee), and Quinn (San Francisco) all among the notable advocates of a less juridical, more informal approach with an eye on maintaining the status quo in terms of the relationship between bishops and university administrators. Some university presidents, similarly, had voiced strong opposition to the current proposal. Edward Malloy, president of Notre Dame, and J. Donald Monan, S.J., former president of Boston College, proudly stated that "so many productive activities are taking place on Catholic campuses today and in dialogue with local bishops," but lamented that "it would be tragic" if the proposal "were to result in driving (the church and the universities) apart."[66]

Malloy and Monan claimed the bishops had ignored the prescription of *Ex Corde* to "(take) into account the Statutes of each University or Institute and, as far as possible

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64. Ibid.
65. O'Brien, 65.
66. Donald J. Monan and Edward A. Malloy, "'Ex Corde Ecclesiae' Creates an Impasse," *America*, January 30-February 6, 1999, 11.

and appropriate, civil law."[67] The resistance of these two prominent leaders of American Catholic higher education rested on what they saw as a grave challenge to academic freedom, namely, the mandate. Regardless of how the bishops defined the mandate, Malloy and Monan saw it as little more than "an instrument, however ineffective, to control what is taught and written."[68]

The bishops were clearly in a difficult position. On one hand, they recognized they each had a pastoral responsibility for the authenticity of Catholic teaching within his diocese. On the other, there was also a clear desire to preserve the best of what was distinctive about American universities: autonomy and freedom. In "The Application for *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* for the United States," the bishops affirmed that "Academic freedom is an essential component of a Catholic university." More strikingly, the integrity of that freedom on Catholic campuses was made a direct responsibility of the bishops themselves: "…the diocesan bishop has the duty to recognize and promote the rightful academic freedom of professors in Catholic universities in their search for truth."[69] Later in the "Application," the bishops nevertheless included the requirement for the mandate, going to great lengths to minimize the potential outcry. In the hope of making it as palatable as possible, the bishops declared that the mandate "should not be construed as an appointment, authorization, delegation, or approbation of one's teaching by Church

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67. John Paul II, 2.1.2.
68. Monan and Malloy, 8.
69. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "The Application for *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* for the United States," (June 2000), 2.2.2-3, www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catholic-education/higher-education/the-application-for-ex-corde-ecclesiae-for-the-united-states.cfm.

authorities. Those who have received a *mandatum* teach in their own name…not in the name of the Bishop or of the Church's magisterium."[70]

Despite the bishops' significant softening of the language regarding the mandate found in canon law and *Ex Corde*, some in American Catholic theology were not pleased. Controversial theologian Daniel Maguire wrote in an open letter to Archbishop Rembert Weakland that he simply "will not request either a mandate or an ecclesial blessing…"[71] Believing the process for granting the *mandatum* required a level of theological competence that many bishops simply did not possess, Maguire characterized the "spirit and purpose" of *Ex Corde* as an attempt "to reverse the freedom that came to Catholic theology before and during the Second Vatican Council."[72] Preferring the oversight of academic peers to that of theologically amateurish bishops, Maguire, in a rhetorical flourish, claimed that *Ex Corde* "slips into magic, implying as it does that nontheologian bishops will be miraculously endowed with divine inspiration to make up for their lack of expertise…"[73]

Moving Forward on the Mandate

Maguire, in making the claim that theologians represent a kind of parallel magisterium, focusing on the academic while the bishops focus only on the pastoral, overlooks whatever pastoral responsibility the bishops might have for Catholic students attending Catholic campuses. At the very least, Joseph Bellacosa is on the right track when he argues that, despite the varied areas of expertise of the bishops, they are

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70. Ibid, 2.4.4.e.ii.
71. Daniel C. Maguire, "Academic Freedom and the Vatican's 'Ex Corde Ecclesiae,'" *Academe* 88, no. 3(May-June 2002), 47, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40252166.
72. Ibid, 48.
73. Ibid, 49.

"entitled…to a presumption of respect for intellectual, honest and conscientious exertion in the fulfillment of their responsibilities and ministries."[74] Admittedly, there may well be an inherent tension between theologians and bishops, regardless of the loyalty of the individual theologian. Robert Imbelli has argued that, insofar as the bishops are responsible for "a concern not to adulterate sound teaching with merely human fantasies and fables," and theologians are charged with promoting "the ongoing appropriation of faith's understanding that can lead the whole Church to authentic doctrinal development," it is not surprising that "bishops embody a more conservative interest and theologians a more progressive one."[75]

Though Imbelli confirms that there is, nevertheless, overlap between the functions of bishops and theologians, he is in very good company in his rejection of the idea that the office of the bishop somehow overshadows or dominates that of the theologian. No less prominent a theologian than Joseph Ratzinger declares that "Theology is not simply and exclusively an ancillary function of the Magisterium…"[76] Regarding the tension that necessarily exists between the hierarchy and theologians, Ratzinger, with no small measure of hopefulness, rightly asserts that "These tensions…can be productive, provided that each side sustains them in the recognition that its function is intrinsically ordered to that of the other."[77]

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74. Joseph W. Bellacosa, "Ex Corde Ecclesiae: Reflections, Perspectives, and Proposals," *The Catholic Lawyer* 40 (Spring 2001), 315.
75. Imbelli, 231.
76. Joseph Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 104.
77. Ibid, 106.

Where does this leave the American church regarding the mandate? It is important to have a theory of what the co-existence of bishops and theologians for the betterment of the church should be like. The potential problems regarding the mandate, however, will only prove solvable or insurmountable in the context of fruitful or dismal relationships between real people. As Ratzinger noted, the "problems lie in the concrete."[78] As the American bishops discovered from their vantage point between the Vatican and the American academy, the post-*Ex Corde* concrete includes the mandate. James Heft recalled the Archbishop of Cincinnati telling the faculty at the University of Dayton, quite simply, that "There is no debate as to whether or not we will have the *mandatum*. The question we are now facing is 'how best can we make it work?'"[79] Heft was very hopeful that the incorporation of the mandate into the life of the Catholic university will have multiple positive results. Heft believed Catholic theologians need to be reminded "theology is not exactly like most other disciplines, and that a genuine…relationship to the faith of the larger Church articulated by the bishops constitutes an integral part of…Catholic theology."[80] Additionally, Heft was hopeful that the implementation of the mandate requirement may very well improve Catholic understanding of due process, which would no doubt ultimately do much to protect the rights of theologians.

Understanding the mandate as "a statement of personal relationship between the bishop and the individual theologian" and a sign the individual theologian is in full communion with the church, Heft believed, fairly, that one of the crucial requirements on

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78. Ibid, 61.

79. J.L. Heft, "The Meaning of the Mandatum: A Report on the Dialogue Between One Archdiocese and a Catholic University Faculty of Theology," *Journal of Catholic Education* 6.4 (2003), 492, http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce/vol6/iss4/7.

80. Ibid.

the part of theologians is an awareness of the pastoral implications of their work.

Ultimately, Catholic theologians "should not want to teach Catholic theology except in

communion with the Church, with or without a *mandatum*."[81] All things considered,

though the theologian is free to present any of a number of points of view in her

classroom, she is nevertheless required by her mandate merely "to present as Catholic

teaching what is Catholic teaching…"[82] That this is a decidedly reasonable expectation,

and would not be the catalyst of any major crackdown on American theologians seems to

be confirmed by experience. In June 2012, in their assessment of the implementation of

Ex Corde over the previous ten years, the bishops acknowledged that, thought there was

still work to be done, "our institutions have made definite progress in advancing Catholic

identity."[83] The *mandatum* was not mentioned once.

The Continuation of Debate

For some, it may be tempting to conclude that the spirited debates surrounding the

implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* have finally died down after reaching some kind

of equilibrium. For others, however, the quieting of the storm is due less to a finding of

equilibrium than it is to one 'side' being wearied by a never-ending series of setbacks. As

conservative Catholic scholar Anne Hendershott proclaims, "The contentious battles that

once surrounded the release of Pope John Paul's 1990 apostolic constitution on Catholic

higher education have ended as college presidents quietly refused to implement it, and

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81. Ibid, 497.
82. Ibid, 496.
83. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Final Report for the Ten Year Review of *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae for the United States*," (June 2012), www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catholic-education/higher-education/index.cfm.

many of the bishops were reluctant to require it. Most seem to have abandoned the fight."[84] For Hendershott, the last half century has been a bleak chapter in the history of American Catholic higher education, marked by an ever increasing lack of interest in authentic Catholic identity. As she sees it, Catholic institutions have largely been single-minded in their desire to emulate the elite amongst their secular peers. As a result, distinctive Catholic identity has been crushed under the weight of trendier academic currents that have been, often enough, downright antagonistic toward the Church and its teaching. As Hendershott sees it, "The students have paid the highest price."[85] While they should have been guaranteed the chance to engage with Catholic doctrine during their time on a Catholic campus, Hendershott fears instead that those who should have been most responsible for handing on the Catholic tradition have given pupils a watered down education marred by relativism, materialism, and otherwise immoral perspectives.

Hendershott is a credentialed scholar who publishes well-documented work. It can be, though, easy to dismiss a good deal of what she writes as reactionary or unrealistic. For instance, Hendershott believes that the Church is not so much in conflict with 'the world' as it is in a fight for its very survival with a fifth column dedicated to its destruction, or at least its radical redefinition. She points to "a war between those who are dedicated to the negation of the authority of scripture and the hierarchy of the Church, and those who are proposing a renaissance of the Catholic intellect and a renewed appreciation for the continued contributions of the Catholic Church itself.[86] As a

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84. Anne Hendershott, *Status Envy* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2009), 227.
85. Ibid, 6.
86. Ibid, 10.

sociologist, Hendershott can be forgiven for having only a layman's grasp of the diversity

of legitimate ecclesiological perspectives in today's Church. And yet, when she accuses

thinkers such as retired Archbishop John R. Quinn of having made suggestions which

"would bring the Catholic Church in line with most Protestant denominations and

radically weaken the papacy" simply for advocating "decreased papal authority,

decentralization, more control granted to bishops, and parishioner involvement in the

selection of bishops," it seems Hendershott is after distinctiveness for the sake of

distinctiveness instead of a distinctive Catholicity.[87]

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that a scholar like Hendershott is

entirely missing the mark in her criticisms of the Catholic higher education. She is on

some solid footing when she questions the dedication of many Catholic institutions to

offering opportunities for remedial religious instruction for their undergraduates.

Additionally, she is right to laud a sentiment expressed by Gerald Bradley on the question

of balancing a search for truth with the conviction that truth is something that had already

been revealed: "Is it not intuitively more likely and does not experience confirm that

where there is no truth there is more likely to be manipulation? Where there is no truth

there can be no genuine common good. There can only be shifting consensus about this

or that, implying that 'right' and wrong' manifest not things as they are, but interpersonal

power relations. This field is ripe for indoctrination."[88]

That there is more work to be done in the area of Catholic institutional identity is

made clearer still by the very public uproars prompted in the past decade by the presence

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87. Ibid, 104.
88. Ibid, 215.

of controversial speakers on Catholic campuses. After President Barack Obama gave the commencement address at the University of Notre Dame and was also honored with an honorary degree, significant criticism was leveled against the University due largely to Obama's pro-choice position on abortion. Charles E. Rice, professor emeritus of law at Notre Dame, wrote an entire book complaining that Obama's honor represented an abdication of the University's responsibility to uphold Church teaching. For Rice, this was not an isolated, poor decision but rather the latest in a long descent away from Catholic identity and toward blatant secularization: "The Obama Commencement was a culmination of the autonomy process begun at Land O'Lakes in 1967." For the local episcopal authority (Bishop D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend), the event marked the opening of a "terrible breach which has taken place between Notre Dame and the Church."[89]

In 2016, Notre Dame courted controversy again when Vice President Joseph Biden and former House Speaker John Boehner were jointly awarded the University's prestigious Laetare Medal for their public service, commitment to civility in public discourse, and willingness to engage with the party across the aisle from themselves. Whereas an opinion piece in *The Washington Post* hailed the decision a means of honoring "political civility,"[90] many from within the American Church were less pleased. *National Catholic Register* complained that the decision was a "whispered…profession

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89. Charles E. Rice, *What Happened to Notre Dame?* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2009), 33, xiv.

90. Jonathan Capehart, "How Notre Dame Honors Joe Biden, John Boehner and Political Civility," *The Washington Post*, May 14, 2016.

of Notre Dame's pro-choice creed."[91] Again, the local Bishop, Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, advised the University not to honor Biden, who is pro-choice. *Catholic News Service* noted that many Catholics had reservations about awarding Boehner and/or Biden.[92]

Even institutions without the national reputation of Notre Dame have provoked the ire of many Catholics through their decisions to host certain speakers. Wisconsin's St. Norbert College has invited two speakers just in the past few years who have proven controversial to a national Catholic audience. In 2015, noted feminist activist and author Gloria Steinem was invited to campus for a public dialogue with author bell hooks. In 2016, then-Presidential candidate Donald Trump was given a campus venue for a campaign speech. Though the College has typically declared that such invitations are simply a manifestation of 'radical Norbertine hospitality,' many in the American Church were appalled. While op-eds were written both in favor and in opposition to each speaker's presence on a Catholic campus, the petitions circulated online to stop each event indicate deep-seated disagreement over the proper role of a Catholic college/university. Reflecting on the Trump visit, St. Norbert President Tom Kunkel posited that "Our hospitality does not mean we endorse a given candidate or his or her views. We simply see our role as helping facilitate these important exercises in democracy….Trump's visit has sparked countless meaty conversations and mobilized hundreds of students, as everyone used the occasion to deeply appraise the leading

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91. Fr. Raymond J. De Souza, "Notre Dame to Honor Joe Biden and John Boehner: At What Cost?" *National Catholic Register*, May 11, 2016.
92. Ann Carey, "Notre Dame Gives Laetare Medal to Biden, Boehner Over Critics' Objections." *Catholic News Service*, May 16, 2016.

Republican candidate and his views. And that, I think, is a big part of what a college is supposed to do."[93] Prior to the Steinem visit, however, the organization TFP Student Action launched an online protest, claiming that "This issue is not about academic freedom. This issue is all about being faithful to God. About being true to our baptismal vows."[94]

Similar examples could easily be noted. What should be clear is that there is, even nearly three decades since *Ex Corde*'s promulgation, no consensus on the proper orientation of a Catholic university between the Church and world that has permeated all levels of the American Church itself. Even if a vast majority of Catholics in the Academy are agreed that the Catholic university needs to be a place of dialogue with the broader culture for the benefit of both the Church and the world, it is also clear that those same Catholic academics have an obligation to consider the impact on the Catholic faithful of Catholic universities. All Catholic universities would list alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff, members of the board, and the founding religious congregations among their stakeholders. It is important that the Body of Christ—the Church in all its variety— not be left off that list. What is needed, here, is a final consideration of what the Church needs its universities to be. From there, it will be clearer what the role of the Catholic scholar has to be. Then, and only then, will it be possible to consider how (or even whether) such a scholar can be hospitable toward perspectives outside—or even

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93. St. Nobert College Press Release, "Donald Trump Campaign Stop Provokes Lively Debate," April 5, 2016. Accessed at http://www.snc.edu/magazine/2016spring/trump.html.

94. TFP Student Action, "St. Norbert College to Host Radical and Notorious Pro-Abort Gloria Steinem—Protest Today," April 16, 2015. Accessed at https://www.tfpstudentaction.org/petitions/st-norbert-college-to-host-radical-notorious-pro-abort-gloria-steinem-protest-today.

antagonistic toward—the Church while remaining rooted in the Church's tradition at the same time.

The Church's Need for Hospitable Catholic Universities

The story of the first Christian Pentecost has long been suggested as the beginning of the church. The story of a crowd made up of speakers of various foreign tongues, united miraculously through their ability to understand the preaching of the Gospel offered by the disciples, points decisively toward the unifying impact the Good News of Christ is intended to have on the world. Read as an inversion of the Tower of Babel story from Genesis 11, one might see that the church is indeed charged with working to overcome the disruptive impacts of sin that have hampered humanity since Eden. Such conclusions about the church's intended, unifying impact on the whole of humanity have cast a long shadow over the theology of the past. Without question, a significant portion of the church's history has been dominated by theological reflection that sought to emphasize the faith's ability to transcend any and all human boundaries. As Edward Schillebeeckx posits, "Previously, one almost took for granted that the theology of the Western churches was supraregional and was, precisely in its Western form, universal and therefore directly accessible for persons from other cultures."[95]

Unfortunately, any theology generated in an exclusively Western context proved ultimately incapable of being truly universal in its appeal. These earlier, universal reflections simply did not "take up the issues that were the most pressing in many local circumstances: the burden of poverty and oppression, the struggle to create a new identity

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95. Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999), ix.

after a colonial past, or the question of how to meet the challenge of modernization and the commodification of the economy in traditional culture and village life." Instead, "The universal theologies were preoccupied with issues not even being raised in local situations, such as the problem of atheism or secularization." Any attempts at imposing such theologies on the entirety of the universal church as normative were destined to fail: "In each case the universal theology turned out to be less than universal…"[96]

The church was in dire need, then, of substantial local theologies that might help it fulfill its evangelical mission within the various cultural contexts that had proven resistant (for whatever reason) to these earlier universal theologies. Not surprisingly, the initial efforts by some theologians to address this need were not always well-received. As Robert Schreiter recalls, "The fledgling contextual theologies were frequently dismissed in Western academic settings as feeble and immature steps on the way to the development of a *real* theology, that is, a critical, rational theology that rose above the immediate situation to speak universally of God and God's action in history."[97]

There is good reason to be optimistic about the continued/future potential for the development of local theologies through continued Catholic attention to the engagement between culture and church. Rausch believes that "The Roman Catholic Church offers an example of a world communion with the structures necessary to maintain and express the communion of a world Church as a communion of communions that would be truly catholic. The challenge is maintaining the proper relationship between the local and the

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96. Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004), 1.
97. Ibid, 84.

global, the particular and the universal."[98] This is true enough, and the historical

experience of the church ought to provide many helpful precedents as this process

continues. As Richard Gaillardetz helpfully suggests, "One should recall that for the first

two centuries of Christianity, there was no universally agreed upon canon of Scripture, no

developed creed, no universally accepted organizational structures, no standard liturgical

books. Yet in the midst of this widespread diversity, Christians still believed themselves

to be united in faith."[99] In more recent history, Yves Congar has noted the relatively

significant differences between Eastern and Western 'modes of theologizing: "The East

takes its stand on the Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils, which have stated the

essentials. Philosophy and reasoning serve for training theologians and for discussion;

not, as in Latin Scholasticism, to extend doctrine by new conclusions. Furthermore, there

is little or no reference to a central *magisterium…*" Nevertheless, Congar still concludes

with confidence that after "More than fifty years of careful study, numerous contacts and

a good deal of reading," "at the sacramental level, i.e. where the supernatural mystery is

expressed in our world, East and West are the same Church."[100]

At all times, though, the broad sweep of the Catholic tradition cannot be seen as

secondary to the development of local theologies. Robert Schreiter has argued strongly

on precisely this point: "Any local theology that is truly Christian has to be engaged with

the tradition, however a church might understand that tradition: the Scriptures, great

conciliar and confessional statements, the magisterium. Without that engagement, there is

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98. Rausch, 181.

99. Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), 86.

100. Yves Congar, O.P, *Diversity and Communion* (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1985), 71, 73.

no guarantee of being part of the Christian heritage."[101] The Catholic university needs to

contribute to this engagement. A university by its very definition attempts to bring all

domains of the human knowledge into conversation with one another. The various

departments on a Catholic university campus can contribute mightily to the engagement

with cultures required to develop local theologies, while simultaneously safeguarding the

integrity of the Catholic tradition that needs to challenge and be challenged by that

engagement.

Catholic Intellectual Life

At this point, having seen the ecclesiological need for universities capable of

assisting the Church in its post-Vatican II mission, it is possible and worthwhile to make

several remarks on the origin, nature, and significance of the Catholic intellectual life.

First, both Scripture and the historical experiences of Christians testify to the need for a

vibrant intellectual component in the life of the Church. In Matthew's Gospel, Christ

instructs the Pharisees that a part of the 'Greatest Commandment' is the need to love God

"with all your mind."[102] Far more recently, Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio*

has pointed to the divine origin of humanity's desire to know, which is (in the words of

Paula Powell Sapienza) "a gift that comes from God's own desire to be known."[103] The

Gospel according to John, in its identification of Christ with the divine *Logos*, in turn,

supports the notion of Christ as a kind of ultimate ground of all knowing.[104]

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101. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 95.
102. Matthew 22:37.
103. Sapienza, Paula Powell, "Catholic Intellectual Life: An Opportunity for the Church to Continue to Learn, in *As Leaven in the World*, ed. Thomas m. Landy (Franklin, Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 2001, 19.
104. John 1:1-3.

While teaching is certainly a vital task of the Church and of the Catholic intellectual, Sapienza rightly contends that that is, at best, only half of the story. The Catholic intellectual life is, for her, "a vocation discerned in prayer, rooted in humility, and based in dialogue that answers God's call to behold and interpret God's action in the world. Catholic intellectual life, therefore, is an opportunity for the church (in the broadest sense of the word) to learn…."[105] It is the foundational Christian belief in the Incarnation that supports what many have described as the sacramental principle of Catholic thought. This principle, according to Richard T. Hughes, "points to the fact that the natural world and even elements of human culture can serve as vehicles by which the grace of God is mediated to human beings. This conviction allows Catholic educators to take the world seriously on its own terms and to interact with the world as it is."[106] Regardless of academic discipline, then, the Catholic scholar is charged with discovering the sacramental presence of God within their particular area of study. As Michael J. Himes asserts, "…anything that awakens, enlivens, and expands the imagination, opens the vision, and enriches the sensitivity of any human being is a religious act. Although we may not use this language, education is or can be training in sacramental beholding."[107]

Though all of the disciplines have the capacity to mediate a sacramental worldview, this is not to suggest that there is little need for explicitly Catholic content in either a Catholic university curriculum or in the scholarship of an individual academic. It is important to note, however, that even the 'classics' of the Catholic intellectual can

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105. Sapienza, 23.

106. Hughes, Richard T, "Christian Faith and the Life of the Mind," in *Faithful Learning and the Christian Scholarly Vocation*, ed. Douglas V. Henry and Bob R. Agee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, 11.

107. Himes, Michael J, "'Finding God in All Things': A Sacramental Worldview and Its Effects," in *As Leaven in the World*, ed. Thomas m. Landy (Franklin, Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 2001, 100.

crush students and scholars alike while also making a mockery of the Catholic intellectual vocation. Richard Liddy notes that there "can be a Catholic fundamentalism of an ideal past that 'had all the answers,' leaving us with the sole responsibility of mindlessly passing on that tradition to the future."[108] Instead of contenting ourselves with reading the likes of Augustine, Aquinas, and Dante, Liddy argues that "if we truly understand the meaning of these writers, we will find ourselves invited to do in our culture what they did in theirs. The point of any authentic tradition is to change us in the present so that we can articulate the authentic meanings of the tradition into the future."[109] As such, there is a need for Catholic intellectuals to help their Church engage with all of the various philosophies, religions, and worldviews of the present.

Obviously, this engagement will enable the Church to learn, but it is equally obvious that the Church must necessarily counteract those perspectives it considers harmful. For the Catholic university, this suggests a need for both formative experiences within the Catholic tradition as well as opportunities to engage the 'other.' For the Catholic intellectual, there appears to be a necessary kind of balancing act. On the one hand, there must be a grounding in one's own Catholic intellectual tradition. Simultaneously, though, one must also carry the riches of that tradition into a critical encounter with whomever—and whatever—one finds as a result of their scholarship.

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108. Liddy, Richard M, "The Catholic Intellectual Tradition: Achievement and Challenge," in *As Leaven in the World*, ed. Thomas m. Landy (Franklin, Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 2001, 4.
109. Ibid, 5-6.

Conclusion

Questions over the Catholic identity of Catholic institutions of higher learning came to the foreground in the 1960's, and they have hardly surrendered their place in the decades since. Pope John Paul II's apostolic constitution on Catholic higher education, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, was itself a result of decades of dialogue, and it sparked several decades more. In the American context, institutional autonomy and academic freedom are hallowed virtues. Not surprisingly, much of the debate in the years after *Ex Corde* was preoccupied with the question of the mandate for theologians. While it might be tempting to argue that Catholic higher education has found an equilibrium of sorts, there remain high-profile instances when debate over Catholic identity can quickly turn mean-spirited; oftentimes, these cases involve speakers and awards, but even something as regular as a review of the core curriculum can quickly be swallowed up by a broader debate over the proper place of the Catholic university in the Church and in the world.

How might a theologian help chart a course forward? There are significant questions that need answering, and the theologian's perspective must be considered alongside those of other Catholic intellectuals from other disciplines. How best to ground a meaningful approach to building a bridge across the divide that often seems to exist between those advocating open inquiry and those concerned primarily with fidelity to the Catholic tradition? How to ensure room for freedom of academics while also ensuring a bishop his ability to be the bishop within a diocese that might include a Catholic university campus? How can an institution help the Church by exploring new ecclesiologies, while also supporting the tradition which must serve as the measuring rod of any ecclesiology in the final analysis? How can an institution welcome people and

perspectives on campus without compromising the faithfulness of Catholic scholars and, perhaps more pressingly, Catholic undergraduates?

Ultimately, this dissertation aims to show that in order for a Catholic university to be truly hospitable (open to the outside while faithful to its own tradition), it requires the presence of Catholic intellectuals who are truly hospitable. Three notable thinkers who have pulled this off will be profiled. First, however, there must be a survey of what, precisely, is meant by *hospitality*.

Chapter 2: Christian Hospitality, Past and Present

Introduction

To argue, as this dissertation does, that hospitality is a vital key for advancing

debates over identity in Catholic higher education is made difficult by the baggage that

the term *hospitality* has taken on in popular usage. For many, the word *hospitality* no

doubt conjures up images of the so-called 'hospitality industry.' *Wikipedia* deftly defines

this 'industry' as "a broad category of fields within the service industry that includes

lodging, event planning, theme parks, transportation, cruise line, and additional fields

within the tourism industry," which no doubt conforms to a very popular notion of what

hospitality is.[1] For many people, therefore, hospitality can be reduced to commerce which

capitalizes on the desire for entertainment, first and foremost, and perhaps on comfort

secondarily. Only slightly better is that understanding of hospitality which would define

it as the entertaining of friends and family. What is missing in this popular conception of

hospitality is its function throughout the Christian tradition as a virtue. Unfortunately, as

Christine Pohl has noted, even "most Christians have lost touch with the amazingly rich

and complex tradition of hospitality."[2]

In the current cultural climate of the West, it may well be the case that the need

for a widespread retrieval of hospitality—extending far beyond the borders of Catholic

higher education—is desperately clear. Pohl believes that "We…find ourselves in a

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1. "Hospitality Industry," *Wikipedia*, last modified January 7, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospitality_industry.

2. Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 4.

fragmented and multicultural society that yearns for relationships, identity, and meaning. Our mobile and self-oriented society is characterized by disturbing levels of loneliness, alienation, and estrangement."[3] Clearly, a virtue that is capable of encouraging a strong sense of identity without losing compassion or charity for the other and capable of respecting clear distinctions without setting ironclad boundaries has the potential to mitigate the possible ill effects of the current milieu.

Happily, the Christian world has been retrieving its ancient conception of hospitality over the past several decades. Amy Oden observes that "Conversations, scholarship, and conferences on hospitality in the last few years have brought attention to the ways a developed notion of hospitality might contribute to Christian community and identity, as well as to mission, spiritual growth, and even contemporary worship."[4] While Pohl's work has done much to ground this retrieval of the Christian virtue of hospitality, a great deal of credit must also be given to Henri Nouwen. In particular, his book, *Reaching Out*, continues to undergird much of the contemporary discussion of hospitality. In that work, Nouwen identified three poles "between which our lives vacillate and are held in tension."[5] These three poles concern one's relationship with the self, with others, and with God. For Nouwen, the second pole is that between which hostility can be transformed into hospitality. Such hospitality, then, "means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can

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3. Ibid, 33.
4. Amy G. Oden, *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press), 13.
5. Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1975), 10.

take place."[6] This hospitality requires charity, therefore, but also no small measure of integrity. "When we want to be really hospitable we not only have to receive strangers but also to confront them by an unambiguous presence, not hiding ourselves behind neutrality but showing our ideas, opinions and life style clearly and distinctly. No real dialogue is possible between somebody and nobody."[7] Even Nouwen's pioneering reflection on hospitality demonstrates how the Catholic intellectual life ought to be guided in no small part by hospitality, especially if that intellectual life is lived in the context of a Catholic university.

A real strength of Christian hospitality lies in its ability to serve as "a bridge which connects our theology with daily life and concerns."[8] As will be seen, hospitality has sparked a great deal of theological reflection throughout the tradition, and it has also proven to be a practice necessary for authentic Christian witness. In short, this virtue has the intellectual substance to pass muster in the academy while also captivating the imagination of those who labor in the groves of all of the Church's ministries. For this chapter of this dissertation, however, particular attention will be given to the potential impact of hospitality in Catholic higher education. This chapter will begin by exploring the Scriptural and traditional testimony on hospitality in order to understand what, exactly, Christian hospitality entails. A consideration of the theology of hospitality will follow. From there it will be possible to begin examining intellectual hospitality in particular. Closely allied with this section will be a linking of hospitality with friendship,

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6. Ibid, 51.
7. Ibid, 70.
8. Pohl, 8.

which this dissertation will contend is a necessary linkage due to the circular relationship between those two virtues. Then, the proper limits of Christian hospitality will be described before the chapter ends with more explicit consideration of the ramifications of hospitality for Catholic higher education. Then, and only then, will this dissertation be able to proceed to an exploration of how intellectual hospitality (and/or friendship) represented a vital orientation for the engagement with non-Catholic perspectives undertaken by Merton, Lonergan, and Dunne.

Hospitality and the Old Testament

Despite the absence of the word *hospitality* in the Hebrew Scriptures, these texts have nevertheless cast a long shadow on the Church's understanding of hospitality because the *practice* of hospitality is prevalent enough. Understandably, commentary on hospitality in the Old Testament focuses a good deal of effort on the social customs of ancient Israel. Indeed, throughout the ancient world, hospitality was often considered a basic and essential moral practice. Hospitality by the ancients, Pohl asserts, "assured strangers at least a minimum of provision, protection, and connection with the larger community. It also sustained the normal network of relationships on which a community depended, enriching moral and social bonds among family, friends, and neighbors."[9] In the Greek and Roman view, hospitality was undertaken in a manner which "stressed formal reciprocal obligations between benefactor and recipient."[10] The Israelite practice of hospitality was conducted less with an expectation of future reciprocity than with a certain gratitude for hospitality proffered them in the past. As Oden highlights, the

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9. Ibid, 17.
10. Ibid, 18.

ancient Israelites "understood themselves to be outsiders in Pharaoh's Egypt, wanderers in the wilderness, and settlers in the Promised Land. Their corporate identity was deeply rooted in a sense of being strangers, even though they also understood themselves to be God's chosen people."[11]

Genesis is the foundational text in any examination of hospitality in the Old Testament. First and foremost, one finds there the account of God's creation, and the charge given to humanity to play the role of caretaker in God's world. As Pohl states, "the theological and moral foundations for Old Testament hospitality were tied closely to Israel's special relationship of dependence on and gratitude to God."[12] Perhaps of equal importance, however, may well be the extended reflection that Genesis provides on Election: God's special choosing of Israel as His people. Certainly, throughout the account of the foundation of the covenant between God and Israel, it is clear that God has lofty plans for Abraham's descendants. It is in the four sibling rivalry stories of Genesis, however, that one might see most clearly the dynamic at work in Israelite hospitality. The stories of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-16), Isaac and Ishmael (Genesis 16, 21), Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:19-34; 27-33), and Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37-50) all indicate something of how the Elect and non-Elect relate to God. Even a superficial reading of Genesis makes it clear that God is concerned also with the non-Elect. Cain, Ishmael, Esau, and Joseph's brothers each receive notable blessings of various kinds from God, and Genesis leaves no doubt that those blessings do, indeed, come from God. Similarly, one cannot read Genesis and come away believing that to be God's Elect is to be granted

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11. Oden, 17.
12. Pohl, 29.

a life of ceaseless privilege. To the contrary, Abel dies, and Isaac is nearly sacrificed before ultimately having his plan for his sons usurped. Jacob is exiled for an extended period of time, is taken advantage of by his uncle Laban, and eventually has to face a potentially murderously angry older brother. In the most well-developed of the sibling stories, Joseph experiences something of his own passion narrative before finally being exalted once and for all in the context of his own family.

Therefore it is hardly a startling claim that each of the four stories also indicates something of how the Elect and the non-Elect are to relate to one another. Cain's murder of Abel provides no blueprint for a relationship between Elect and non-Elect, nor does the lack of substantial interaction between Isaac and Ishmael. The partial reconciliation of Jacob and Esau at the end of that narrative is at least an improvement from the previous two stories, but it is really in the Joseph story that the impact of God's Election on all peoples can be best understood. Joseph's ample blessings are not intended to justify a sense of superiority on his part. Instead, his gifts are to be employed for the benefit of all. Election seems to impart responsibility, then, rather than privilege. As such, the Israelites are charged with witnessing to God's universal sovereignty and God's will. Election in the Old Testament foreshadows, or perhaps even *establishes*, the tension involved in any act of hospitality. On the one hand, Election sets the Israelites apart from all other peoples. On the other, Election made real demands regarding how the Israelites interacted with others. As Pohl puts it, "Embedded within the covenant between God and Israel was Israel's identity as an alien and its related responsibility to sojourners and strangers."[13]

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13. Ibid, 27.

In terms of specific instances of hospitality in the Old Testament, the story of Abraham's welcome of three guests in Genesis 18 has had "a persistent formative role in the instruction and motivation of the people of God."[14] In his commentary on Genesis 18, Lee Roy Martin has rightly noted that the Old Testament practice of hospitality is simply "not sufficient as a contemporary model for hospitality…" Nevertheless, Martin does note that the Hebrew Scriptures *do* indeed reveal "a number of theological assertions that can undergird a contemporary Christian theology of hospitality."[15] In particular, the *Imago Dei*, the fundamental relational nature of all humans, human dependence upon each other, and the notion of all people as sojourners hosted by God are listed by Martin as potential Old Testament building blocks for a contemporary theological reflection on hospitality. Martin is rightly suspicious of any theology of hospitality which rules out vigorous engagement with those outside his own tradition. The challenges posed by pluralism in the 21st century rightly weigh heavily on Martin's Old Testament commentary. Where Martin misses the mark, however, is precisely in the absence of Election on his list of salvageable theological assertions. As Pohl has noticed, "It appears that Israelite response to strangers as inclusion or separation hinged, at least in part, on the capacity of the stranger to threaten Israel's identity and unity."[16] The Church, like Israel, is similarly called to straddle the line between distinctiveness as God's people and engagement with the world. The Church is called to convert the world, not to become the

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14. Ibid, 24.

15. Lee Roy Martin, "Old Testament Foundations for Christian Hospitality," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 35.1 (2014).

16. Pohl, 137.

world indiscriminately. Obviously, however, the Church's hospitality must also draw

deeply from New Testament insights if it is to hold true to Christ's Good News.

Hospitality and the New Testament

Unlike the Old Testament, the New Testament includes several explicit references

to *hospitality*. In a typical example from Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Paul "urged fellow

Christians to welcome one another as Christ had welcomed them. He challenged the early

believers to 'pursue' hospitality; in fact hospitality was a qualification for leadership in

the early Christian communities." Truly, as Pohl notes, hospitality came to be regarded

by Christians "as a fundamental expression of the Gospel."[17] While the word *hospitality*

does not appear in any of the four canonical Gospels themselves, hospitality's

prominence in early Christian practice was nevertheless dependent largely on stories of

Christ or lessons taught by Christ.

Just as Genesis looms large in the Old Testament conception of hospitality, Luke

14 and Matthew 25 are especially influential in the New Testament contribution. In Luke

14, Christ gives clear teaching on inviting people to banquets. Simply put, "hosts who

anticipated the hospitality of God's Kingdom welcomed the poor, lame, crippled, and

blind, those who were dependent and lived on the margins of the community. While such

hosts expected no immediate benefit, they would ultimately experience God's repayment

at the resurrection."[18] In the famous passage from Matthew 25 in which the Son of Man

separates the 'sheep' from the 'goats,' Christ takes a drastic step beyond any of the

ancient Israelite prophets' calls for just living by identifying Himself with the poor and

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17. Ibid, 5.
18. Ibid, 21.

downtrodden: "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me."[19] As Pohl describes it, "This passage sets up a fundamental identification of Jesus with 'the least of these' and personally and powerfully connects hospitality toward human beings with care for Jesus."[20]

Jesus not only functions as a teacher exhorting His followers to be hospitable, therefore; He also represents an embodiment of the very hospitality of God. In Pohl's words, "Jesus' gracious and sacrificial hospitality—expressed in his life, ministry, and death—undergirds the hospitality of his followers."[21]Intriguingly, however, Jesus oftentimes communicates the hospitality of God by playing the role not of the host, but the guest. As Pentecostal theologian Amos Yong observes, "Jesus characterizes the hospitality of God in part as the exemplary recipient of hospitality. From his conception in Mary's womb by the power of the Holy Spirit to his birth in a manger through to his burial, Jesus was dependent on the welcome of others."[22] For Yong, the story of the risen Christ on the Road to Emmaus is helpfully illustrative of this dynamic at work. Christ is clearly invited by the two disciples traveling alongside Him to be their guest, but it is nevertheless Christ who blesses and breaks the bread, an act which sparks their recognition that they "had been guests in the presence of the divine all along. Similarly, throughout his public ministry, Jesus as the recipient of hospitality is at the same time the one who heralds and personifies the redemptive hospitality of God." The very people

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19. Matthew 25:45.
20. Pohl, 22.
21. Ibid, 29.
22. Amos Yong, *Hospitality & the Other* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), 101.

who welcome Christ into their homes, it seems, "become…guests of the redemptive hospitality of God." [23]

It is necessary, also, in this consideration of the place of hospitality in the Gospels to mention the table fellowship that was such a major pillar of Christ's public ministry. The joys that the Christian reader of the New Testament can glean from reading the various stories of Jesus dining with renowned sinners, however, can pale in comparison to the joy that comes from participating in the ritual meal instituted during Christ's final meal with His disciples. It is the Eucharist, after all, which "most fundamentally connects the hospitality with God because it anticipates and reveals the 'heavenly table of the Lord.'" For any participant in the sacramental life of the Church, then, it will be easy to assent to Pohl's claim that "A shared meal is the activity most closely tied to the reality of God's Kingdom, just as it is the most basic expression of hospitality."[24] Before moving on to explore the place of hospitality in early Christian thought and practice, however, it will be worth noting, as Pohl does, that it would be insufficient to reduce the power of a shared meal (as a glimpse of the hospitality of the Kingdom) to the physical need that is being satisfied. "Within acts of hospitality, needs are met, but hospitality is truncated if it does not go beyond physical needs. Part of hospitality includes recognizing and valuing the stranger or guest."[25] Absent this, it hardly seems possible for the guest to become a friend, or for any lasting communion to be forged.

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23. Ibid, 102.
24. Pohl, 30.
25. Ibid, 31.

The Early Church Experience of Hospitality

As is the case in Scripture, the early tradition of the Church is sparing in its explicit references to hospitality. Nevertheless, Oden finds that hospitality is a prominent topic in early Christian sources: "There is not so much explicit reflection by these early Christians on the idea of hospitality as there is tacit expectation and practice of hospitality."[26] Early Christian hospitality extended, as noted above, well beyond the physical needs of the beneficiary to include social and spiritual needs as well. Additionally, just as Christ Himself offered hospitality even while a guest in others' homes, the early Christian testimony suggests an awareness that hosts had needs that might very often be addressed by the hospitality of their guests. It is also worth pointing out that early Christians did not think of hospitality as a checklist of possible, isolated actions. The hospitality of the early Church, according to Oden, was "not so much a singular act of welcome as it is…an orientation that attends to otherness, listening and learning, valuing and honoring. The hospitable one looks for God's redemptive presence in the other, confident it is there, if one only has eyes to see and ears to hear. Hospitality, then, is always a spiritual discipline of opening one's own life to God's life and revelation."[27]

The 'location' of early Christian hospitality was in the "overlap of household and church." It was the early Christian notion of Church as a people gathered in a homelike setting that "was responsible for imitating God's hospitable and gracious character. God's household represented the welcome of Gentiles into the inheritance together with Israel,

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26. Oden, 11.
27. Ibid, 14-15.

and relations within this new household explicitly transcended ethnic boundaries."[28] Nevertheless, there are indications that the early Church, like ancient Israel before it, was aware of certain tensions—and perhaps even limits—necessary to any practice of hospitality. As Bretherton observes, "We see in the *Didache* a tension within the Christian tradition of hospitality that surfaces time and again; that is, the prudential consideration of discriminating between deserving and undeserving strangers."[29] As Bretherton rightly concludes, however, "the very existence of documents that attempt to address the problem of the abuse of hospitality points to how, in the early church at least, hospitality was considered a normative and necessary practice."[30]

This clear willingness on the part of early Christians to run the risks of offering hospitality makes it unsurprising to find that this orientation to welcoming and caring for the needs of various outsiders became something of a hallmark of Christian identity. As Oden describes, Christians became known for extending hospitality to the sick, the poor, travelers and pilgrims, widows and orphans, and also slaves and prisoners.[31] Indeed, Christian hospitality was apparently so pronounced and widely admired that some opponents of the faith sought to combat its spread by emulating its practice. In the fourth century, Julian the Apostate observed that it was from Christians' "benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead and the pretended holiness of their lives" that Christianity had gained much of its momentum. Seeing also that Hellenic paganism had a correspondingly poor track record when it came to hospitality, Julian worried that

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28. Pohl, 42.
29. Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 139.
30. Ibid, 139.
31. Oden, 19-26.

"all men see that our people lack aid from us." What was needed, then, was for pagan priests to "Teach those of the Hellenic faith to contribute to public service of this sort."[32]

What propelled this distinction that, even in the eyes of the church's opponents, set Christians apart? The Old Testament idea of God's people on sojourn in this world resonated strongly in the early church. With the Kingdom of God encompassing both present and future dimensions in Christ's teaching, it is not surprising that His early followers took some sojourning cues from their Israelite forebears. The early Christian voices, Oden notes, "reflect the profound conviction that Christian identity is rooted in otherness. Before one can truly offer hospitality, one must understand one's own marginal position."[33] For Chrysostom, this marginality was close to the heart of the Christian moral life: "The first virtue, indeed, the whole of virtue, is to be a stranger to this world, and a sojourner, to have nothing in common with things here and let go of them, as we would from anything strange to us."[34] Augustine pushes the implications of this sojourning specifically in the direction of hospitality: "You take in some stranger, whose companion in the way you yourself also are, for we are all strangers. This person is a Christian who, even in his own house and in his own country, acknowledges himself to be a stranger."[35]

Even with an awareness of their own status as sojourners, the early Christians no doubt found hospitality difficult to execute. As already seen, Christ encourages His disciples to see Him in the stranger, the poor, and the marginalized. Nevertheless, "To

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32. Pohl, 44.
33. Oden, 39.
34. Ibid, 42.
35. Ibid, 45.

recognize Christ in the guest at the door is not easy. It is rarely the Christ we expect or the Christ of our imaginings."[36] The identification of the other with Christ, coupled with the Old Testament insight that all people are created in the *Imago Dei* made the stakes high when it came to hospitality in a Christian's life. Indeed, some early Christian thinkers went so far as to equate hospitality to true worship of God. As one early third century source puts it, "Whoever wishes to be pious towards God does good to humans, because the body of a person bears the image of God."[37] Interestingly, this dedication to reverencing the Image of God was central enough to early Christian practice that it covered even hospitality extended to the dead. As Lactantius exhorted his listeners, "…we will not tolerate the image and workmanship of God to lie exposed as a prey to beasts and birds. Instead, we will restore it to the earth, from which it had its origin."[38]In her work on early Christian hospitality, Oden detects four distinct stages in its practice. These stages include the welcoming of the guest, the restoration of the guest through attention to their needs (physical or otherwise), a stage characterized by dwelling together in common life, and then a sending forth of the guest. This final stage, as Oden notes, "suggests that hospitality does not create systems of dependence, but empowers the other to move on."[39]

The early church was also careful not to allow very normal human desires to interfere with Christians' hospitable work. Chrysostom encouraged his congregation to refrain from a practice of hospitality that was constrained by conditions: "…don't busy

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36. Ibid, 50.
37. Ibid, 55.
38. Ibid, 89.
39. Ibid, 146-147.

yourself with people's lives and doings. For this is the very extreme of stinginess, to nit

pick about a person's entire life to avoid giving them one loaf of bread…And yet your

Master causes even the sun to rise upon him! And do you judge him unworthy of food

even for a day!"[40] Ambrose, similarly, advocated for liberality in hospitality, but also

cautioned against extravagance: "It is a mark of liberality to receive the stranger, to

clothe the naked, to redeem the captives, to help the needy. It is wasteful to spend money

on expensive banquets and a lot of wine…It is wasteful to spend one's own wealth

merely for the sake of gaining the favor of the people."[41] The monastic rule of Basil

addresses the same concern in the section on "The rule to be followed in serving meals to

guests." According to Basil, "the desire to please men, and acting for display are strictly

forbidden to Christians under all circumstances, because even a man who observes the

precept but does it for the purpose of being seen and glorified by men loses the reward

for that observance."[42] In the West, hospitality would similarly come to play a substantial

role in its monastic traditions. The Rule of St. Benedict, for instance—which would

eventually inform the Cistercian lifestyle of Thomas Merton—has a section on the

reception of guests as well as exceptions to some of the other rules if made necessary in

the offering of hospitality.

The monastic context of hospitality indicates an evolution in the practice of

Christian hospitality that began in the early fourth century. With the legalization and

subsequent exaltation of Christianity throughout the Roman world, hospitality became

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40. Ibid, 63.
41. Ibid, 245.
42. Ibid, 266.

less of a face-to-face encounter and more of an institutionalized process of directing resources to those who needed them. While some of this institutionalization had already begun before Constantine's conversion, the fourth century saw instances wherein "hostels provided care for strangers, hospitals were established for the sick, the poor, and strangers, and monasteries welcomed pilgrims."[43] On the one hand, it is easy to see the creation of such institutions as a step forward. As Pohl rightly observes, "The increasing dependence on differentiated and specialized institutions of care was a response to the increasing scale of need, to the increasing availability of resources given to the church, and to the church's related responsibility to the larger population."[44] On the other hand, though, one has to ask whether anything was lost in the process. In a memorable homily, Gregory of Nyssa railed against the possibility that Christian hospitality might become something impersonal: "Let no one say that it is sufficient to send food to people not involved in our lives. This does not reveal mercy but an outward show in order to remove such persons from our presence."[45] This homily hints at one of the symptoms of the institutionalizing of hospitality. The poor were cared for at a distance, while "personal hospitality was increasingly reserved for visiting dignitaries."[46] With hospitality to the poor becoming less and less personal, and further removed from households, some of the core values of the practice of hospitality weakened considerably. As Pohl puts it, "Commitments to respect and recognition often fade when needy persons are segregated

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43. Pohl, 43.
44. Ibid, 45.
45. Oden, 111.
46. Pohl, 45.

out, grouped together, and hidden from view. Such populations are easily overlooked and quickly forgotten."[47]

Theology of Christian Hospitality

Having outlined the place of hospitality in Scripture and also in the early tradition of the church, it is necessary to make some general theological assertions about the nature of Christian hospitality before moving on to a consideration of what intellectual hospitality might entail in a Christian context. At its center, Christian hospitality is built on the foundational belief that God "delights in us and desires that we receive the joy and pleasure of God's own communion." Hospitality, then, rests on this "overflowing communion rather than in a scientific rationality or an understanding of an abstract 'Real.'"[48] By virtue of God's Creation, then, it is possible to say that God offers hospitality to humanity by giving humanity a place to call home. Because Christian hospitality is dependent on what Amos Yong calls this "magnanimous hospitality of God," it is therefore "founded on the incarnational and Pentecostal logic of abundance rather than that of human economies of exchange and scarcity."[49]

The essential homelessness of Christians, which was one of many keen insights (noted above) the early Christians had regarding hospitality, seems to outline a clear tension, if not an outright contradiction. How can one claim that people are given a home by God while also claiming that Christians are homeless? For Elizabeth Newman, the resolution of this tension comes from noting that Christians are homeless "only in a

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47. Ibid, 79.
48. Elizabeth Newman, *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007), 84.
49. Yong, 118.

sense. We are displaced from locating our identity in our nation, our family, or our position in society, in order to locate it more fully before God."[50] It remains possible, therefore, for Christians to revel in—and be grateful for—the loving hospitality of God while also experiencing something of the marginality which often seems to make hospitality more genuine. As Pohl claims, "the best hosts are people who recognize their own frailties and weaknesses."[51]

For Bretherton, Christian hospitality as a practice is inherently eschatological in nature and was inaugurated at Pentecost. It is both "inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit, who enables the church to host the life of its neighbours without the church being assimilated to, colonized by, or having to withdraw from its neighbours."[52] Hospitality, therefore, is the virtue which guides the church's engagement with that which is not church, while simultaneously preserving the integrity of the church throughout that engagement. It is impossible, therefore, to claim that the entertainment of friends or the visiting with family are sufficient manifestations of Christian hospitality. As Pohl makes clear, "Hospitable attitudes, even a principled commitment to hospitality, do not challenge us or transform our loyalties in the way that actual hospitality to particular strangers does."[53] In effect, any theology which grounds and advocates hospitality as a necessary Christian concern *must* be paired with an intentional practice. To refrain from the practice of hospitality, furthermore, would be to potentially cut oneself off from a significant means of encountering God's grace. Newman captures it well when she writes

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50. Newman, 114.
51. Pohl, 118.
52. Bretherton, 143.
53. Pohl, 14.

that "the stranger may well be a messenger of God….Such hospitality is sustained not by human ingenuity but by God, who can come to us in unexpected ways and whose presence in the stranger might well be as discomforting as it is comforting."[54]

The practice of Christian hospitality cannot be cleanly distinguished from the theology that coincides with it. It certainly *can* be distinguished, though, from the type of corporate hospitality that is characteristic of the hospitality industry. Perhaps most startlingly different about Christian hospitality is the sheer fact that it "is not particularly concerned with efficiency." Instead it is content "to be patient and vulnerable with others…since the aim is to be in God's abundant time of giving and receiving rather than in efficient, productive time."[55] It would, admittedly, be difficult to concentrate entirely on efficiency while also allowing Christ to come in His own good time. The success of Christian hospitality, then, depends less on hours logged or people helped than it does on "the degree to which one offers one's genuine presence with another, to fully enter another's world and dwell with another."[56]

It is with this in mind that the importance of recognition to hospitality can be most clearly seen. Recognition, Pohl finds, "involves respecting the dignity and equal worth of every person and valuing their contributions, or at least their potential contributions, to the larger community." When people think of hospitality as something quaint or tame, Pohl argues, it is at least "partly because they do not understand the power of recognition."[57] For hospitality to be complete, however, this respect which is so essential

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54. Newman, 120.
55. Ibid, 90-91.
56. Oden, 109.
57. Pohl, 61-62.

to recognition must be coupled with care. In addition to the dignity of the other, one must also be aware of his/her need. And who is this other to whom the Christian must be respectful and caring? Though hospitality may well help one to navigate the tension between church and world, it also challenges practitioners to expand their notion of exactly who their neighbor might be. For Pohl, "The twin moves of universalizing the neighbor and personalizing the stranger are at the core of hospitality."[58]

Hospitality and Worship

As noted above, early Christians wasted little time in connecting authentic piety with the practice of hospitality. The awareness of the *Imago Dei* in other people made this connection an intuitive one. Unsurprisingly, then, Christians have long noted a connection between hospitality and worship. Given the sophistication of some of the most recent theological work done on this connection, it is important to at least briefly survey it before moving into an exploration of intellectual hospitality.

Paul Wadell begins one of his books on Christian friendship with a compelling line of questions: "What does worship do for us? If we find ourselves in communities of worship week after week, has it made a difference in our lives? Has it changed us? Has it made us see the world differently?"[59] In Wadell's thinking, worship is an integral part of a life of discipleship. Worship and morality, for Wadell, have the same goal: "Both want to initiate us into the truth of Jesus so we can become as much like God as we possibly can, so resplendent in holiness and goodness that we walk the earth no longer as strangers

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58. Ibid, 75.
59. Paul Wadell, *Becoming Friends* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002), 15.

or foes of God but as the loyal faithful friends of God…"[60] Seen in this light, worship has

a transformative impact on the Christian person. Wadell argues that worship "works to

achieve in us exactly the radical, total conformity of the self to Christ"[61] that God desires

from His people, but it seems clear enough that this transformation is not facilitated by

worship simply because of worship's capacity to be educative. Newman has argued that

worship might best be understood as our "participation in divine hospitality," just as

hospitality "names our participation in the life of God…"[62]

There is, then, at the very least a close relationship between worship and

hospitality, as each represents a human participation in God's own being. Interestingly,

Newman pushes this relationship so far that she actually comes to identify worship itself

as hospitality. Newman understands that this perspective runs contrary to popular

perceptions: "Common assumptions regard worship as *motivation* for hospitality or as a

place we might garner some useful *information* about hospitality. But such assumptions

miss the mark; they make worship a means to an end, and they locate hospitality outside

of worship."[63] Put in terms somewhat more conducive to the Catholic context, Newman

argues that Eucharist and hospitality are alike in that they are both "communal acts that

call for bodies willing to give and receive the abundance of God."[64] Newman's

reflections on this identification of worship as hospitality were spurred, initially, by her

conviction that hospitality has been a much-abused and oft-misunderstood topic in

contemporary culture. Indeed, she takes to task the perspective (which she traces back to

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60. Ibid, 16.
61. Ibid, 27.
62. Newman, 13.
63. Ibid, 41.
64. Ibid, 169.

Kant) which suggests that enlightenment, or even freedom, can only be achieved by breaking away from any tradition or sense of dogma. Such optimism, Newman maintains, is unwarranted in the current cultural climate, however. "In our late modern epoch," Newman rightly observes, "we can see that a self stripped of context, a 'universal self,' is at the mercy of global economic and political forces beyond its control."[65] In order to recover a place from which today's Christian might extend hospitality, then, there comes an inevitable ecclesiological insight that sees the church as "absolutely necessary."[66]

It is when the church is gathered together in worship that it can most clearly be seen that the church is, in fact, God's dwelling place. As the New Testament indicates, 'home' is not so much a physical place as it is "a people before God."[67] Rather than constraining the Christian's ability to be hospitable due to some latent intolerance of those who are not church, the idea of church as home actually frees the Christian to practice hospitality by giving her a place from which to extend welcome. If, as Newman argues, "*church* names our joining together in the household of God, then *worship* names the way we participate in God's own hospitality."[68] Presumably, if Christians are to offer a specifically intellectual kind of hospitality, then they will also depend on an awareness—gained in part by participation in liturgy—of the church as God's home. The time is now right to consider what this intellectual hospitality might be, and do.

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65. Ibid, 35.
66. Ibid, 39.
67. Ibid, 51.
68. Ibid, 57.

Intellectual Hospitality

In the current climate of American higher education, it seems likely that any discussion of intellectual hospitality would lead to a consideration of tolerance and inclusivity. Indeed, these concepts loom large on most campuses as universities struggle to compete for students and avoid being pilloried for being backward, exclusive, etc. Nevertheless, the perspective that would contrast hospitality and tolerance—rather than equate them—has been steadily gaining momentum. Bretherton, for instance, argues simply that "hospitality constitutes a better way of framing relations with strangers than tolerance."[69] While aware of how the language of tolerance has come to supplant that of hospitality, Bretherton finds tolerance inadequate for the Christian context. In part, this inadequacy is because hospitality simply has "more antecedents in Christian social practice than tolerance, but also, as a practice, it is founded on more explicitly biblical and theological imperatives." Additionally, tolerance is simply ill-equipped to engage with contemporary diversity in moral perspectives.[70] Similarly, for Newman, hospitality is both theologically more sophisticated as well as practically advantageous than tolerance: "In the practice of hospitality, exercising the virtue of love, we are to give and receive from the 'other' as Christ would. So understood, hospitality is at once more receptive and more active than tolerance, receptive in that it sees the other as gift and active in that it seeks lovingly to live, speak, and hear the truth in any given situation."[71] In the cases of the Catholic intellectuals to be surveyed in the remainder of this dissertation, it is clear that their profound abilities to engage the other did not result from

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69. Bretherton, 5.
70. Ibid, 125-126.
71. Newman, 144.

a passive tolerance. Instead, their willingness to engage was motivated by (in all three cases) a Christian's desire for truth wherever it can be found and a Christian's yearning to love (and perhaps even learn from!) one's neighbors wherever they are to be found.

Elizabeth Newman and a Distinctively Christian Intellectual Hospitality

So what, then, gives intellectual hospitality its potency? For Newman, much depends on patience. The Christian intellectual must "bear with, (and)…practice patience, in our conversations with our colleagues and students as we together grope towards the particular truths at hand."[72] Newman makes a point of mentioning immediately thereafter, however, that this patient awareness that all are on a similar journey toward truth must be balanced by a real and robust courage. Jesus never refrained from speaking the truth, Newman notes, regardless of context; regardless of whether he played the role of guest or host. The intellectual hospitality of Christians, then, must create "a space for Christian identity to appear as a whole way of life." In short, then, if such hospitality is to be vibrant and impactful, "making distinctions and separating ourselves in some sense from other convictions, from 'the world,' are crucial…"[73]

The Christian intellectual life takes place within the life of the church. This must be every bit as true regardless of whether a given Christian intellectual labors on the campus of a sectarian university. Indeed, the Christian intellectual life occurs within the life of the church even if it is not housed on any university campus at all. It is an important form of witness for the Christian intellectual to name her commitment to God

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72. Elizabeth Newman, "Hospitality and Christian Higher Education," *Christian Scholar's Review* 33.1 (2003), 86.
73. Ibid, 87.

manifested by her vocation exactly as Christian intellectual. The surroundings may

nevertheless have an impact, obviously, on the dynamics of one's intellectual pursuits.

Newman sees clearly that Christian intellectual hospitality is not at all for the benefit only

of those receiving welcome. On top of the predictable goods that come from

academically engaging other perspectives, though, comes something else: "Christian

hospitality gives us a vigilant place to stand to see how easily various cultural

assumptions and practices can distort our lives."[74] Without such vigilance, Newman

worries, the Christian intellectual might certainly be swept into unfaithfulness.

Hospitality therefore requires training, in which the Christian intellectual learns "how to

be steadfast in the faith while knowing how to resist that which obstructs the hospitality

of God, a resistance that might well call for a willingness to suffer."[75]

One need not look all that closely at contemporary academe in order to find ample

justification for such vigilance. Pluralism, it is said, serves a global economy by making

all distinctiveness seem insignificant. Postmodernism, in the same vein, "has produced an

ethic rooted primarily in the individual and his or her choices."[76] While this ethic might

seem, initially, to be liberating, it actually serves to enslave one to a particularly narrow

tradition of thought which is subject entirely to the individual's own notion of how his

identity ought to be created/developed. If such a tradition were to go entirely unchecked,

how could any authentic hospitality, or even pluralism for that matter, be possible?

Scientism, also, seems to pose a significant challenge to the faith of the Christian

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74. Newman, *Untamed Hospitality*, 71.
75. Ibid, 74.
76. Ibid, 109.

intellectual. By neatly separating facts and values, it would seem to lead to a worldview

entirely unrelated to the world in which anyone actually lives. Perhaps more damning is

another effect illustrated by Newman's consideration of the problems posed by seeing

evolution as *the* description of how the world *is* and *is intended to be*. The very plenitude

of God would be denied, and hospitality, of course, would seem to be absurd: "It would

be better to look out for oneself and protect one's own family and belongings."[77]

With such varying intellectual trends and schools of thought vying with one

another in the academy, however, it is not at all difficult to see why many might see an

equation of hospitality with tolerance as useful. Newman correctly discerns that this

equation underwrites "the polity of our liberal democratic nation-state. By practicing such

hospitality, Christians embrace the politics of liberalism, all the while failing to notice

that it is a politics."[78] If the politics underlying the Christian attempt to practice

hospitality in the American context is built on assumptions that individuals themselves

are the ultimate (or the only) source of meaning and morality, the bar for hospitality truly

needs only to be set as high as *tolerance*. As Newman notes, "Liberalism therefore is

necessarily yoked with pluralism: there are plural understandings of the good." It is

undoubtedly the virtue of tolerance, then, that can provide some semblance of social

cohesion in society with such disparate notions of morality and the proper ends of human

life.[79] Naturally, Newman is bound to recognize the clear possible good of pluralism: it

allows multiple voices to be heard, and forces perspectives to be sharpened through

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77. Ibid, 80.
78. Ibid, 125.
79. Ibid, 127.

engagement with different—and potentially even hostile—outlooks. There is tremendous

insight in her observation, however, that pluralism cannot provide the tools to make any

grounded conclusions regarding these differences: "pluralism has absolutely no way to

discern between the true, the good, and the beautiful and the false, the bad, and the

ugly."[80] Pluralism, then, is no guarantor of a higher education. To the contrary, Newman

argues that it actually "shuts down true learning. By imposing a 'culture of choice,'

pluralism underwrites a market approach to education, fueled by self-interest and

competition. Such an approach makes desiring and loving the good unlikely."[81]

Luke Bretherton and the Necessity of Tradition

Newman's work leads her to the conviction that all disciplines require a kind of

catechesis "before there can be genuine debate."[82] What is required, it seems, is for the

individual intellectual to have a place to stand while engaging in the push and pull of

academic discourse. In his work on the importance of continued Christian witness in the

midst of contemporary diversity (with its attendant relativism) of moral perspectives,

Luke Bretherton seems to make a similar observation. Bretherton notes that Alasdair

MacIntyre, for instance, has found that any "rational enquiry into morals is inherently

tradition-bound and must take account of its social context."[83] While post-moderns might

predictably bristle at any suggestion of moral standards that transcend the particularities

of context, it is nevertheless the case that moral standards are, as such, universal. To

engage with the standards of another, then, is really to bring one *tradition* into

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80. Ibid, 131.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid, 132.
83. Bretherton, 15.

conversation with another *tradition*. As Bretherton again summarizes MacIntyre: "It is

traditions that are the repositories of standards of rationality, which in turn enable

appropriate moral deliberation and action in accord with the natural law."[84] Such a

framing of the matter makes rational moral debate possible, in MacIntyre's view. The

process, to be sure, is nevertheless a complex one. First, the "protagonists of each

tradition must learn the language of their rivals' tradition…." Second, each side must

give "an account or history of the other in terms defined by the other, thus demonstrating

that it properly understands the other within the other's own criteria of evaluation."

Finally, each tradition must evaluate "itself in the light of its rival and (judge) whether its

own account of the truth is inferior to that offered by its rival."[85]

Bretherton also engages with Germain Grisez's conclusion that "all traditions,

despite great variation of culture, and the problems of sin, share a general, or universal,

ethic based on practical reason."[86] Thus for Grisez, then, there is an underlying

consistency binding all traditions together that makes MacIntyre's fears of fragmentation

unfounded. Interestingly, then, Grisez would argue that there is no ultimately significant

difference between what a disciple of Christ holds to be morally upright and the moral

sensibilities of non-Christians. As Bretherton summarizes, "In effect, Grisez is saying

that Christ simply republishes the moral law."[87] Whereas MacIntyre envisions any

progress in dialogue over moral disputes between traditions to be very difficult, Grisez

detects enough common ground stemming from practical rationality that such progress

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84. Ibid, 20.
85. Ibid, 28, 29.
86. Ibid, 34.
87. Ibid, 54.

could be gained relatively easily. Rather starkly, though, Bretherton himself rejects

Grisez's perspective as utterly unfaithful: "To resort to a general ethic to justify Christian

moral claims demonstrates a lack of faith in Christ."[88] Christologically, Bretherton's

rejection of Grisez is strong. Nevertheless, one wonders if Bretherton would be better off

considering a somewhat more inclusivist awareness that God's Word may well cast a

shadow far longer than even His most devoted disciples might realize.

Bretherton is surely on more stable theological ground in his skepticism regarding

MacIntyre. He notes, correctly, that MacIntyre allows for the possibility of one tradition

being vindicated over and against another, but "there is always the possibility that another

tradition might arise which can usurp the former victor." Such insecurity, Bretherton

contends, is incompatible with faith in the Gospel. "There is no room for slipping into

such insecurity in Christianity: the gospel is good news precisely because the future is

already achieved in Christ and we can now trust that goodness and justice will prevail

against all that oppose their establishment."[89]

Instead, Bretherton relies on the ecclesiological work of Oliver O'Donovan to

inform his conception of Christian intellectual hospitality as proper response to ethical

disputes with non-Christians. Bretherton argues that O'Donovan provides an

ecclesiological model which "can account for both the church's distinctiveness from, and

the possibility of the church sharing its life together with, its neighbours."[90] Given the

ability of 'the world' to become 'church,' Bretherton recognizes this is a fine line to

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88. Ibid, 55.
89. Ibid, 84.
90. Ibid, 107.

walk: "In this age, no clear dividing lines can be identified between Christians and non-Christians; all such division will only become clear at the *eschaton*."[91] It is ultimately, for Bretherton, Christian hospitality which is necessary to straddle both distinctiveness and the possibility of communion:

> Importantly, the motif of hospitality maintains the key eschatological tensions of Christian specificity. It does not force a harmony either through abstraction: that is, the term does not dissolve the eschatological tension by appealing to some universal principle (love, justice, and so on); neither does it demand that Christians enter into relations with their neighbours on the basis of a rivalry between competing traditions. Rather, the motif highlights the central and substantial concerns already discussed; that is, it allows for Christians to retain their specific criteria for evaluating the veracity of moral claims, while at the level of moral practice experiencing both continuity and discontinuity with their neighbours.[92]

Amos Yong and a Pneumatological Hospitality

While Bretherton arrives at the importance of intellectual hospitality in considering ethical disputes between traditions, Pentecostal theologian Amos Yong comes to the same realization via his work to develop a vigorous theology of religions. Broadly speaking, Yong acknowledges that while "there are valid arguments for forms of Christian sectarianism that can serve as correctives to Christian expressions that are overly accommodating to cultural dynamics and fads," he also sees clearly that "there are also unhealthy fundamentalisms shaped by religious convictions and forms of life that are immune to external criticism." What is needed, then, is a means of facilitating introspection on the part of the church. Yong contends that "the space for self-reflexivity and criticism is opened up precisely in the hospitable encounter with the stranger, the alien, and even the religious other."[93] With a pneumatological emphasis befitting his tradition, Yong argues that "the many works and tongues of the Spirit of Pentecost open

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91. Ibid, 113.
92. Ibid, 128.
93. Yong, 53.

up to many practices vis-à-vis the religions."[94] It is, therefore, the Spirit that animates the Christians' side of any meaningful engagement with the other. "…the Christian doctrine of hospitality provides a rich framework to think about how the many tongues, gifts, and works of the Spirit enable and empower a wide range of Christian practices with regard to other religious traditions in general and people of other faiths in particular."[95]

Yong considers the theological suppositions of what he considers the exclusivist, inclusivist, and pluralist perspectives on the theology of religions, and proceeds then to examine what practices the beliefs of each seem to support.[96] Yong surveys both Scripture and tradition in piecing together his pneumatological theology of interreligious engagement, and ultimately draws conclusions that sound commensurate to Bretherton's. Namely, "the requisite posture is much more paradoxical in affirming both countercultural opposition and hospitable openness…In this case, countercultural opposition means maintaining a distinctively Christian communal identity, but hospitable openness means interacting with rather than isolating ourselves from our neighbors."[97]

Thinkers as diverse as Newman, Bretherton, and Yong have contributed much to the recent retrieval of hospitality in general, and also to a more specific defining of what Christian hospitality might mean in an intellectual sphere. In particular, all three would be wary of a crude conflation of hospitality with tolerance. For all three, hospitality implies a radical openness that is possible only when one knows where home is, and also something of what it is that makes home distinctive. It will no doubt strike the reader that

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94. Ibid, 57.
95. Ibid, 65.
96. See Yong, 65-98.
97. Ibid, 125.

none of these three thinkers writes from an explicitly Catholic perspective. This absence

of Catholic voices will not continue long into the next section of this chapter, much less

the remainder of this dissertation as a whole. It will be seen in the chapters on Merton,

Lonergan, and Dunne that their own journeys as Catholic intellectuals reflected an

authentic Christian hospitality. All three were eager to engage the other, to love and to

learn. And for all three, this hospitality was not inhibited by, but was indeed spurred by,

the content of their own Catholic tradition. At this point, attention must be paid to another

Christian virtue, one which has long been closely related to hospitality.

Friendship and Hospitality

It has already been noted that this modern retrieval of hospitality was sparked in

no small part by the work of Henri Nouwen. It is worth mentioning again at this juncture

that, in Nouwen's definition of *hospitality*, it is clear that Christian hospitality is oriented

toward the transformation of enemies into friends. Although hospitality cannot coerce a

recipient into friendship, there is an openness to friendship which is integral to the

practice of Christian hospitality.[98] On the one hand, there is certainly reason to suspect

that this connection of hospitality and friendship is detrimental to hospitality. After all,

hospitality has clearly entailed significant risk for Christian practitioners as often as not.

There is an obviously selfless element to it. Friendship, on the other hand, has not always

found a home in Christian thinking, precisely because it seems to pale in comparison to

the selfless agape of the Gospel. "In friendship we see an exclusive, preferential love

based on what people find attractive in one another. In agape we see an inclusive,

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98. Nouwen, 51.

universal love that goes out to anyone regardless of whether that love is returned, regardless of whether we find the person easy to love or not."[99]

The work of Paul Wadell on Christian friendship can add significant texture to the relationship between friendship and hospitality noted by Nouwen. For Wadell, though agape and friendship may move in different directions, it is not necessary to see them in opposition to one another. "As such, friendship can school us in the virtues because it demands getting outside ourself, it demands developing a horizon of interests and concerns beyond the confines of the self. Friendship enlarges the self, but only to the degree that it focuses on another precisely as other."[100] Indeed, for Wadell, morality itself can only be understood as something which happens to someone in relationship with others. "Morality is an implication of otherness, and this means we can only be moral when we learn to appreciate what is not ourselves."[101] When one is hospitable—and open to the prospect of friendship—there is significant exposure to risk. The world must necessarily become a bigger place, and there is no guarantee that one's previous understandings and suppositions will continue to be tenable in precisely the way they had been. "It is impossible to risk such hospitality without feeling a loss of self, without an initial sense of disintegration, for that is exactly what happens."[102]

Wadell's insights make it rather easier to see what exactly is at stake when Christian hospitality is being ventured. There is clearly much that can be gained from a hospitable encounter with those who might help one better understand himself, God's

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99. Paul Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 70.
100. Ibid, 80.
101. Ibid, 145.
102. Ibid, 146.

creation, or even God Himself. How much difference can be 'absorbed' within the context of Christian hospitality, however? How much broadening of horizons ought one risk in the interest of friendship? It is Newman, though, who articulates best the nature of the dilemma when it comes to intellectual hospitality: "The challenge, in terms of hospitality, is to discern when our differences ought to be embraced and when they need to be transformed."[103] Indeed, when precisely is friendship a realistic possibility when Christian hospitality is offered? It will be necessary to expand a bit on the relationship between hospitality and friendship here before considering further the importance (and advantages) of friendship.

Newman examines this relationship in the midst of an overarching explanation of the dangers posed to Christian hospitality by individualism. "That we are created for communion with God and others means that we are part of a tradition in which we are dependent on others…to demonstrate to us what we are to be. Such a politics does not depend on individualism but rather on *friendship*."[104] An awareness of humanity's *telos*, then, orients the Christian's life toward the prospect of friendship, and it is this orientation which makes hospitality possible. At the same time, though, Newman also contends that friendship is dependent on hospitality. She sees that "hospitality involves taking delight in the dynamics of giving and receiving such that we become more fully capable of delighting in the love of God. Without such hospitality, friendship is not possible."[105]

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103. Newman, *Untamed Hospitality*, 178.
104. Ibid, 141.
105. Ibid, 142.

Wadell's work confirms Newman's suspicion that friendship and hospitality relate in a dynamic, clearly non-linear way. It would be too simplistic, it seems, to say only that hospitality leads to friendship or that friendship facilitates hospitality. As already seen, Wadell considers friendship to be something of a school of the moral life, in that it forces the human person to look beyond the self. "The plot of the moral life," Wadell posits, "is to move beyond the security but hopelessness of egotism to the risk but enrichment of hospitality, and this is one thing friendship achieves."[106] Wadell also seems to suggest that the offering of friendship can simply be a part of hospitality: "There are people dying for attention, people silently screaming out for a moment of recognition, a chance to be befriended. For us to befriend them is to give them the attention of love, to rescue them with the gift of life sometimes only a stranger can give."[107] While there may well be a certain intuitive consistency to supposing that hospitality must come first with friendship following, the above demonstrates that there is an equally potent movement beginning with friendship and leading to hospitality. If, as Wadell argues, "There is a disintegration of the self in friendship because there is also a redefinition of self," then it is exactly friendship which ought to help Christian hospitality be a great deal more than a means of entertaining those whom one already likes.[108]

Friendship

The previous chapter makes clear that this dissertation was undertaken largely out of concern for a Catholic university's ability to be true both to its own Catholic identity

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106. Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life*, 147.
107. Ibid, 159.
108. Ibid, 165.

as well as to the rigorous demands of being not only a university but also a part of the Catholic Church's encounter with—and even witness to—the world. This second chapter has followed with very little of that clear institutional orientation. As will become clearer in the remaining chapters, this dissertation contends that it would be utterly foolish to suggest that something as complex as a Catholic university can straddle the demands of both identity and mission if an individual Catholic scholar cannot remain faithfully Catholic and hospitable to the other. As such, the remaining chapters will each be devoted to profiling a Catholic intellectual who—to one degree or another, and in his own unique ways—remained rooted in the Catholic tradition while engaging with those outside that same tradition. As such, this second chapter's extended consideration of hospitality would seem incomplete (especially given the previous section) if more time were not spent examining further the Christian's need for friendship.

In the farewell discourses of John's Gospel, Christ makes a claim that may well seem to be hard to reconcile with the high Christology of that text. "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."[109] This passage has heartened Christian readers ever since, and indeed has occasionally informed Christian thought on humanity's proper end. Aquinas, for instance, believed "we can, are called to be, and must be friends of God. That is what our life is, a life of ever-deepening friendship with a God who is our happiness…"[110] For Wadell, God draws us into this friendship with Himself through a process in which

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109. John 15:15.
110. Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life*, 120.

people learn to be friends with one another. When friendship with God is achieved, "we give ourself away, we surrender to the Spirit, and in that surrender our most exquisite individuality is secured, for we come to be what God in perfect love has always wanted us to be."[111] Longtime missionary Christopher Heuertz and Pohl put it more concisely, stating that "Friends of God love what and whom God loves."[112] They also provide a meaningful addendum to Wadell's notion that human friendship serves as a school of morality in which people learn to be friends of God. Reflecting on the experience of trying to aid women fleeing the commercial sex industry in South Asia, Heuertz describes the great pain he felt when one of the women to whom his mission had offered hospitality betrayed and robbed them. Even in failing to cultivate friendship, however, Heuertz found himself 'schooled in morality.' "Slowly we were being reconciled to God's vision of faithfulness and love. Through the pain of loss we came to realize the joy of giving ourselves in love and friendship."[113]

Nevertheless, it is Wadell's contention that without friendship, life morally is not worth living. Of course, this might easily be reconciled with Heuertz's experience. His earlier experiences of friendship had no doubt given him a much clearer idea of what had been lost when he was betrayed and robbed by a previously prospective friend. Indeed, even in failing in the offering of friendship, Heuertz experienced something of the breaking out of oneself that Wadell argues is necessary for the moral life. "It is never enough," Wadell posits, "just to be ourselves, we have to grow, to be transfigured from

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111. Ibid, 121.

112. Christopher L. Heuertz and Christine D. Pohl, *Friendship at the Margins* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2010), 30.

113. Ibid, 37.

sinners into friends of God."[114] And the human person, it is worth adding, is never capable of effecting this transfiguration alone. God's grace, obviously, is of paramount importance. Friendship with others, too, is indispensable; "there simply is no other way to come in touch with the goods that make us whole than through relationships with those who share them."[115] It is in the moral life, nurtured by friendship, that one discovers when she is at her best. What love will bring her to fullness? For Wadell, then, morality, which depends on friendship, is not simply one compartment within one's life. Instead, "it is the whole of life viewed a certain way, seen as the story of how men and women through their beliefs, convictions, and actions, through their loves, passions, and attachments, *together* make themselves into someone they had not been before."[116]

Given Wadell's strong statements on the necessity of friendship for morality and the extreme significance of morality for achieving one's *telos*, it is perhaps important to note that these insights ought not lead one to conclude that friendship is primarily about selfishly looking after one's needs. American culture, however, is greatly influenced by both consumerism and materialism, which can distort a healthier understanding of what Christian friendship ought to entail. In the first place, "they seriously misunderstand what a good friendship is. In the ideology of consumerism, the primary purpose of any relationship is to fulfill our needs, but this fundamentally redefines what a friendship is." Such an understanding would surely lead one 'friend' to manipulate another. Materialism and consumerism also undermine friendship in that they form "in people qualities of

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114. Wadell, *Friendship and Moral Life*, 1.
115. Ibid, 5.
116. Ibid, 24.

character that are the antithesis of what good friendship requires….If we believe what we own matters more than who we love, we will hardly be unselfish enough to seek the good of another for her or his own sake or find joy in expending ourselves for their well-being, which is exactly what friendships require."[117]

In a very real way, friendship is a kind of sacramental encounter. The love of a friend makes real the love that God also has for a person. This sacramental nature of friendship, coupled with Wadell's notion of friendship as a school of virtue, moves friendship to a place far more central to the Christian life than many have previously accorded it. Undoubtedly, friendship has a close relationship to hospitality. The Christian learns hospitality by being a friend, even as it is an initial gesture of hospitality that makes friendship possible. What, then, might the implications of this relationship be for the church as a whole? In Wadell's estimation, "If the church is faithful to its identity as the friends of God, it should be a befriending community that not only welcomes all who come to it but also offers them a place where the grammar of intimacy and friendship can be learned."[118] As the church's ability to be hospitable goes, so too, it would seem, goes its willingness to befriend.

Limits of Hospitality

Hospitality has been proposed as a vital tool that Catholic higher education ought to employ to more effectively navigate questions of institutional identity in a way in keeping with the riches of the Catholic tradition. Hospitality's roots in both Scripture and the early history of the church have been explored. The nature of Christian hospitality has

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117. Wadell, *Becoming Friends*, 48-49.
118. Ibid, 53.

been found to clearly contrast with the far less risky hospitality of the 'hospitality industry.' Moving closer to the central matter at hand in this dissertation, Christian intellectual hospitality has been considered as well, drawing from the work of three recent Christian scholars. Finally, the relationship of hospitality to friendship has been defined as a kind of circular interchange. Before concluding this chapter with a section linking hospitality explicitly to Catholic higher education, it is a good time to briefly remember that Christian hospitality—despite being inspired by the loving plenitude given by God and motivated by a selfless charity for fellow people as Christians continue their pilgrimage—does in fact brush up against very real limitations. Hospitality creates a space wherein communion between even erstwhile antagonists can find grounds for communion and friendship. In order for that space to be structurally sound, it has to be constructed of something real. Intellectually, it seems, hospitality must necessarily imply formation in a tradition of thought and some commitment to that tradition in order for any communion to be substantial.

Nevertheless, a certain sadness accompanies any limitations on Christian hospitality. While studying Christian communities noted for their hospitality, Pohl discovered that most had initially resisted any idea of boundaries. Only gradually did they find that "certain guidelines, certain boundaries were necessary to be able to continue offering hospitality." Even so, these same communities retained an obvious ambivalence regarding these same limitations that they had placed upon themselves. They were, at best, "a concession to human finiteness, and they were never imposed without regret for

the cost and loss involved."[119] It is hard for practitioners of Christian hospitality to square

boundaries of any kind with the kind of gracious plenty that seems so characteristic of

God's love. Indeed, what limits, one might ask, did Christ place upon Himself as He

underwent his Passion? Limiting hospitality, Pohl notes, "seems to undermine what is

fundamental to the practice."[120] As much as a Christian might be on her guard to make

sure she never turns Christ Himself away, and as much as that same Christian be

desperate to incarnate something of God's own hospitality, there is no shame—or sin—in

remembering that she is, by nature, limited. Pohl acknowledges that "Although

boundaries are difficult to impose and sometimes contested by hosts and guests, ignoring

limits can be a form of arrogance, a refusal to recognize finiteness."[121]

More to the point of this dissertation is Newman's caution regarding inclusiveness

pushed too far: "Christian hospitality disappears when the distinction between church and

world is collapsed."[122] Newman is a strong advocate of retaining a sense of discipline in

Christian hospitality. Any practice of hospitality, Newman rightly sees, "is going to be

exclusive in some sense. Since such practice will always be rooted in a broader tradition

regarding the way the world is and regarding the good and the true, it is going to

necessarily exclude other kinds of hospitality."[123] Without a disciplinary way of

functioning as the body of Christ, Newman worries, "the church risks becoming a

collection of individuals who might share common beliefs or common likes but who

cease to be a visible, political body. Undisciplined hospitality easily becomes superficial,

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119. Pohl, 129.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid, 134.
122. Newman, *Untamed Hospitality*, 43.
123. Ibid, 165.

often judging poorly out of false desires, such as the desire to be liked."[124] There may well be times, then, that even an act of rejection on the part of the Christian may well be an act of hospitality. While such an act of calculated rejection might be said to protect the integrity of the church in some way or another (depending on the reasons for the rejection), it seems clear that it may also protect the integrity of the rejected person's freedom. Should she not have a right to freely choose, or reject, that which is, authentically, Christ's church at its best and most genuine?

Links to Catholic Higher Education

Elizabeth Newman criticizes a significant swath of Christian (Catholic and otherwise) higher education on the question of identity. What she terms "woefully inadequate" ways of talking about Christian identity stem, in her thinking, from a "malformed theology" that rests on the conviction that faith and knowledge "are separate entities or exist in separate spheres."[125] In the case of particular institutions, that is a conviction this dissertation shares. It would, of course, be difficult to take a university's Catholic identity seriously if that identity did not extend down into the part of the university's life that dealt with teaching and learning. This is not simply a case of Catholic higher education being different for difference's sake. As Newman puts it elsewhere, "The vocation given to Christian institutions is the same one given to Christians individually. It is, in the words of the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, a 'vocation to perfect love.'"[126] If this is the case, then it is surely clear that the politics of Catholic

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124. Ibid, 166.
125. Newman, "Hospitality and Christian Higher Education," 77.
126. Newman, *Untamed Hospitality*, 139.

higher education must run counter to the highly-individualistic politics of the time. No small part of this counter-cultural bent ought to be the Catholic university's comfort with speaking of the proper ends of a Catholic university education. Monika Hellwig once suggested that "If we look at higher education in terms of Christianity, then the goal for students is not the moment of graduation but *the moment they die*. What have they done with their lives? The goal should be a lifetime engagement in search of the reign of God."[127]

Of course, such explicitly religious language certainly will make many in the broader academic world uncomfortable, as it will seem to be potentially exclusive of those who do not, for whatever reason, subscribe to that language. The true danger, however, may well lie in a universalist rationalism which would "(maintain) that true intellectual discourse requires the privatization, or even abandonment, of explicitly religious language."[128] It is actually this kind of a position which threatens Catholic institutional identity and has the potential to seriously flatten the intellectual landscape of American higher education as a result. Newman, in a manner not unlike this dissertation, believes strongly that "the practice of Christian hospitality can give us language, skills, and virtues that enable us to speak more truthfully about Christian higher education."[129] Rather than contribute to more exclusion or a dumbing down of the Catholic university's intellectual atmosphere by amplifying the religious language used to express its identity, however, exactly the opposite becomes likely. "To invoke the Christian practice of

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127. Newman, "Hospitality and Christian Higher Education," 83.
128. Ibid, 79.
129. Ibid, 83.

hospitality," Newman explains, "…is to call attention to a complex tradition, a story, a concrete place even, from which we think, come to know, engage the other, and generally move forward in our intellectual pursuit of truth."[130]

It is been made clear that hospitality—as the Christian tradition has always understood it—simply does not rely "upon a *hostility to givenness*. Rather, hospitality delights in and is even defined as the welcoming of the other as gift. To practice this kind of welcome, we must see our own condition as gift, as something we did not simply create or construct, nor as something *essentially* oppressive."[131] As Pohl succinctly notes, "Hospitality requires some material resources."[132] When it comes to intellectual hospitality, perhaps the most important resource is having a place to stand. That is to say, the most important resource for a practitioner of Christian intellectual hospitality, and indeed the most valuable thing that practitioner has to offer, may well be the intellectual tradition which makes such hospitality possible in the first place. As Newman posits, "making distinctions and separating ourselves in some sense from other convictions, from 'the world,' are crucial if hospitality is going to be a truly vibrant practice."[133]

Oden acknowledges that "The virtue and practices of hospitality do not emerge automatically in most communities. They must be cultivated."[134] This would no doubt be the case every bit as much in a contemporary Catholic university as it ever was in a medieval monastery. Some of the practical steps that an institution might take will be addressed toward the end of this dissertation. Between now and then, however, it must be

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130. Ibid.
131. Ibid, 84.
132. Pohl, 115.
133. Newman, "Hospitality and Christian Higher Education," 87.
134. Oden, 199.

shown that this idea of Christian intellectual hospitality is, in fact, workable on any level whatsoever. Noting the dependence that many have on institutions for imparting hospitality, Pohl states that while this may lessen the amount of personal investment and responsibility required, something important is missing: "But hospitality requires both personal and communal commitment, and settings which combine aspects of public and private life."[135] If a Catholic university has any hope of being truly hospitable, then, it will require the presence of dedicated Catholic intellectuals who themselves manage to be intellectually hospitable. What would such intellectual hospitality look like? Each of the next three chapters will examine the hospitality of a noted Catholic intellectual in the hope of drawing systematic conclusions on the nature of a specifically Catholic intellectual hospitality.

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135. Pohl, 151.

Chapter 3: Thomas Merton's Monastic, Global Hospitality

Introduction

In November 1958, Trappist monk, American public intellectual, and famous Catholic author Thomas Merton wrote a letter to Pope John XXIII which reflected Merton's developing sense of his vocation and also would serve to define much of his activity for the ten remaining years of his life. Ten years earlier, Merton's spiritual autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, had been received with great acclaim, despite a pronounced renunciation of the world, which may actually have contributed to its popularity in the years immediately after the Second World War. In the interim, Merton had sought greater solitude in a monastery bursting with new additions to the Trappist order attracted in no small part by his own writing. Drawn to a contemplative vocation, Merton's outlook was radically altered by the experience of being master of scholastics and then, several years later, master of novices. In a sequence rather reminiscent of Wadell's description of friendship as a school of charity, Merton found his relationship to the aspiring monks as their teacher to be utterly transformative. Merton explained to the Pope that he had "come to see more and more what abundant apostolic opportunities the contemplative life offers, without even going outside the monastic cloister."[1]

Merton desired to share his contemplation with the world. Indeed, he desired to be enriched through his exchanges with various intellectuals from throughout the world, but he was also firmly convinced that he had something to offer them as well. Merton informed the Pope that he had had "the experience of seeing that this kind of

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1. William H. Shannon and Christine M. Bochen, editors, *Thomas Merton: A Life in Letters* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 103.

understanding and friendly sympathy, on the part of a monk who really understands

them, has produced striking effects among artists, writers, publishers, poets, etc., who

have become my friends without my having to leave the cloister."[2] And it was, truly, as a

Catholic monk that Merton engaged with an almost incredibly wide range of people with

an equally wide range of backgrounds and perspectives. Reassuring the Pope that his

vision for his somewhat peculiar vocation had received the approval of his superiors at

Gethsemani Abbey and within the Cistercian order, Merton described his calling as "an

apostolate of friendship."[3]

This chapter suggests Merton as an exemplar of precisely the kind of intellectual

hospitality described at length in the previous chapter. Merton corresponded, visited, and

was visited by friends of various faiths and friends with seemingly no faith at all.

Throughout the entirety of his apostolate, Merton maintained his Catholic convictions

even as he enriched them with the insights his exchanges garnered. In 1965, the heart of

the period in which Merton was pursuing the apostolate of friendship, he wrote in

Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander that he found in himself "not the slightest inclination

to be anything but 'Catholic.' Any further question of other institutions, other

organizations, appears to me to be totally ludicrous. I believe in the Church. I am in the

place where Christ has put me. Amen. On the other hand, I wish I had more

charity."[4]Moreover, this chapter will contend that it was actually the content of his

Catholic worldview—specifically the Christological conclusions that he would draw later

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2. Ibid, 104.
3. Ibid.
4. Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, (Turnbridge Wells, Kent: Burns & Oates, 1995), 250.

in life, as the previous quote just begins to suggest—that enabled his apostolate of intellectual friendship in the first place. In turn, this dissertation will proceed to argue that Merton's example may have lessons for the Catholic intellectual life generally, and indeed for Catholic higher education in particular.

In some ways, though, it may seem odd to suggest a useful connection between Merton and Catholic higher education. On the one hand, Thomas Del Prete has long argued that Thomas Merton provides an attractive foundation for a spirituality of education. Despite the 'pithiness' of Merton's explicit references to education as such, "they become magnified enormously in scope and depth when set against the rich background of Merton's life, his spiritual and social writing, his creative expression, and his Christian contemplative perspectives nurtured in the midst of the twentieth century."[5] On the other hand, however, Merton has sometimes been declared an intellectual without the refinement characteristic of academe. G.T. Dempsey has rather strongly asserted that "despite being intensely bookish," Merton himself was simply "not a scholar."[6] Dempsey goes back to Merton's MA thesis at Columbia University to find early evidence of "the lack of the necessary knowledge in depth of the subject matter and a disregard for historical contextualization and causation" that "remained hallmarks of Merton's work throughout his life."[7] Truly, it is not difficult to find the word *impulsive* used to describe Merton in any commentary on his life. Merton himself was well enough aware that he

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5. Thomas Del Prete, *Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1990), 175.

6. G.T. Dempsey, "The Tears of Thomas Merton," *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 67 (2002), 354.

7. Ibid, 355.

had a habit of writing too much too soon.[8] And yet, it is important to remember that what may have been recorded in journals or even sent in letters were not always—or even often—Merton's ultimate conclusions on a given topic. Merton biographer Michael Mott notes that Merton had long had a habit of testing alternative perspectives by getting and gauging reactions from others.[9] Perhaps to some extent the relationship(s) Merton was forming at a given time was a matter of greater urgency to him than the immediate consistency and lasting tenability of his assertions.

Nevertheless, Merton's bookishness (amateurish though it may have been), the development of his perspective on solitude and contemplation, and his insight regarding the true self have all contributed to make Merton's writings classics—in some cases instantly so. While Merton may have lacked some of the polished critical analysis of a seasoned scholar, he nevertheless had an impressive ability "to learn from others yet think for himself, even as an impressionable college student."[10] Additionally, the use of Merton as an exemplar of sorts for academicians seems justifiable also on the grounds of the intellectual activity that Merton's work has inspired in the decades since his death. Within a mere eleven years after his death, Elena Malits notes that there were already "some sixty-seven doctoral dissertations or master's theses on Thomas Merton" either finished or in progress.[11] As of this writing, some fifty years since Merton's death, he

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8. Michael Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 373, 525.

9. Ibid, 152.

10. Ephrem Arcement, *In the School of the Prophets: The Formation of Thomas Merton's Prophetic Spirituality* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015), 27.

11. Elena Malits, *The Solitary Explorer: Thomas Merton's Transforming Journey* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 18.

continues to be read, continues to inspire, and remains an exemplar of astonishing

curiosity and literary output. It is with this in mind that this chapter proceeds.

Friendship and the Early Merton

Thomas Merton was born in France in January 1915, to an American mother and

a New Zealander father. Merton's childhood was characterized by frequent travel and

significant autonomy, both of which resulted in part from the loss of both parents before

he had entered college. After a disastrous year at Cambridge during which he fathered a

child out of wedlock, Merton moved to the United States, where he would soon enroll at

Columbia University. Over the course of the following decade, Merton's path would lead

him through a conversion to Catholicism, and even through discernment of a vocation to

the Trappists. Merton's life as a Trappist (until his death in 1968) was characterized in no

small part by his career as a prolific author of works of Catholic spirituality, social

commentary, and monastic witness.

While conducting the research for his impressively comprehensive biography of

Merton, Michael Mott found that many of the people with whom he spoke had found

something perhaps both disarming and mesmerizing in their respective encounters with

Merton. For many of these people, Mott relates, there was a clear sense "that when

Merton talked to you he made you feel—at least for the time—that you were his most

intimate confidant, that he opened himself to you and you opened yourself to him in a

way which made it an exchange like no other, and that this friendship could not be

duplicated by either of you with anyone else."[12] If Merton truly possessed such an intense

charisma, it may go a long way toward explaining the success of the apostolate of

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12. Mott, xxvi.

friendship which dominated his latter years. At the same time, though, Mott does also suggest that Merton had a peculiar ability to "(hide) himself in a blaze of self-revelation."[13] This is less likely an indication of consistent disingenuousness on Merton's part than it is simply a clear sign that the quality of Merton's interactions with others changed markedly over time. As a young man, Merton's intensity was in no small part a symptom of his desire to assert himself over and above his various youthful insecurities. Later on, however, this intensity is a reflection of the earnestness with which he sought the communion of true friendship with others.

This section of the chapter will outline some of Merton's earlier forays into friendship, so as to better contextualize later on the relationships that were part of his apostolate of friendship, his attitude toward them, and the impact they had on him. Throughout *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton displays an almost incredible capacity for recollection. Obviously, any autobiographical work must be read critically, and it is clear that Merton is interpreting (sometimes decades after the fact) various events in his life in terms of Providence at work in the story of his conversion. In the early chapters of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton paints vivid portraits of the family members who impacted him most greatly. Strikingly absent from his account of the young Merton's life, however, are any really meaningful friendships. Of course, this could simply be part and parcel of Merton the monk casting judgement upon Merton the boy, as is typical enough in his autobiography. And yet, another factor here is that Merton the orphan seems to have resisted to the utmost almost anything which might have grounded him, or

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13. Ibid, xxv.

encouraged him to look beyond himself. As Merton recounts, "The death of my father left me sad and depressed for a couple of months. But that eventually wore away. And when it did, I found myself completely stripped of everything that impeded the movement of my will to do as it pleased. I imagined that I was free."[14] Straight through the dismal experience of his single year at Cambridge, Merton does not give the reader much reason to believe that any of his friendships were actually lasting, or even substantial.

Things would certainly change on that front in Merton's recalling of his days at Columbia. It was there that Merton found friendships capable of inspiring in him something beyond self-interest. Nestled amidst his Columbia memories is Merton's acknowledgement that "God has willed that we should all depend on one another for our salvation, and all strive together for our own mutual good and our own common salvation."[15] Thus, Merton would eventually be convinced that it was no mere accident that he enrolled at Columbia, nor was it simply the peculiarities of personality that held his social circle together: "So now is the time to tell a thing that I could not realize then, but which has become very clear to me: that God brought me and a half a dozen others together at Columbia, and made us friends, in such a ways that our friendship would work powerfully to rescue us from the confusion and the misery in which we had come to find ourselves…"[16]

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14. Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt, 1998), 94.
15. Ibid, 194.
16. Ibid, 195.

The nexus of this group of friends, at least at its beginning, was the classroom of Professor Mark Van Doren, whom Lawrence Cunningham describes as the "most influential" friend from this period in Merton's life. Van Doren, according to Cunningham, brought Merton "into intimate contact with the world of literature, guiding him through the classical tradition" and encouraging Merton's interests in many of the most important literary influences of Merton's life.[17] While Van Doren receives a full measure of praise in *The Seven Storey Mountain*, even he may not have been as crucial a friend for Merton as Robert Lax. It would be impossible to miss the lingering love and even admiration that Merton the monk retained for Lax in his descriptions of him throughout the autobiography. When Merton describes "the secret of (Lax's) constant solidity" as being "a kind of natural, instinctive spirituality, a kind of inborn direction to the living God," it is clear that Lax represented something to which Merton himself aspired.[18] Indeed, in the arena of goals and aspirations, Merton credits Lax with imparting to him the insight that there is only one legitimate life goal for any self-respecting Catholic: sainthood.[19]

Wherever Merton would find himself on his peculiar path toward sainthood, he was apparently always able to rely on the support of his close cadre of friends from Columbia. Merton remained intensely loyal to them, even as they were every bit as loyal to him throughout extended periods characterized by a very monastic lack of communication. As Mott puts it, "When (Merton) turned his back on the world in 1941,

17. Lawrence S. Cunningham, *Thomas Merton & the Monastic Vision* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 8.

18. Merton, *Seven Storey Mountain*, 198.

19. Ibid, 260.

he made no such rejection of his friends, and his friendships survived the long silences."[20]

When Merton was ordained in 1949, several of his Columbia friends were in attendance, having made the trek to Kentucky. It is impossible to know how Merton's life would have turned out had it not been for his decision to enroll at Columbia, or had it not been for the friendships he built there. What is clear, though, is that Merton had at least a Columbia-inspired conception of the importance of friendship when he began to articulate the summation of his life's work as an apostolate of friendship by the end of the 1950s.

Solitude

And yet, it would be a gross oversimplification to suggest that there is a neat progression from the college friendships of the 1930s to the intellectual friendships of the 1960s. While there is undoubtedly a connection, it must be remembered that for a good deal of time in between Merton was quite focused on finding greater solitude, devoting more time to contemplation and being rather far removed from any opportunity for making new friends.

Of course, much of what Merton writes indicates that monasticism—as he understood it—did not mean Gnosticism, and that solitude—as he experienced it—did not mean selfish isolation. Merton was keenly aware of the danger of making solitude simply a type of isolation. If isolation is the only thing solitude had to offer, it would be very difficult to see how solitude could ever be a legitimate means of Christian discipleship. After all, so much of the Gospel message relies on being in relationship to others. Without the chance to encounter other people created in God's image, how could

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20. Mott, 219.

one possibly learn to love like Christ? Solitude would be little more than a selfish attempt to retreat from the world that God created. As a result, Merton developed a much more sophisticated notion of solitude. Instead of forcing solitude to mean isolation, Merton felt that a person was solitary "at the moment when, no matter what may be his external surroundings, he is suddenly aware of his own inalienable solitude and sees that he will never be anything but solitary."[21] Indeed, Merton would eventually look upon even John Henry Newman as a solitary of sorts, insofar as Newman had suffered the "kind of rejection which liberates (solitaries) into a realm of a final perfection, a uniqueness, a humility, a wisdom, a silence that is definitive and contains all that they have ever said."[22] Far from being a rejection of people, the embrace of solitude was "not to escape other men but in order to find them in God."[23]

It took some time for Merton to arrive at an understanding of solitude that included room for many other people. In 1946, for example, Merton wrote that "for myself, I have only one desire and that is the desire for solitude—to disappear into God, to be submerged in His peace, to be lost in the secret of His face."[24] Read in tandem with some of the world-rejecting passages of *The Seven Storey Mountain*—which he was working on at the time—it is hard to escape the conclusion that Merton was not terribly optimistic about humanity at this point. At the very least, people were a distraction from cultivating a relationship with God. Of course, the end of 1946 would mark five years in the monastery for Merton. He would not leave Gethsemani Abbey for any reason

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21. Lawrence S. Cunningham, editor, *Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 242.

22. Merton, *Conjectures*, 24.

23. Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961), 53.

24. Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas* (New York: Image Books, 1956), 26.

whatsoever until August 1948, when he left for a grand total of six hours to conduct business for the Order.[25] It was Merton's literary career that would eventually open up the lines of communication for him to conduct his apostolate of friendship. With an irony that has been frequently noted, however, it was precisely his literary successes that helped to make Gethsemani a setting wherein it was exceedingly hard for Merton to find the solitude he craved. He would sarcastically observe that at the monastery's post-war peak there were "two hundred and seventy lovers of silence and solitude…packed into a building that was built for seventy."[26]

Merton had hardly become entirely misanthropic. Cut off to a considerable degree from his Columbia friends by the normal restrictions of life as a Trappist, there are clear instances when Merton felt very much attached to the monks of his community. He once seemed even a bit surprised at his own reaction when a group of his fellow monks left Gethsemani to start a new foundation in 1947: "I am certainly not detached enough from them to be immune to a little pain at the thought that I will never see them again."[27] Overall, however, Merton's pain here seems rather a sign of familiarity with the departing monks than friendship. Merton nonetheless found something very comforting in this monastic familiarity. His burgeoning career as a successful writer was forcing him into consistent communication with the world of publishing, and Merton did not feel entirely edified by these exchanges. Instead, they seem to have reinforced the conviction that had helped to propel Merton toward the monastery in the first place: that people are

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25. Mott, 205.
26. Thomas Merton, *Jonas*, 14.
27. Ibid, 64.

depressingly petty and ceaselessly self-serving. "Even my contacts with the outside—with the world of writers and of people who publish and of people who insult one another for the sake of art—have their advantages. To see how seriously men take things and how little they profit by their seriousness. Their tragedy makes our mediocrity all the more terrible."[28]

His brief sojourn from Gethsemani in 1948 *did* do something to shock Merton's sensibilities regarding others. Merton found himself face to face with the world, which was perhaps "no longer so wicked after all." Instead, Merton "went through (Louisville), realizing for the first time in my life how good are all the people in the world and how much value they have in the sight of God."[29] Over the next few years, the newly-elected Abbot, James Fox, would offer Merton a number of allowances that gave him some limited time in solitude, either in the community's rare book vault or even through permission to walk alone in the woods. Despite the impact that his brief time in Louisville had had on Merton's assessment of people, it seems that Merton was still thinking of them as—at best—obstacles to his own vocational path. This assessment is shared by the late Anne Carr, who believed that "for the Merton of 1949, (there was) no genuine sense of real Christian community and its goodness or its importance in the life of faith. And there is certainly no sense that community can be an aid to or a genuine expression of one's relation to God."[30]

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28. Ibid, 83.
29. Ibid, 98.
30. Anne E. Carr, *A Search for Wisdom & Spirit: Thomas Merton's Theology of the Self* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 21.

This would eventually change, and drastically so. By the time Merton was living full time in his hermitage on the grounds of Gethsemani, he was cognizant of how differently he understood solitude then compared to years earlier. "In a sense, a very true and solitary sense, coming to the hermitage has been a 'return to world,' not a return to the cities, but a return to direct and humble contact with God's world."[31] Rather than isolation, solitude had come to mean connectedness for Merton. Indeed, Merton understood that his solitude could be part of an authentically Christian vocation if "it will help you to love not only God but also other men."[32]

Merton declared the era he lived in to be a time of anxiety. Even though a life in solitude was not by any means an attempt to become complacent with the status quo, there is a very strong sense in Merton's writing that true solitude may afford the seeker with some level of serenity. Merton believed that true solitude would not make all of the problems in someone's life go away, but they would "cease to be (problems)."[33] Many of Merton's contemporaries certainly did not agree with this sentiment. Especially for those friends involved in the peace movement of the mid-1960's, "there was a widespread and lasting feeling…that Thomas Merton was in the wrong place at a critical time."[34] Paul Elie suggests, however, that the best evidence of the "rightness" of Merton's hermit life is simply "the sudden clarity of his writing."[35]

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31. Thomas Merton, *The Intimate Merton*, ed. Patrick Hart and Jonathan Montaldo (San Francisco: Harper, 1999), 258.

32. Merton, *New Seeds*, 52.

33. Ibid, 53.

34. Mott, 429.

35. Paul Elie, *The Life You Save May Be Your Own* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004), 370.

Merton strongly believed that solitude helped to teach him how to love. The spiritual life of a Christian in solitude is not intended to obliterate any problems that might trouble the human soul. Rather, silence helps to put those troubles in their true context. "We are not meant to resolve all contradictions but to live with them and rise above them and see them in the light of exterior and objective values which make them trivial by comparison."[36] Though he does not expound on what he means by *objective values* in this context, it is safe to assume that what he means includes God.

The Christian solitary must seek to encounter God where the faithful know He is: within all people. It is for this reason that Merton felt that "the smoke-screen of words" that blurred humanity's perspective of true reality had to be cleared away. Such an undertaking could only happen in solitude. As if to respond to the classic critique of the solitary life that monks hate the world, Merton described true reality as being something quite beautiful indeed: "…the nakedness of reality…is neither a matter of terror nor for shame. It is clothed in the friendly communion of silence, and this silence is related to love." Rather than the Gnostic understanding of the created world as inherently evil, in solitude we are taught "to know reality by respecting it where words have defiled it." [37]

Impressive as this already is, Merton felt that this new vision of reality would help the solitary in all relationships. "When we have really met and known the world in silence, words do not separate us from the world nor from other men, nor from God, nor from ourselves…"[38]It is clear that solitude is not about withdrawing into some world of

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36. Cunningham, *Spiritual Master*, 243-244.
37. Ibid, 244.
38. Ibid.

spiritual fluff and fantasy. Instead, it is about learning to be, in a world that is because of

God. What had changed, for Merton? What transpired between the 1940s and the 1960s

that developed his understanding of solitude from something that helped to preserve and

protect an individual's walk with God from the temptations and distractions wrought by

other people, into something that deepened one's sense of connectedness to, or even

communion with, others? Even more basically: what led Merton away from his earlier

rejection of the world and toward his later work in the apostolate of friendship, actively

seeking out and engaging with friends throughout the world and all along the ideological

spectrum? While there were no doubt multiple factors involved, this chapter contends

that the single most significant was Merton's newfound role, throughout the 1950s, as a

teacher.

Teaching

      With the publication of *New Seeds of Contemplation*—an update on the original

Seeds of Contemplation—in 1961, Thomas Merton took time to reflect on what had

changed for him in the twelve years since the original. In particular, Merton

acknowledged that the original had been hampered by its own author, in that he had had

"no experience in confronting the needs and problems of other men. The book was

written in a kind of isolation, in which the author was alone with his own experience of

the contemplative life."[39] What had changed was not that Merton had left solitude behind,

but that his solitude had been "modified." One of these modifications involved Merton's

encounter with, as he put it, "the perplexity of novices and scholastics of his monastic

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      39. Merton, *New Seeds*, ix.

community."[40] By the 1961 revision, Carr asserts, Merton had removed "all suggestion

that other people represent a danger to contemplative union with God."[41]

The casual reader of Merton might begin to think of Merton's mystical

experience—several years before *New Seeds of Contemplation* but not published for

another half-decade—at the corner of Fourth and Walnut in Louisville, during which he

became aware of the profound proximity of all people to God and of his own deep love

for those same people.[42] And yet, as significant as that event may have been for

propelling (or at least reflecting) a change in Merton's orientation to the world, it seems

that even that famous moment did not develop in a vacuum. Instead, Merton's insight at

Fourth and Walnut was made possible by his experiences as a teacher at Gethsemani. In

1951, Merton had been appointed master of scholastics, meaning that he was to play a

crucial role in the spiritual formation of the young monks intending to seek ordination to

the priesthood. In 1955, Merton was appointed master of novices, a post he would fill for

an entire decade.

Teaching would change the course of Merton's literary career, his vocation, and

even his outlook on humanity in general. From the beginning, Merton found great joy in

the building of relationships with the young monks in his charge. Merton was unsure if he

was of much help to them, but he quickly appreciated the positive impact they had on

him. Merton felt that he had discovered that "the kind of work I once feared because I

thought it would interfere with 'solitude' is, in fact, the only true path to solitude." Rather

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40. Ibid, x.
41. Carr, 33.
42. Merton, *Conjectures*, 156.

than being a classroom full of distractions preventing Merton from being as contemplative as he ought to have been, the young monks were demonstrating to Merton precisely how a relationship—a friendship, even—can be a school of charity in precisely the manner Wadell describes. And Merton was perfectly aware of it. "What is my new desert?" Merton would ask. "The name of it is compassion. There is no wilderness so terrible, so beautiful, so arid and so fruitful as the wilderness of compassion."[43] Merton was encountering the scholastics from his vantage point as an always-aspiring Christian solitary, and this very perspective was well-suited to observing a profound communion— not only with his fellow monks, but with potentially anyone and everyone: "Now that I know them better, I can see something of the depths of solitude which are in every human person, but which most men do not know how to lay open either to themselves or to others or to God."[44]

Struggles of a Monastic Author

When the Merton collection at Bellarmine College Library was opened in 1963, Merton's friend and mentor Dan Walsh read a paper Merton had prepared for the occasion, which offered a summary of Merton's literary output up to that point: "Whatever I may have written, I think it can all be reduced in the end to this one root truth: that God calls human persons to union with Himself and with one another in Christ, in the Church which is His Mystical Body."[45] The apparent serenity of that statement gives no indication of the tremendous difficulties Merton's writing career caused him during his life as a monk; and it is important to emphasize here that, despite the various

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43. Merton, *Jonas*, 323.
44. Ibid, 326.
45. Mott, 392.

hats which Merton may have worn over the course of his life, he was, as Lawrence

Cunningham has argued, a monk first and foremost.[46]

While the reader of Merton's journals may well be left with the impression that

Merton was consistently hanging on the brink of leaving either Gethsemani or even the

Cistercians altogether, it is important to temper that impression by holding it alongside

the realities which kept Merton where he was. Indeed, it seems that Merton always took

seriously his obligations as a member of his community. As Michael Mott points out,

"Had Thomas Merton been as neurotic, quixotic, and generally unpredictable as he has

been portrayed at times, no one as shrewd as Dom James would have entrusted him with

the post of either master of scholastics or master of novices. Nor, for that matter, would

the abbot have chosen Father Louis as his confessor."[47] For his own part, Merton seems

to have been very much aware of the manner in which the community, and in particular

his superiors, kept some of his shortcomings in check far better than he could manage on

his own. In a 1954 letter to Abbot Fox, Merton expressed his hope that Fox would

"always tell me frankly when I am not doing what you want, because that is my one big

safeguard, on which everything depends…"[48] Over a decade later, fearing a potentially

more lax abbot might be elected upon Fox's retirement, Merton wrote to Archbishop

Thomas McDonough of Louisville, apparently in the hope that McDonough would keep

him reined in should the new abbot give him too much freedom: "With the possibilities

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46. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision*, 17.
47. Mott, 278.
48. Shannon and Bochen, 24.

of new policies around here, I think I had better draw my own lines in case they are not

drawn for me…"[49]

This letter indicates an awareness on Merton's part of what his vocation was, but

an interesting level of caution regarding the way it might be manifest. It is not difficult to

see why this should be the case. Implicit in the act of writing is the feeling that you have

something worthwhile to say. Similarly, to have your writing published is to secure a

legacy. Obviously, there can be a tremendous amount of pride built into the processes of

writing and being published, and for Thomas Merton the Trappist, this was a source of

self-doubt. He was simply unsure of the purity of his intentions, hearing in his head the

sarcastic rebuke: "Admiration, admiration—You are my ideal—you are the one, original,

cloistered genius, the tonsured wonder of the Western world."[50] Early attempts to

reconcile his writing and his vocation were not productive, either. "God defend me from

the stuffy academic language and from the pious jargon I feel I got into…on the theory

that, since I was a monk, I had to write that way. NO! That is NOT the way to write! It

does NO good."[51]

His inability to find peace on this question did even lead him to consider a change

of order: "Should I move somewhere where I can find solitude and silence and peace to

be alone with God in a pure tranquility that is impossible for a Cistercian?"[52] Though he

does not mention his writing in this passage as the source of his misgivings, it seems

likely that it was a major contributing factor. And yet, writing would also be a part of the

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49. Mott, 514.
50. Merton, *The Intimate Merton*, 48.
51. Ibid, 49.
52. Ibid, 53.

peace he would come to find, little by little, because he became convinced that he was not writing for himself: "Since I belong to God and my life belongs to Him and my book is His and He is managing them all for His glory, I only have to take what comes and do the small part that will be allotted to me…."[53] In moments of clarity, Merton was able to see the good resulting from his writing. "Now I see what it is all leading up to: to the happiness and the peace and the salvation of many people I have never known. There is no greater joy than to be drawn into union with God's great love for the souls of men.…"[54] Already (June 1948), Merton was starting to develop some basic understanding of writing as a form of contemplative prayer. In addition to the multitude of anecdotal accounts of the impact Merton's writings have had, Ephrem Arcement agrees that Merton's writing was vital for many: "…this dual vocation of monk and writer would become a uniquely influential source for the exercise of his own prophetic spirituality and contribute significantly to his own personal integration."[55] William Shannon adds that Merton's writing "enabled him to articulate, for himself and for others, his ongoing experience of what it meant to be a Catholic and a monk in a fast-changing world wherein both Catholicism and the monastic life were being scrutinized, both from within and from without, in a way that was unprecedented…"[56]

None of this is to say, however, that there were not days when it all seemed useless again. Indeed, Merton's journal is full of instances where he 'rediscovers' things (like humility, or the centrality of Christ), and it appears to work that way with vices as

53. Ibid, 55.
54. Ibid, 56.
55. Arcement, xx.
56. William H. Shannon, *Silent Lamp: The Thomas Merton Story* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 16.

well as virtues. "The business of being poisoned in spite of yourself by the pleasure you take in your own work! You say you don't want it, but it gets into your blood anyway."[57] At times, Merton seemed skeptical about the encouragement to write that he received from his Superior. "That afternoon, when (the abbot) was in Louisville at the Archbishop's, I got a check for nine hundred dollars on *The Seven Storey Mountain*, so I gave it to him the next morning. He told me to go on writing."[58] When he had reservations about writing, it continued to trigger doubt about his entire life as a Cistercian: "To make an Order, a spiritual tradition, the center of my life is not enough. Contemplation is not enough....In other words, I need to get rid of everything. Here I am compelled to keep my hands full. And if I write, I am bound to live submerged in books."[59]

Though Merton's spiritual life may have been one long trajectory overall toward contemplation of God in solitude, it is already quite clear that this trajectory holds true only in a general sense. Some days were clearly better than others. It is for this very reason that Merton's writing was so important to him. The written word helped him give glory to God (and guidance to readers) when times were good, and his habit of keeping a journal helped him come to some understanding when times were bad. Writing became for him a means of examining his conscience. This was of great help to him: "Every book I write is a mirror of my own character and conscience. I always open the final printed job with a faint hope of finding myself agreeable, and I never do."[60]

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57. Merton, *The Intimate Merton*, 57.
58. Ibid, 59.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid, 60.

Merton came to see that his writing was a key factor in his ongoing spiritual conversion: "And yet it seems to me that writing, far from being an obstacle to spiritual perfection in my own life, has become one of the conditions on which my perfection will depend."[61] He was well aware that the life of an author-monk was unlikely to be easy, but his awareness of God's ability to work through him intensified: "It must come somehow from the Holy Ghost."[62] In coming to terms with his vocation Merton also drew strength from the liturgy. He was able to make a connection between Christ in the Eucharist and himself, put on display in the form of his writing: "One of the results of all this could well be a complete and holy transparency: living, praying, and writing in the light of the Holy Spirit, losing myself entirely by becoming public property just as Jesus is public property in the Mass." Making the connection between this idea and his ordination to the priesthood, Merton hoped that "this is an important aspect of my priesthood—my living of my Mass: to become as plain as a Host in the hands of everybody. Perhaps it is this, after all, that is to be my way of solitude."[63]

Merton had developed a substantial theological framework to justify his unique vocation. After signing a deal that promised four books to his publisher, Merton felt that "…my work is my hermitage because it is writing that helps me most of all to be a solitary and a contemplative here at Gethsemani."[64] Writing therefore continued to be the dominant factor in Merton's spiritual development. "This Journal…Apparently I have not

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61. Ibid, 73.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid, 77.

yet written enough of it to become completely solitary and to be able to do without it."[65] There is agreement amongst commentators that Merton was not mistaken when he suggested that writing may have been a necessary part of his vocation. Malits suggests that "The effort to articulate what was happening in his life was for him essential to the process of self-discovery. That enterprise actually served to shape Merton's identity, because writing about himself consciously engaged the man in the task he described as trying 'to be what I am.'"[66]

It was because of his writing as well as his life as a Trappist that Merton became comfortable being an active monk. Instead of creating an image of solitude in his mind and finding a way to work toward it in reality, he learned to achieve the solitude that God granted him. Merton learned that "One must be in some sense a hermit before the care of souls can serve to lead one further into the desert. But once God has called you to solitude, everything you touch leads you further into solitude."[67] Solitude, in the true sense of it, did not depend on the degree of isolation, or on geography at all. Instead, it was something that was always available to a person who had pursued his/her proper vocation.

With its many bumps in the road and probably more than a few wrong turns, Thomas Merton's story is one of authentic Christian conversion. He never ceased trying to find a closer relationship with God. Despite the potential tension between his roles as author and monk, Merton was fortified by the one, and the other, on an alternating basis.

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65. Ibid, 82.
66. Malits, 140.
67. Ibid, 86.

Without his writing, Merton may not have lasted at Gethsemani. Without the Trappist

lifestyle (and certainly without his fellow Trappists), Merton would have struggled to

advance to the point where an eremitic existence could be more than a hasty retreat from

the world. It seems that this insight, which Merton shared in *The Sign of Jonas*, is

genuine: "If I am to be a saint—and there is nothing else that I can think of desiring to

be—it seems that I must get there by writing books in a Trappist monastery."[68]

The Formation of the Whole Person/The True Self

If Merton was committed, despite his moments of doubt, to this idea of sainthood

through Trappist authorship, then it was because he believed that that path would allow

for him to be precisely who God created him to be. Michael Mott has claimed that "a

battle with a kind of self-consciousness" was "the chief struggle of Merton's life…"[69]

This does not seem to be an exaggeration, as Merton spent a good deal of effort on

defining what was, and what was not, the true self. Cunningham points out, for instance,

that Merton believed "identifying the Cartesian 'ego' with the true self was a fatal error

of judgment."[70] Merton himself wrote that "There is an irreducible opposition between

the deep transcendent self that awakens only in contemplation, and the superficial,

external self which we commonly identify with the first person singular." Contemplation,

then, "is precisely the awareness that this 'I' is really 'not I' and the awakening of the

unknown 'I' that is beyond observation and reflection…"[71]

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68. Merton, *Jonas*, 228.
69. Mott, 93.
70. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision,* 137.
71. Merton, *New Seeds*, 7.

Del Prete summarizes the difference between the true self and false self by saying "The false self tends to identify itself in terms of its external activity, its output; it must be engaged in doing something in order to experience itself as real. The true self simply is. It does not have to do in order to be....The difference is that its doing is motivated by love, reflected in the quality (not quantity) of its actions."[72] Discovery of the true self is not to be equated to any process of mere psychological self-realization or intellectual adjustment. It is, simply, the discovery of what one is already in the eyes of the Creator. Merton's monastic vocation, similarly, was not aiming for his detachment from the various things that exist in God's creation. "We do not detach ourselves from things in order to attach ourselves to God, but rather we become detached *from ourselves* in order to see and use all things in and for God."[73] Merton contended that much in the world gave glory to God simply by being what it was created to be: "For in being what God means it to be it is obeying Him. It 'consents,' so to speak, to His creative love."[74] For people, things are more complex, because "God leaves us free to be whatever we like." Nevertheless, humanity's prospects are not fundamentally different than those of the trees or birds: "For me to be a saint means to be myself."[75]

Contemplation

This chapter has so far examined Merton's understanding of Christian solitude, and why it was a crucial part of his own vocation. From there it was shown that Merton's

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72. Del Prete, 40.
73. Merton, *New Seeds*, 21.
74. Ibid, 29.
75. Ibid, 31.

solitude did not rule out the possibility of his being an author. To the contrary, Merton

came to see writing as something he could not discard, as it was simply part and parcel of

who God intended for him to be. As such, it was in writing as a monk that Merton was

able to share something of his solitude with the world. Being an author-monk was the

path by which Merton would learn to identify with the *point vierge*, the untainted—

though often buried—presence of God within all people.[76] At this point, the time is nearly

right to begin considering the intellectual exchanges which characterized Merton's

apostolate of friendship while also propelling his vocation as a monk who was

simultaneously both an author and public intellectual. What is needed first, however, is a

brief survey of what Merton understood *contemplation* to be.

According to its back cover, Thomas Merton's *New Seeds of Contemplation*

seeks to "awaken the dormant inner depths of the spirit so long neglected by Western

man," and to "nurture a deeply contemplative and mystical dimension in our spiritual

lives." If one expects that book to be Merton's systematic approach to contemplation,

some kind of detailed 12-step process, there is sure to be disappointment. In Merton's

opinion, such a book would not be possible, "For contemplation cannot be taught. It

cannot even be clearly explained. It can only be hinted at, suggested, pointed to,

symbolized."[77] Rejecting the idea that contemplation might be heavily systematized,

Merton would comment elsewhere that "To restrict the contemplative monk to one set of

narrow horizons and esoteric concerns would be in fact to condemn him to spiritual and

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76. Merton, *Conjectures*, 158.
77. Ibid, 6.

intellectual sterility." [78]It is telling, then, to note that the chapter in *New Seeds* called "What is Contemplation?" is only five pages long, while the chapter on "What Contemplation is Not" is nearly eight pages.

It is at the crescendo of that second chapter that Merton dispels the notion that contemplation is a means of accessing some kind of perpetual bliss for the remainder of one's life. Quite to the contrary, Merton felt that contemplation was something that could awaken "a tragic anguish and (open) many questions in the depths of the heart like wounds that cannot stop bleeding."[79]Though this is not, at face value, a ringing endorsement of contemplative experience, Merton explains why there is a necessary element of pain: contemplation is a kind of iconoclasm. It is fair to use this term, *iconoclastic*, because "In the end the contemplative suffers the anguish of realizing that *he no longer knows what God is*."[80] While *New Seeds* represents some of Merton's most mature thinking on contemplation, it is clear to see that such apophatic thinking had long captivated Merton's imagination. St. John of the Cross was a strong influence on Merton in his early days as a monk, and later readings of Meister Eckhart and Julian of Norwich ensured the presence of an apophatic (the 'negative' approach to theology which seeks always to preserve the fundamental mystery of God) strain to Merton's theology. Nevertheless, the Incarnation has given humanity things that *can* positively be said about God, and Christ's Gospel makes clear to what the Christian ought to aspire. Merton's notion of contemplation reflects this reality, especially given Merton's reliance on the

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78. Merton, *Conjectures*, 7.
79. Merton, *New Seeds*, 12.
80. Ibid, 13.

Pauline notion of how, for the contemplative, "It is now no longer I that live but Christ lives in me."[81]

Merton's contemplative experiences gave him a profound awareness of the presence of God. Such awareness could not help but transform Merton's outlook, his thinking, and of course his writing as well. Arcement has written insightfully on the prophetic aspect of Merton's spirituality. Arcement contends that Merton's contemplation was inevitably going to spill over the walls of Gethsemani: "Through the transformation of the self into an authentic existence, the transformation of the world becomes possible, (Merton) thought. The two transformations together form Merton's integrated vision of God's desire for recreating the world in God's image and likeness—of reconciliation."[82]

Merton's contemplation gave him "spiritual insight into the reality of things." Merton did not believe that he was an author and public intellectual in spite of his solitude, nor did he think that this was in spite of his contemplation. To the contrary, he wrote, agitated on behalf of justice regarding numerous causes, and engaged with various intellectual perspectives *because* of his contemplation. "By being firmly rooted in a life of contemplation, (Merton) understood, the monastic vocation blossoms into a prophetic witness to the kingdom of God."[83] Merton wrote, then, in part because of his desire to share the fruits of his contemplation, which he saw "not only as the nourishment

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81. Ibid, 5, 41, 65.
82. Arcement, 152.
83. Ibid, 140.

necessary for his own monastic and solitary vocation, but as a desperately needed antidote to the various poisons in contemporary Western life."[84]

Social Consciousness

It is for this reason that Merton's seemingly unique vocation as an author-monk who was also a renowned intellectual had a real consistency to it. Thomas Del Prete asserts that Merton's growing social consciousness and voice were "not out of step with his growth toward greater identification with others…nor did it reflect a major discontinuity with his sense of vocational commitment or the spiritual insight represented by his meditative writing."[85] It therefore seems a rare, though perhaps minor, misstep by Cunningham where he states that Merton's "thirst for imageless union with God" merely "coexisted" with his "wide-ranging reading and his insatiable desire for a deeper understanding of God."[86]

That being said, it does seem as though *coexisted* might be an appropriate word for the early years of Merton's life at Gethsemani, when it seemed that his primary goal may well have been a yearning for God through renunciation of the world. After all, one can find the seeds of Merton's social consciousness already germinating in the pages of *The Seven Storey Mountain*. Michael Mott argues, perhaps rightly, that Merton's teenage dalliance with communism was likely a means for Merton to soothe an aching personal conscience by appealing to an apparently nascent social one.[87] By the time Merton wrote his autobiography, however, and was able to express his contempt for a situation in which

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84. Carr, 6.
85. Del Prete, 93.
86. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision*, 46.
87. Mott, 99.

Hollywood was glorified and Harlem maligned, there can be little question that his social consciousness had at least begun to bloom.[88]

Arcement contends that Merton worried whether the church of his time had "an adequate platform for effective prophetic communication(.)"[89] As Merton enjoyed the spiritual growth that came through greater degrees of solitude and contemplation, he came to see that he was perhaps uniquely well-placed to help the church speak prophetically. It is not difficult to see which social ills pressed most heavily on Merton. The Cold War certainly weighed on him, as did questions of war in general. Merton was also alarmed by some aspects of the astonishing technological advances of the mid-20th century, particularly when those advances were seen "in the context of *unbalance* with the other aspects of human existence in the world," wherein "the very splendor and rapidity of technological development is a factor of disintegration."[90] Such disintegration had, in Merton's mind, left much of humanity feeling adrift, to the point that "there are so many of everything that one lives in a state of constant bewilderment and fear. One cannot begin to commit himself to any definite love, because the whole game is too complex and too hazardous and one has lost all focus. So we are carried away by the whirlwind, and our children are even more helpless than we ourselves."[91]

Merton's hope that the church retained the means for prophetic communication, coupled with his ongoing reflections over the ills of life in the modern world, left him primed to be impressed anytime he saw someone exercising the kind of charismatic

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88. Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, 379.
89. Arcement, 94.
90. Merton, *Conjectures*, 72.
91. Shannon and Bochen, 129.

prophesying that he himself would eventually undertake. Merton is not being

melodramatic, for instance, when he writes with verve that simply seeing the witness of

Daniel Berrigan "restores one's hope in the Church."[92] Merton did not think of the church

as a kind of corporation which had a message (prophetic or otherwise) to export to people

who simply did not have it. Instead, Merton had a natural instinct, no doubt honed during

his years as a teacher at Gethsemani, for meeting people where they were. In his book on

Merton and education, Del Prete posits that the study of other cultures was crucial for

Merton in that it helped him to engage those other cultures, but it also helped him to

better understand himself.[93] By the time his apostolate of friendship was in full swing, he

would engage Russians, Western Europeans, Latin Americans, Indians, Middle

Easterners, and others. This was part and parcel of his own spiritual development, but it

was also reflective of this growing social consciousness over the course of the 1950s.

Before looking at the apostolate of friendship itself, it is necessary to examine further the

rootedness—geographically but also intellectually—that makes Merton a worthwhile

exemplar for the Catholic intellectual life even today.

Rootedness in Tradition

It has already been shown how Merton relied on his rootedness in Cistercian

community life to protect himself from his own flights of fancy. Indeed, the Trappist

emphasis on stability in particular was surely a protection against the kind of restless

traveling that characterizes so much of *The Seven Storey Mountain*. Interestingly, though,

Merton was equally dependent on an analogous check within the intellectual realm.

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92. Merton, *Conjectures*, 251.
93. Del Prete, 103.

Obligations to Gethsemani may have kept Merton from roaming geographically, but it was the Catholic tradition—as Merton understood it—that kept him from being overwhelmed by the multiplicity of perspectives with which he would dialogue over the course of the apostolate of friendship's life.

Near the beginning of *No Man Is an Island*, Merton writes that he had no intention to divorce from Catholic tradition, but that he would not blindly accept any unexamined truths that that tradition passed to him.[94] Similarly, in his Author's Note to *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Merton expresses the hope that it "does not contain a line that is new to Christian tradition."[95] On the one hand, such statements might seem like bland reassurances to his superiors and to the Trappist censors who closely examined all of his published work. In truth, however, Merton was especially cognizant of the dangers that his vocation as solitary author-monk would pose if he were completely detached from his community, the church, or its tradition.[96] By the time he wrote the materials that make up *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Merton was finding himself "more and more convinced that my job is to clarify something of the tradition that lives in me, and in which I live…"[97] Around the time *Conjectures* was being published, Merton would note in a letter to Marco Pallis that "I agree entirely that one must cling to one tradition and to its orthodoxy, at the risk of not understanding any tradition."[98] Just over two years later, Merton would answer with clear approbation a letter in which Amiya Chakravarty, then at Smith College, had written that "The young scholars here realize that the absolute

94. Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1982), xiv.
95. Merton, *New Seeds*, xiv.
96. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision*, 78.
97. Merton, *Conjectures*, 194.
98. Shannon and Bochen, 367.

rootedness of your faith makes you free to understand other faiths…Your books have the

rock-like inner strength which sustains the Abbey of Gethsemani, which can challenge

violence and untruth wherever they may appear."[99]

Of course, in agreeing with any assertion that he was a man of the Catholic

tradition, Merton was absolutely not perceiving that tradition as something set in stone, as

if it were merely a series of truths that were being preserved in an unchanging form from

one era to the next. To the contrary, Merton thought of the Catholic tradition as

something very much dynamic and alive. It is important to note here that, in *New Seeds of

Contemplation*, Merton saw fit to pair tradition with *revolution* in one of his chapters:

"The biggest paradox about the Church is that she is at the same time essentially

traditional and essentially revolutionary. But that is not as much of a paradox as it seems,

because Christian tradition, unlike all others, is a living and perpetual revolution."[100] The

Catholic tradition was, in Merton's thinking, a vast, communal response to the Good

News of Christ that could never be exhausted, never be finalized in this world. Merton

was no mere religious syncretist, nor did he eventually grow indifferent to the real

differences between religious traditions. Instead, he was firmly rooted in the monastic life

of Gethsemani Abbey, and notes frequently in various writings that his engagement with

the other was always "designed to help him deepen his own Christian monastic life."[101]

Thus, if one desires to classify Merton and his literary corpus, it is perhaps best to

describe him as a monastic theologian. Whatever truths he discovered, he sought them—

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99. Ibid, 381.
100. Merton, *New Seeds*, 142.
101. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision*, 119.

always—in the hope that they would further his spiritual journey. His intellectual

encounters and the writings they produced therefore reflect this emphasis on the

experiential. In *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Merton writes that he is not trying to

analyze Protestant thought as a Catholic so much as he was rather "a Catholic sharing the

Protestant experience—and other religious experiences as well."[102] Merton would write,

with no small amount of pride, that he was convinced that a Protestant would "have

greater security and clearer light if he were in my Church, but he does not see this as I do,

and for this there are deeper and more complex reasons than either he or I can

understand. Let us try to understand them, but meanwhile let us continue each in his own

way, seeking the light with all sincerity."[103] As a result, Merton could be highly critical of

that "vapid and careless friendliness that accepts everything by thinking of nothing."

Instead, he wanted to be the best Catholic dialogue partner that he could by affirming the

truth in his partners' worldviews.[104]

This position, and the willingness to engage the other to which it led, was a

natural outgrowth of Merton's theological reflections. Cunningham emphasizes Merton's

pneumatological perspective as a significant force behind his apostolate of friendship:

"He did very much accept…that the Spirit moves all over the world, and from quite

disparate experiences by quite diverse people one learns to deepen the contemplative

life."[105] Cunningham also notes, however, what this chapter would hold up as the key

theological insight behind Merton's apostolate of friendship: "(Merton) was aided in this

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102. Merton, *Conjectures*, 6.
103. Ibid, 90.
104. Ibid, 144.
105. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision*, 100-101.

quest by his conviction and experience that Christ as the Word, Christ as wisdom, permeated the entire cosmos."[106] This Christological position lies beneath much of Merton's desire for his apostolate to have a unifying impact on the peoples with whom he would dialogue. "In *Sophia*," Merton would write in *New Seeds*, "the highest wisdom-principle, all the greatness and majesty of the unknown that is in God and all that is rich and maternal in His creation are united inseparably…"[107] Just as Christ is the unification of God and man,[108] so too does Christ as Wisdom bestow a powerful, underlying unity to all the peoples of the world, regardless of their intellectual positions.

As intrigued as Merton may have ever been by non-Christian perspectives, he was adamant about what they were missing: "I may be interested in Oriental religions, etc., but there can be no obscuring the essential difference—this personal communion with Christ at the center and heart of all reality as a source of grace and life."[109] Merton would not agree that Christ was simply missing in other traditions, however: "Christ is the fulfillment of the latent desires and aspirations of all religions and all philosophies. One must transcend them all to come to Him: yet in Him one finds all that was good and true in every other religion."[110] It was Christ, then, that 'kept Merton Catholic.' It was also Christ that allowed Merton to venture into the apostolate of friendship, with all of the interreligious dialogue therein. Still further, though, it would still be Christ that Merton would find in the fruits of that dialogue. John Wu would notice this very dynamic in a

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106. Ibid, 63.
107. Merton, *New Seeds*, 141.
108. Ibid, 150.
109. Merton, *The Intimate Merton*, 250.
110. Shannon and Bochen, 186.

1961 letter to Merton, in which he observed that Merton was "so deeply Christian that you cannot help touching the vital springs of other religions."[111]

Forming the Apostolate of Friendship

In 1957, during what Cunningham rightly considers "a critical moment in Merton's intellectual and spiritual maturity,"[112] Merton wrote in his journal what may well have been something of a mission statement for his apostolate of friendship: "If I can unite in myself, in my own spiritual life, the thought of the East and the West…I will create in myself a reunion of the divided Church and from that unity in myself can come the exterior and visible unity of the Church…We must contain both (East and West) in ourselves, and transcend both in Christ."[113] If the world were to be transformed, Merton thought, he would himself need to be transformed first.

If his apostolate were to have any success on this monumental front, Merton would obviously have to work from within the context of his monastic life—and his monastic vows. He simply would not be able to match the globe-trotting tendencies of many of his friends and correspondents. Indeed, from the time Merton entered Gethsemani in 1941, he would not leave again until 1948, when he was gone for a grand total of six hours on a business trip on behalf of the Order. In the ten years after that, almost every time Merton would leave Gethsemani, it would be in order to go to a hospital for care due to one of Merton's many ailments. The only exceptions in this period were two trips to Louisville to obtain American citizenship, a trip to Ohio to scope

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111. Ibid, 374.
112. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision*, 55.
113. Mott, 306.

out a location for a new possible foundation, and a trip to Minnesota for a conference. Other monks were present with Merton on each of these excursions.[114]

By the late 1950s and into the 1960s, however, restrictions at Gethsemani had loosened considerably.[115] Merton's apostolate may well have never happened had they not. In March 1958, Merton would learn something significant about friendship from a sermon by one of his confreres. Merton would write that "my worst and inmost sickness is the despair of ever being able truly to love, because I despair of ever being worthy of love. But the way out is to be able to trust one's friends and thus accept in them acts and things which a sick mind grabs as evidence of lack of love—as pretexts for evading the obligation to love."[116]

It was perhaps only with this lesson on friendship—so reminiscent of Wadell's description of friendship as a school of charity—that Merton began assembling his apostolate of friendship in the 1950s. It was in this decade, as Cunningham describes, that Merton, "well before the openness deriving from the Second Vatican Council, began to formulate ideas and strategies that would not only allow him to enter into dialogue with other Christians from other traditions, but would also help him learn how to relate to other cultures and to religions that were not Christian."[117] Already in 1954 Merton would declare to fellow monk Jean Leclercq that "I do not like the idea of an isolated, and spectacular, apostolate."[118] Six years later, Merton would report to his longtime friend

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114. Ibid, 205-206.
115. Ibid, 255-256.
116. Ibid, 317.
117. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision*, 54.
118. Brother Patrick Hart, editor, *Survival or Prophecy?: The Letters of Thomas Merton & Jean Leclercq* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 56.

that "A very fine little hermitage has been built in a nice site; it is for the purpose of dialogue and conversations with Protestant ministers and professors, but it also serves for solitude and I have at least a limited permission to use it part-time."[119]

If by 1960 the apostolate of friendship was up and running, it was because of many developments over the course of the previous decade. For this chapter's purposes, it is important to highlight two. First, 1958 marked the beginning of Merton's relatively brief but deeply impactful—on both men, it seems—correspondence with Boris Pasternak. Though they would exchange only six letters, Merton discovered through these letters the kind of love that might be expressed and the kind of experiential bond that might be found linking people of widely divergent perspectives.

The second major factor was undoubtedly Merton's pitching of his idea for an apostolate of friendship to Pope John XXIII. Writing to Pope John only months after his famous experience at Fourth and Walnut, Merton had clearly come a long way in seeing that his might be a uniquely well-placed voice both for the purposes of communicating prophetically as well as seeking to strengthen the bonds of love between Catholics and others. By April 1960, Merton would similarly inform the Abbot General, Dom Gabriel Sortais, of his apostolate, though interestingly only after Pope John had written of his approval of Merton's vision and sent along several gifts to Gethsemani. Merton's apostolate of friendship was underway.

Merton the Letter-Writer

As famous a writer as Merton was in his day, and as popular as he remains even today, it must be remembered that he required a good deal of practice before his writing

119. Ibid, 89.

became all that good. Indeed, even on the cusp of his gargantuan success with *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Merton was no stranger to strong critiques of his work. Evelyn Waugh, who would edit the English edition of Merton's autobiography, visited Gethsemani Abbey in December 1948. Though Merton passes Waugh's recommendation for his future literary career off as something of a compliment in *The Sign of Jonas*, it is a backhanded compliment at best: "Evelyn Waugh, who came to visit Gethsemani in December…thought that it would be a good idea for me simply to put books aside and write serious letters, and to make an art of it."[120] Merton never gave up on books, but letter-writing would occupy a major place in Merton's life, up until his death. Once *The Seven Storey Mountain* was published, Merton enjoyed, or rather suffered from, an excess of fan mail. Happily for him, the vast majority of it could be answered with a simple card with a form response assuring the recipients of Merton's prayers.

Eventually, however, letter-writing became something more important for Merton, who seems to have always had a deep-seated yearning for human contact, despite his simultaneous thirst for greater solitude. It has been estimated that Merton had some 2100 correspondents.[121] While many of these can hardly be said to plumb the depths of Merton's best thinking, there is nevertheless an astounding range of people included in that number. "He wrote to poets; to heads of state; to popes, bishops, priests, and lay people; to monks, rabbis, and Zen masters; to Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, and Orthodox Christians; to Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, and Sufis; to literary agents and

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120. Merton, *Jonas*, 130.
121. Shannon and Bochen, viii.

publishers; to theologians and social activists; to old friends and young ones, too."[122]

While all of Merton's writings seem to be autobiographical to one degree or another,

reading his letters is a powerful means of getting to know the man, and seeing how his

thinking developed over time. Of course, there are plenty of unpolished thoughts in his

various letters, but the "flashes of intuition" they contain are nevertheless valuable for

seeing Merton's growth, be it spiritual, intellectual, or otherwise.[123] For Thomas Del

Prete, Merton's writing of letters was simply a part of his quest for becoming

authentically himself via learning as much as he could of the experiences of others:

"Letter writing enabled him to explore and support the exploration of the genuine and

personal in himself and others."[124]

     Even those letters which are among the more utilitarian of the Merton corpus

often reveal a great deal about him and about how he typically approached the realities of

friendship. Merton's lengthy correspondence with his literary agent, Naomi Burton

Stone, illustrates clearly Merton's willingness to share his vulnerabilities with those who

were close to him. "They became close friends. She acted as 'sister' and sometimes

'mother' to him. He valued her counsel, even the occasional scoldings she found it

necessary to give him. In a way he does with no other correspondent, he shared with her

his concerns, his needs, his fears."[125] Despite the incredible efforts Merton had been

pouring into writing since his childhood, he maintained throughout his life a certain

naiveté about the world of publishing. Burton Stone helped him navigate the murky

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122. Ibid, xiii.
123. Ibid, ix.
124. Del Prete, 163.
125. Shannon and Bochen, 65.

waters which he could not, especially from within the monastery. In a February 1947

letter, Merton acknowledged this dependence, when he writes "I hope all this does not

communicate my own mental fog to you, on whom I depend for clarification and clear

vision!"[126] In a May 1956 letter, Merton confided to her that, at least up to that point, he

did not consider himself a skilled communicator. "You don't know yet that for me

communication is not communication but a narcissistic gesture of some sort at which I

happen to be quite clever. Do you think that I have ever in my life communicated with

another person? Sacramentally I hope, but not in writing."[127] Presumably, by the time he

wrote his 'apostolate of friendship' letter to Pope John several years later, Merton felt

rather differently about his ability to converse meaningfully with other people.

Merton's teaching responsibilities within the monastery motivated him to keep up

a rigorous study of primary sources from within the Catholic (and especially the

monastic) tradition. Letters also afforded him an opportunity to deepen his knowledge of

the tradition. His nearly two decades-long exchange with Jean Leclercq was a major

source of insights and resources for Merton's lifelong quest for authentic renewal within

his Order.[128] Scholar of Christian mysticism Etta Gullick's correspondence with Merton

demonstrates a clear influence on Merton's monastic studies as well. In particular, it

seems that Gullick was instrumental in developing Merton's assessment of Meister

Eckhart. In June 1961 Merton would write her that while he liked Eckhart, he found that

"now and again (Eckhart) leaves one with a sense of being let down, when he goes

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126. Ibid, 66.
127. Ibid, 73.
128. Hart, xii.

beyond all bounds."[129] Forty-five days later, Merton would thank her effusively for sending him additional resources on Eckhart, at least one of which he considered "a book of enormous and providential importance…"[130] By April 1966, Merton would confess to her that he had "read a lot of Eckhart and am more and more convinced of his greatness…"[131]

Letters also allowed Merton to stay abreast of the Catholic tradition's cutting edge. Daniel Berrigan was a longtime friend (mainly through correspondence) whom Merton admired for his poetry but also for his tireless social justice activism. Some of Merton's hardest words for the Church were written in his letters to Rosemary Radford Reuther, who seems to have taught Merton something about the reality of Catholic feminism, among other things.[132] Letters were also the most effective means for Merton to remain connected to the Catholic peace movement during the Vietnam War. Exchanges with Dorothy Day and James Forest did much to keep Merton advised of any and all developments, even after Merton's Trappist superiors ordered him to cease writing on matters of peace. After Pope John XXIII promulgated his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, Merton wrote sarcastically to Forest that "The Pope is lucky he does not have to be approved by the censors of our Order, he would never get by them!"[133]

Perhaps the most significant of Merton's correspondences, though, was that with Boris Pasternak (mentioned briefly above). Merton clearly admired Pasternak a great deal, as Pasternak's courageous stand against Stalinism represented a clear prophetic

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129. Shannon and Bochen, 170.
130. Ibid, 171.
131. Ibid, 181.
132. Mott, 467.
133. Shannon and Bochen, 257.

witness along the lines which Merton himself would strive to follow.[134] Given Merton's earlier reservations, as seen in his letter to Naomi Burton Stone cited above, regarding his ability to communicate meaningfully through letters, his brief relationship with Pasternak appears to have marked a change. The other possibility, of course, is that the letters with Pasternak did not so much reflect a change as they themselves enabled that change to take place. Each man would send only three letters to the other, but there is a clear intensity in their contents. In August 1958, two months before his letter to Pope John, Merton would tell Pasternak that "With other writers I can share ideas, but you seem to communicate something deeper. It is as if we met on a deeper level of life on which individuals are not separate beings. In the language familiar to me as a Catholic monk, it is as if we were known to one another in God."[135] As far as Merton was concerned, conversing with Pasternak had taught him a great deal about the human experience, and perhaps even the human's task before God. "No, the great business of our time is this: for one man to find himself in another one who is on the other side of the world. Only by such contacts can there be peace, can the sacredness of life be preserved and developed and the image of God manifest itself in the world."[136]

Merton's epistolary engagement with the Islamic world provides an excellent example of precisely the kind of intellectual hospitality that makes Merton's apostolate of friendship feature so significantly in this dissertation. Admittedly, Merton's most substantial grappling with Islam—and Islamic mysticism in particular—was conducted

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134. Arcement, 80.
135. Shannon and Bochen, 105.
136. Ibid, 107.

with Louis Massignon, who was not a Muslim. Nevertheless, Merton learned a great deal from Massignon's work, and incorporated much of what he learned in his own writing. If Merton can be considered a spiritual master of the 20th century, it must be because of his insights regarding the quest for the true self. Some of the richest passages he wrote on this topic rest significantly on the notion of *le point vierge*, which Merton took from Massignon.[137] The expression, which Merton refrained from translating to English, refers to "At the center of our being…a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will. This little point…is the pure glory of God."[138]

Merton's friendship with Polish writer Czeslaw Milosz is also worthy of at least brief examination here. This exchange rivaled Merton's correspondence with Pasternak in its intensity, and it offers a clear glimpse of how critical Merton's very best of friends were willing to be of Merton. Michael Mott describes the strong impact Milosz had on Merton's reading choices and perhaps even on his literary taste.[139] Milosz would pull no punches if he thought something Merton had written to be of low quality. More interesting, though, is Milosz's accusation from 1960 that Merton was too naïve in his reflections on the natural world. "In other words," Merton interpreted the critique, "he thinks I am not Manichaean enough."[140] Mott interprets Milosz's complaint as an

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137. Ibid, 357.
138. Merton, *Conjectures*, 158.
139. Mott, 356.
140. Merton, *Conjectures*, 139.

expression of his own search for a spiritual guide.[141] Whether or not Mott is correct, it is obvious that Merton and Milosz did not always treat one another gently, to the enrichment of both.

This section has provided only a sketch of Merton's 'career' as a letter writer. It was primarily in the writing of letters that Merton's apostolate of friendship was carried out. As such, there are letters in which Merton appears quite vulnerable, and letters in which Merton's compassion reaches its fullest expression. Throughout his letters Merton demonstrates his grounding in the Catholic tradition, even as his awareness of the dynamism of that tradition allowed him to yearn constantly for a fuller, deeper understanding of his faith.

The Apostolate of Friendship in Person
Though Thomas Merton's apostolate of friendship was carried out primarily through the mail, Merton was able to meet with a fairly astounding number of his friends during the last decade of his life in particular. The number is astounding, of course, because of the nature of Trappist life generally, as well as Merton's aforementioned yearning for ever-greater solitude---tempered at all times, though it was, by his persistent need for human contact. Not surprisingly, his epistolary relationships often laid the groundwork for his encounters in person, which ended up being a significant part of Merton's apostolate in their own right. As was the case with Merton's letters, Merton's guests at Gethsemani—and the rare friend for whom he ventured forth from the monastery—represent a wide range of personalities and worldviews. For the purposes of this chapter, seeking as it does to survey Merton's development as a Catholic intellectual

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141. Mott, 357.

throughout his apostolate, it might be helpful to begin with one of the significant

friendships Merton would be able to grow; that with Zen scholar D.T. Suzuki.

It is not at all shocking that Merton would have been attracted to Zen. As

Cunningham points out, Zen's fundamental goal of "the penetration of the illusion to the

non-Self" fit neatly with Merton's understanding of the Christian contemplative life.

Zen's track record of emphasizing discipline without much along the lines of theological

dogma also made it easier for Merton to explore as an unfailingly devout Catholic.[142]

Merton initiated his correspondence with Suzuki in March 1959, with a letter sharing his

humble suppositions regarding Zen with Suzuki, who responded with a letter containing

his own suppositions regarding Christianity. Merton, who was never afraid of a rhetorical

flourish, would gush to Suzuki that "it seems to me that Zen is the very atmosphere of the

Gospels, and the Gospels are busting with it. It is the proper climate for any monk, no

matter what kind of monk he may be."[143] Simultaneously, though, it is interesting to note

how much energy Merton puts into his descriptions of Christian beliefs as he shared his

own tradition with Suzuki: "The Christ we seek is within us, in our inmost self, *is* our

inmost self, and yet infinitely transcends ourselves. We have to be 'found in Him:' and

yet be perfectly ourselves and free from the domination of any image of Him other than

Himself."[144] Ultimately, as has been seen in previously noted exchanges, what Merton

seems to have been after was a sense of common experience that might transcend the

apparent differences between Merton's Catholicism and Suzuki's Zen. Only one month

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142. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision*, 61.
143. Shannon and Bochen, 359.
144. Ibid, 361.

into their correspondence Merton shared with Suzuki his hunch that he had pinpointed such an experiential commonality: "With us, this stress on freedom, God's freedom…is the thing that corresponds to Zen in Christianity. The breakthrough that comes with the realization of what the finger of a koan is pointing to is like the breakthrough of the realization that a sacrament…is a finger pointing to the completely spontaneous Gift of Himself to us on the part of God…"[145]

In June 1964, Merton received word that Suzuki, then 94 years old, would be in New York, and would like to meet him. Rather unexpectedly, it seems, Merton was granted permission to make the trek from Abbot Fox. While Merton's journals reveal that he was very anxious about returning to a city that had figured so greatly in his pre-monastic life and about the possibility of being recognized, they also reveal that his conversations with Suzuki were well worth the risks. "These talks were very pleasant, profoundly important to me—to see and experience the fact that there really is a deep understanding between myself and this extraordinary, simple man whom I have been reading for about ten years with great attention. A sense of being 'situated' in this world."[146] As was the case with Pasternak, Suzuki was another whom Merton had come to know 'in God.' On the purely intellectual level, Merton's writings demonstrate the degree to which his engagement with Suzuki modified his thinking on non-Christian mysticism. Whereas he had once been entirely negative on the prospect of genuine mystical experience outside the church, he would eventually grant that Zen mystics may,

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145. Ibid, 362.
146. Merton, *The Intimate Merton*, 222.

despite their lack of refined theological language, have "experienced the presence of God in what they speak of as knowing the inmost self."[147]

The trip to New York was an exceptional moment in Merton's apostolate of friendship. In the vast majority of cases, if Merton was going to interact face to face with a person or with a group, it was going to take place at Gethsemani. Cunningham notes the consistency with which groups from various schools and seminaries made the trek to Kentucky in order to speak with Merton. Cunningham finds in his research that "the meetings had more of the quality of mutual exchange and common prayer in line with Merton's desire to further a dialogue of friendship."[148] Merton was no scholar, and his conferences with people outside his own community were not academic conferences. Serious intellectual exchange would take place, but it would always take place in a prayer-filled context where Merton was apparently always looking to forge friendships, find common ground, and make whatever spiritual advances were possible through a comparison of experiences. An especially illustrative example of the kind of dialogue for which Merton was best-suited is the 'Fellowship of Reconciliation' retreat at Gethsemani in November 1964. A truly ecumenical gathering in which numerous traditions were represented, Merton intentionally avoided a rigid agenda because "What we are seeking is not the formulation of a program, but a deepening of roots."[149]

Unfortunately, it is obviously impossible to know what trajectory Merton's apostolate of friendship would have followed had he lived longer. Merton could be

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147. Carr, 42-43.
148. Cunningham, *Monastic Vision*, 84.
149. Mott, 406.

unpredictable. For several months in 1966, Merton carried on a romantic relationship

with an engaged woman, a nurse he had met on one of many trips to Louisville for

medical attention. Merton's journals indicate the significant degree to which she (called

simply 'M' in the journals) dominated his attention for those months. He wrote her often

and met up with her frequently, also. These face-to-face meetings often required Merton

to take advantage of his friends, who generally seem to have been amused initially by the

romance between priest and nurse, but later aggravated or even fearful for Merton's well-

being.[150] The affair undoubtedly adds important complexity to any consideration of

Merton. At times, Merton suggests that there was something quite beneficial for his

spiritual development in this relationship. M, for instance, seems to have done something

to heal the wounds caused by the young Merton's inability to forge entirely meaningful

relationships with women: "In the light of M.'s love I realize for the first time how

deeply I was loved back in those days by girls whose names I have even forgotten."[151]

Once the relationship had begun to diminish, however, it seems that Merton was willing

to assess things apart from what he felt for her: "How evident it becomes now that this

whole thing with M. was, in fact, an attempt to escape the demands of my vocation…I

did not stand the test at all but allowed the whole essence to be questioned and tried to

change it. I could not see I was doing this."[152]

Thomas Merton was killed in Bangkok in December 1968 in an apparent accident

in which Merton was electrocuted after coming into contact with a faulty fan after

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150. See especially Mott, 435-454.

151. Merton, *The Intimate Merton*, 287.

152. Merton, *The Intimate Merton*, 303.

showering. Merton had, just before, addressed the monastic conference that had called

him to Thailand. Abbot Primate of the Benedictines Rembert Weakland administered

Last Rites to Merton, whose remains were returned to the United States in an American

bomber. He had traveled throughout the East, attending conferences, giving retreats, and

expanding his network of friends. Though there has been speculation that Merton's death

was a result of suicide or foul play, there appears to be no hard evidence to support such

claims. Others have suggested that Merton, had he lived, would have left the Trappists,

left Catholicism, and/or remained in the East. It is difficult to support such hypotheses,

given Merton's deep embrace of Catholic spirituality, and the degree to which his life at

Gethsemani clearly suited him—despite his seemingly constant expression of a desire to

be elsewhere. Merton was very much aware of his own shortcomings, and he was also

aware of the need he had for the rootedness provided for him at Gethsemani.

Preliminary Conclusions

Thomas Merton's apostolate of friendship was a rigorous undertaking that

allowed Merton to better plumb the depths of his own Catholic tradition even as he

represented that tradition to interlocutors of any and seemingly all intellectual homes.

The friendships Merton forged through his apostolate most certainly involved risk on his

part, especially given his awareness of his own inability to communicate meaningfully

with others for much of his own life. Nevertheless, Merton intentionally created the space

necessary to help transform people with worldviews quite different from his own to

become friends. Whether Merton was the one doing the reaching out, or if he was the one

being reached out to, the basic underlying ingredient of his hospitality was an abundance

of goodwill. Regardless of a person's intellectual perspective, Merton had a clear gift for welcoming the other into dialogue. Merton's intentionality on this front was no doubt aided considerably by his deep sense of his almost unique vocation as a Trappist monk sharing his contemplation with the rest of the world, to the enrichment of both that world and his own monastic spirituality. Thomas Merton saw his apostolate of friendship as needing to avoid both the temptation to engage in a simplistic apologetics as well as the temptation to collapse into an unthinking acceptance of all things. The Catholicism of Thomas Merton in *The Seven Storey Mountain* is therefore noticeably different than that of the man who wrote, say, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*. In his autobiography, Merton saw his embrace of Catholicism as a summit that he had reached once and for all. By the time he wrote *Conjectures*, Merton seems no less enthralled with his Catholic worldview, but he had a profoundly different understanding of how his faith oriented him to the world. *Conjectures*, as a result, gives full expression to Merton's sense that he needed to share the riches of his contemplative Catholic perspective with the world around him. That world, as Merton could see with the clarity of his increasing social consciousness, needed Catholic insights. What Merton had also come to see, though, was that his Catholic perspective had benefitted from—and would probably continue to benefit—from the insights of his various friends. The friendships he maintained and the friendships he forged during his first decade in monastic life drew him out of any narrow conception of himself as monk that he may have once entertained for himself. His friends, similarly, could come to expect that they would be brought into serious engagement with the riches of Merton's Catholic tradition.

Merton's great spiritual insight regarding the nature of the true self was an additional boon to his apostolate of friendship. As Merton grappled with the questions and challenges posed to him through letters and face to face encounters, he endeavored to experience more than a straightforward intellectual refinement. On top of that, he desired to have any attachment within him to something other than God to be burned away. His immersion in the apostolate of friendship, on top of his normal monastic lifestyle, forced him to remain oriented to the other. Just as in Wadell's conception of friendship as a school of charity, Merton's relationships with people both within and far away from Gethsemani trained him to be more hospitable, even as his hospitality enabled him to be a better friend.

Obviously, this chapter represents only a brief survey of Merton's apostolate. Much more correspondence could be mentioned, and many more meetings at Gethsemani as well. This chapter has tried to zero in on a few notable examples that demonstrate the kinds of dialogue Merton engaged in while also showing the manner in which these exchanges broadened his horizons both spiritually and intellectually. Above all else, it is crucial for the remainder of the dissertation that this chapter succeeded in showing that Merton's intellectual hospitality—and subsequent intellectual friendship, did not occur in spite of his Catholic faith, but because of it. Were it not for Merton's particular understanding of solitude, contemplation, and Christology, it is clear that the apostolate of friendship would not have happened. For Catholic institutions of higher learning that strive to be both authentically Catholic and true universities, Merton's example intellectual hospitality is a potent one. As a convert who became a Trappist who became

a public intellectual, Merton's path of Christian discipleship was by no means a common one. Nevertheless, the particularity of Merton's outlook *as a Catholic* was his very doorway into hospitable dialogue with the rest of the world. The Merton corpus is a gigantic testament to the university's responsibility to invite students into and strengthen their grasp of a tradition which might serve as their intellectual home. Important decisions regarding things like possible changes to core curricula and invitations to guest speakers must be seen in light of that responsibility.

Chapter 4: Bernard Lonergan and the Hospitality of Cognition

Introduction

That Thomas Merton represents an excellent exemplar of the kind of intellectual hospitality of which a Catholic thinker might be capable will hardly come as a surprise to anyone at least somewhat familiar with his life and/or works. Indeed, Merton's corpus could be used to powerful effect by any university trying to inspire faculty or students to greater heights of hospitality in their own work. And, though it would be difficult to replicate the many characteristics and strengths which contributed to Merton's hospitality, there are no doubt intellectuals on Catholic campuses who can match at least some of them. As a sporadic thinker, however, Merton does not necessarily provide a clear blueprint or method to follow.

As such, this chapter is going to attempt a survey of a very different kind of Catholic intellectual, who was anything but sporadic. Indeed, Bernard Lonergan was so methodical a scholar that he did, quite literally, write the book on method. Unlike Merton, Lonergan will give a clear path for an individual scholar to follow in the interest of being a more hospitable thinker who is better able to befriend the intellectual other. As important as this is in itself, perhaps more significant is that Lonergan's work will also suggest a path that universities might follow in the interest of making their entire curricula a training in hospitality. Historically, the Catholic tradition has demonstrated a fundamental orientation to hospitality in its striving for a synthesis of all knowledge. What better way to make room for another philosophy or school of thought than to bring

it into an all-encompassing engagement with the best of what Catholic thought has to offer? How better to make friends with the other than to give them the gift of our best while simultaneously seeking to incorporate any and all truth that they have to offer in return?

The ability of Catholic university curricula to offer students an integrated education which enables them to synthesize all of what they learn into a coherent worldview has been strained over the past half a century. The fragmentation so characteristic of contemporary thought may well pose one of the gravest threats to the Catholic identity of a Catholic university. Alasdair MacIntyre argues that "the distinctive calling of the American Catholic university" should be "to challenge its secular counterparts by recovering both for them and for itself a less fragmented conception of what an education beyond high school should be…"[1] After lamenting the nature in which such fragmentation is able to perpetuate itself throughout academe, MacIntyre complains that while "Each part of the curriculum is someone's responsibility," there does not seem to be anyone who "has a responsibility for making the connections between the parts."[2] Bernard Lonergan has also been critical of fragmentation in the Academy, and has questioned whether there is, even, someone capable of doing the connecting. Too much specialization, in Lonergan's estimation, "very easily results in a notion of education as the information belt supplying students with a great number of pieces and leaving to them the task of putting together what the professors cannot put together themselves."[3]

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1. Alasdair C. MacIntyre, "The End of Education: The Fragmentation of the American University," *Commonweal* (October 20, 2006).

2. Ibid.

3. Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 17.

That such fragmentation could hinder Catholic higher education as much as it has secular higher education would likely have come as a shock to those schooled in Catholic institutions in the decades immediately prior to the Second Vatican Council. The standard Catholic university education was built in no small part upon the foundation provided by the neo-Scholastic synthesis that resulted from a revival of Thomistic thought toward the end of the 19th century. Though this synthesis, as will be seen, was often enough criticized as being a peculiarly parochial function of an insular Catholic Academy, the kind of integration it aspired to can rightly be seen as indicative of an instinct for intellectual hospitality. Of course, this instinct can, and perhaps regularly was, hijacked for purposes rather more triumphalist than hospitable. Regardless, despite its once commanding presence within Catholic universities, the synthesis would not survive the 1960's. Ever since, the search has been on for a suitable replacement that might define a thoroughly Catholic education in the way that Thomistic thinking once did. This chapter will contend that the thinking of Bernard Lonergan is uniquely suitable for a timely renewal of education in the Catholic intellectual tradition, with Lonergan's understanding of human cognition serving as the basis for a new method capable of integrating a curriculum. The goal is to describe the potential for hospitality latent in the older, Thomistic school of thought characterized by Aquinas himself, and show how Lonergan's thought might ground a similarly hospitable synthesis of knowledge across the disciplines. It is important to note that this chapter is not advocating a reinstitution of the old neo-Scholastic synthesis. This chapter is also not trying to consider neo-Scholasticism from a vantage point characterized by naiveté, or misplaced nostalgia. The

shortcomings of the neo-Scholastic synthesis, and the manner in which it was implemented, are readily acknowledged.

In its contention for a greater application of Lonergan's thinking to Catholic higher education, this chapter is in good company. John C. Haughey, SJ posits that Lonergan's work "has not been sufficiently plumbed to assist in answering the question about what it means to be educated in light of the Catholic intellectual tradition."[4] The post-Vatican II Church (and the universities which serve it) cannot thrive through a simple reversion to the old neo-Scholastic synthesis. This is, somewhat ironically, illustrated clearly in Pope Paul VI's proposal of Aquinas as "a model to theologians, not only because of the profundity of his doctrine, but also because of his openness to the world and his respect for truth from whatever source."[5] In his own time, Aquinas was capable of providing an integrated philosophical system precisely because his thought was neither parochial nor reactionary. For Lonergan, the vitality breathed into the Church by the Council—if it is to prove enduring—"requires a genuine assimilation of what is new in modern science, scholarship, philosophy, and theology. It requires the careful preservation of what is still valid in the older traditions."[6] Much of Lonergan's work can be characterized as a striving for this kind of assimilation.

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4. John C. Haughey, SJ, *Where is Knowing Going? The Horizons of the Knowing Subject* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2009), xi.

5. Romanus Cessario, OP, *A Short History of Thomism* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 33.

6. Michael McCarthy, "Toward a Catholic Christianity: A Personal Narrative," in *In Search of the Whole*, ed. John C. Haughey, SJ (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2011), 155.

Bernard Lonergan

It is often noticed that seemingly everything Thomas Merton ever wrote was fundamentally autobiographical in nature. While the same may well be true of any writer, the reader of Lonergan can easily lose track of the man behind the method. Despite that, or perhaps because of it, it is important to trace, briefly, something of Lonergan's biography in order to understand how his particular brand of intellectual hospitality came about. As was the case with Merton, Lonergan's path included a whole series of important people, books, and ideas, that would all contribute something to the thought of this impressively capacious thinker.

Bernard Lonergan was born in December 1904 in Quebec, to a hardworking father and a pious mother. After attending a local, ungraded elementary school, Lonergan attended a Jesuit-run high school in Montreal. Receiving a classical education at this boarding school, Lonergan was afforded the opportunity to skip grades because of his already apparent academic gifts.[7] It was also during his time in high school that Lonergan discerned a vocation to the priesthood, choosing specifically to enter the Jesuit novitiate in Ontario in 1922. After the novitiate was completed, Lonergan was sent in 1926 to study philosophy at Heythrop College in England. Later on, Lonergan would recall that "My early education, up to about the age of 21 was in a classicist tradition."[8] Denied the ability to study method at Heythrop and at the University of London where he was enrolled as an external student, Lonergan studied the classics but also mathematics and logic. Additionally, it was at this point that Lonergan was to receive his formal

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7. Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 5.

8. Ibid, 8.

introduction to philosophy, which would be, as was customary of the time, by way of the

neo-Scholastic system that continued to dominate Catholic education and religious

formation.

Always a voracious reader, Lonergan also received his first exposure to the

writings of John Henry Newman while at Heythrop. Timothy Hanchin posits that it was

from Newman (as well as Augustine) that Lonergan received "an enduring insight that

would direct his life's work: the starting point for philosophy should be an account of

concrete, lived experience rather than metaphysics."[9] Liddy, relatedly, refers to Newman

as "The major influence on Lonergan's thought during his early years…"[10] Some of

Newman's impact on Lonergan was no doubt attributable to Newman's style: "Newman

evidenced an uncanny ability to enter into the minds and views of his opponents. Before

refuting liberal views he always insisted on presenting them with their full force."

Lonergan would later assert that Newman "encouraged me to look difficulties squarely in

the eye, while not letting them interfere with my vocation or my faith."[11]

Some of the impact, however, was surely due to the specific content of Newman's

writings as well. In the book which was to be a favorite of Lonergan's, *Grammar of

Assent,* the core issue "was the nature of the human mind. What does it mean to know?"[12]

For the future author of *Insight*, this was a topic of considerable interest. In Liddy's

estimation, echoing Hanchin, it was Newman's method that would have the most

enduring influence on Lonergan: "the focus on the concrete, the interior, the facts of

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9. Timothy M. Hanchin, "A Trinitarian Vision of Education: Bernard Lonergan's Hermeneutics of Friendship and a Catholic University for Our Time" (PhD dissertation, Boston College, 2015), 44-45.
10. Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 16.
11. Ibid, 18, 19.
12. Ibid, 19.

consciousness, as of primary importance, as distinct from what philosophers or scientists 'say' about knowledge. This principle became in Lonergan's writings the notion of self-appropriation. It is on the basis of our knowledge and appropriation of our own mental processes that we…come to express…who we are as human beings."[13]

Lonergan would continue to discover other influences as he pursued his studies and pursued his expanded awareness of the centrality of method. In 1930, Lonergan read J.A. Stewart's *Plato's Doctrine of Ideas*. Stewart's interpretation of Plato would begin to propel Lonergan away from the nominalism which had been attractive to him for some years. In particular, it seems that Plato led Lonergan to what would be a lifelong conviction of the significance of understanding to the process of human knowing. Having struggled with *concepts*, Lonergan found in Plato that "Concepts then are rooted in 'grasping the intelligible in the sensible,' as Lonergan would later put it."[14]

Augustine, too, would prove a key influence in Lonergan's ongoing intellectual formation. The great Bishop of Hippo's influence would prove to be multi-faceted for Lonergan both in light of what Augustine's own thought offered him, but also because it facilitated Lonergan's turning of attention to the work of both Aristotle and Aquinas. Augustine's profound awareness of the many twists and turns of his lifelong search for truth indicated a "commitment to introspection, to coming to terms with the facts of his own consciousness and the inevitability of those facts."[15] Lonergan would later posit that Augustine "knows more about consciousness than Thomas does," but he simply lacked

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13. Ibid, 39.
14. Ibid, 45.
15. Ibid, 72.

the technical vocabulary to express what he knew.[16] Regardless, Augustine's experience

of conversion—not only religious but intellectual—would intrigue Lonergan so much

that he would, in *Insight*, use "Augustine's change of mind in 386 as a paradigm on the

transformation that he is seeking to facilitate in the minds of 'sufficiently cultured'

readers of the twentieth century."[17]

In 1935, Lonergan would write that "The intelligibility of reality itself needs an

explanation. The sole explanation is that there is an ultimate identity of intelligence and

reality…"[18] This burgeoning conviction of realism would eventually lead Lonergan to a

re-assessment of the scholasticism with which he had not been much impressed as a

younger man. Lonergan required a philosophical framework that was attentive to the

workings of human cognition as he understood them, and his expanding engagement

through the mid-1930's with Thomas Aquinas would give him such a framework. As

Hanchin points out, "In Aquinas, Lonergan found not only a model of unceasing inquiry

similar to his admired Newman and Augustine, but also a more profound account of the

workings of the human mind."[19] By that point, Lonergan was already convinced of the

centrality of understanding, but it would be Lonergan's reading and reviewing a

dissertation by one of this professors that would turn him on to another decisive step in

knowing: judgment. Lonergan would write in his review that his professor, Leo W.

Keeler, "especially tries to show that for St. Thomas the apprehension of a nexus is one

thing, the act of assent is another; the former dwelling in the purely intelligible world, the

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16. Ibid, 73.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid, 82.
19. Hanchin, 45.

latter affirming the objective existence of the intellectual content." It was from this distinction, Lonergan believed, that it could "be deduced that we err, not so much because we apprehend false things, but because we are too precipitous in assenting."[20]

A fellow student in Rome had introduced Lonergan to the work of one of his own former professors, Joseph Maréchal of Leuven. Maréchal was fearless in his appropriation of Aquinas and his application of Thomism to the problems of contemporary philosophy. He held that "a comprehensive and modern critique of knowledge revealed the objective dynamism of human knowledge, culminating in objective judgments of existence." The Catholic, then, should fear nothing of engaging in such a critique of knowledge, because it could "arrive at the basic Aristotelian and Thomistic metaphysical positions."[21] Lonergan learned from Maréchal that human knowledge functions as a process of "acts of experiencing, understanding, and judging to limited knowledge of reality and then the cycle of knowing begins to fill out perspectives or to rise to higher viewpoints."[22] Through his engagement (which appears to have been mainly through conversation with his classmate in Rome) with Maréchal, Lonergan was primed for a deep dive into the mind of Aquinas. In order to contextualize Lonergan's engagement with Aquinas, it is necessary to give a lengthy overview of Thomism in both medieval and modern times. Only then can Lonergan's own Thomistic orientation be understood, and only then will it be clear what intellectual hospitality might have looked

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20. Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 99.
21. Ibid, 102.
22. Ibid, 104.

like to Catholic intellectuals in the first half of the 20th century compared to those of the latter half.

The Common Ground of Catholic Higher Education

The reintroduction of Aristotelian philosophy into the West during the Crusades set into motion a chain reaction which would alter Western Christianity forever afterward. With Augustine continuing to dominate Catholic thought, universities (Paris, notably) were necessarily going to become battlegrounds between traditionally Christian and Aristotelian principles. Alasdair MacIntyre gives a concise overview of the showdown: "Where Aristotle asserted the eternity of the world, Christianity assigns to it a beginning at the moment of creation; where Aristotle ruled out the separate immaterial existence of the soul, and where Averroes' interpretation of the *De Anima*, although it left room for the resurrection of the dead, reinforced the denial of any survival of the soul apart from the body, Christianity was committed to belief in such survival."[23] Compounded by differing perspectives (between Aristotle and Augustine) on the question how people come to know, the understanding of truth, and the relation between error and morality, it is no surprise that Aristotelian philosophy was a matter of grave concern to many churchmen of the time.

What was needed, therefore, was a concerted effort to engage, hospitably, with Aristotelian thought. That Aquinas 'baptized' Aristotle has become something of a truism. What he truly accomplished, however, is better understood as a synthesis of Augustinian and Aristotelian thought. "He judged Augustinianism by its standards; he

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23. Linda C. Kondrick, "Thomism and Science Education: History Informs a Modern Debate," *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 48, 2 (August 2008), 207.

judged Aristotelianism by its standards. He integrated the two in a way that allowed a compromise to be brokered between the two camps that were entrenched in their own traditions."[24] Aquinas's notion of the human being as a whole composed of both body and soul helped him overcome what he found to be a major shortcoming in Augustine's thought. As MacIntyre summarizes, in Aquinas "an Aristotelian account of nature…was not merely harmonized with an Augustinian supernatural theology but shown to require it for its completion, if the universe is to be intelligible in the way in which parts relate to wholes."[25]

Just as Aquinas engaged Augustine critically, he did the same with Aristotle. Rachel Goodrich contends that the originality of Aquinas "consists partly in the fact that as a metaphysician he adopts an 'existentialist' as distinct from an 'essentialist' approach." While both Aristotle and Plato perceived *essence* as the core of reality (arguing that beings consisted of form and matter), Aquinas went further and affirmed "an act-of being which is prior to essence and constitutes the living actuality of each existent thing."[26] In noting this same development in Aquinas's thought, Lonergan asserts that Thomas "was going beyond Aristotle in a profound and radical fashion."[27]

Readers of Aquinas will soon realize, though, the extent of what he accomplished in crafting a synthesis of Aristotle and Christianity: Aquinas incorporated ideas from a wide range of sources. Etienne Gilson refers to the "extreme diversity" of his sources: "St. Thomas borrows now from Aristotle, now from Avicenna, and now from St. John

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24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Rachel M. Goodrich, "Neo-Thomism and Education," *British Journal of Education Studies* 7, 1 (November 1958), 27, 28.
27. Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 94.

Damascene or St. Augustine. No matter how eclectic we suppose him to be, he cannot

have collected thoughts so infinitely varied without modifying them considerably."[28]

Aquinas, it seems, simply had a mind with a gift for drawing, hospitably, multiple

streams of thought together. But what, then, did this synthesis produce? What *is*

Thomism?

There has been, historically, no small difficulty in answering precisely that

question. Part of that difficulty is a result of how prolific Aquinas was. Over the course of

his career Aquinas produced "theological syntheses, disputed questions, biblical

commentaries, commentaries on Aristotle, commentaries on other classical works

commonly in use at medieval universities, polemical writings, treatises on specific

subjects, letters and requests for expert opinions on particular issues, liturgical works,

sermons, and prayers."[29] What do these diverse writings suggest, in sum? For Romanus

Cessario, OP,Thomism is "a theological and philosophical movement that begins in the

thirteenth century, (and) embodies a systematic attempt to understand and develop the

basic principles and conclusions of St. Thomas Aquinas in order to relate them to the

problems and needs of each generation."[30]

This is the work of the Thomist, then, just as synthesis was once the work of

Thomas himself. Theology, for Aquinas, was all about "ordering truths to the one

Truth…"[31] For Thomas, the universe in its totality was best understood as a hierarchy,

and his task as a philosopher was "to place each class of beings in its proper grade. To do

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28. Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 77.
29. Cessario, 10.
30. Ibid, 13-14.
31. Ibid, 9.

this, one principle of universal value must always be kept in mind: that the greater or less can only be appraised and classified in relation to the maximum, the relative in relation to the absolute."[32] There can be no being without God, in Aquinas's system. "There is no being save the divine being in which all creatures participate; and creatures only differ from one another by reason of their greater or lesser degree of participation in the divine being."[33]

The thinking of Thomas Aquinas can rightly be described as a kind of realism. Thomas, and the Thomists who follow him, "defend the reality of creation, and hold the conviction that from the visible things of the universe the human mind can know the existence of God."[34] The human mind is capable of true perception of the universe, just as the human mind is capable of reasoning its way toward knowledge of humanity's true end: God. Ultimately, then, there can be for Thomas no divergence between revelation and reason: they both come from God. Just as faith and reason cannot contradict one another, however, either one cannot proceed without the other: "They can neither contradict each other nor ignore each other nor be confused with each other. In vain will reason justify faith. It can never transform it into reason. The moment faith gives up authority for proof, it ceases to believe and begins to know. And in vain would faith move reason from without or beguile it from within. Reason can never cease to be itself."[35] Should reason begin to accept anything other than a definitive proof, it will yield at once to faith. The two are utterly distinct, then, but necessarily complementary. This

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32. Gilson, 360.
33. Ibid.
34. Cessario, 23.
35. Gilson, 23.

complementarity no doubt contributes to Thomism's attractiveness as a philosophy around which to build a university education. Before that would happen in the American context, however, Thomistic thought would need to regain the momentum it had lost by the end of the eighteenth century.

Pope Leo XIII's 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris* would prove to be the definitive document behind the revival of Thomistic thought. Leo was not any less troubled than his predecessor, Pius IX, by the intellectual currents of the time. Leo felt that anyone considering the problems facing the Church (and the world) "must come to the conclusion that a fruitful cause of the evils…lies in this: that false conclusions concerning divine and human things, which originated in the schools of philosophy have now crept into all the orders of the State, and have been accepted by the common consent of the masses."[36] Just as Thomas had become the master of original Scholasticism by being the great synthesizer he was, so too would neo-Scholasticism allow the Church to discern the good from the bad in contemporary thought. Rather than fearlessly engaging with contemporary philosophy, however, Leo's revival of Thomistic thought would be oriented to a sifting of wheat—what the Church already had—from the chaff—what the world had to offer.

Leo's successors would continue to carry the neo-Scholastic torch. For example, Gleason recounts how, shortly before his death in 1914, Pope Pius X "made it clear that when he had earlier said St. Thomas was to be studied 'particularly,' he really meant

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36. Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, August 4, 1879, 2, http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris.html.

'exclusively.'"[37] This sentiment, especially coming from a reigning Pope, definitely suggests something of a reactionary nature to the neo-Scholastic project. Rather than a system of thought through which the Church might seek to confidently welcome an engagement with outside perspectives, neo-Scholasticism began to be treated as a kind of pinnacle, suggesting that Catholic thought was something that had already reached an accomplished gold standard. Rather than the courageously expansive hospitality of Aquinas, neo-Scholasticism would approach the other not with a spirit of seeking truth wherever it might be found, but rather with the bearing of one convinced of having already fleshed out the totality of truth. The *Code of Canon Law*, revised in 1917, similarly "commended to professors of philosophy and theology the methods, doctrine, and principles of…Thomas Aquinas." Benedict XV would lend his support to the quasi-official status of neo-Scholasticism by referring to it as "the preferred doctrine of the Church."[38]

The revival would not make its most dramatic ascent until the 1920's. On the heels of the first World War, Enlightenment-style optimism was no longer in vogue. "The nineteenth century's confidence in reason, optimism about human perfectibility, and belief in progress…were utterly shattered by the cataclysmic shock of the Great War and the outbursts of revolutionary fury that accompanied and followed it."[39] When neo-Scholasticism came to dominate Catholic higher education, it likely did as much to distinguish a Catholic university education as did the presence of priests and vowed

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37. Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995),* 112.
38. Cessario, 27.
39. Gleason, 114.

religious staffing university faculties. After all, this school of thought "reasserted the capacity of reason to comprehend reality, the unity and harmony of the world…(and) It provided Catholic intellectuals with an ideology that expressed the intelligibility of the world and the Catholic community's optimism and Americanism…" All this, of course, at a time when "many prominent American intellectuals had denied that intelligibility and become disillusioned…"[40]

With an optimistic view of human nature and the capabilities of reason, neo-Scholasticism "criticized the age for its skepticism, irrationalism, disillusionment, individualistic capitalism, and totalitarian socialism."[41] The revival of Thomistic thought gave a philosophical basis for an obviously-Catholic faith commitment that impacted the full range of human endeavors: social, political, economic, and cultural. Catholic scholars of the time were well-equipped, then, to confidently engage the world around them. Such confidence is entirely conducive to intellectual hospitality as it encourages the scholar to undertake the engagement. Not surprisingly, neo-Scholasticism therefore had ramifications that extended well beyond the classroom. Luca Sandona, for instance, has described the impact of a Thomistic, natural law approach to economics, especially after the Second World War: "In particular, the economic growth of Germany and Italy was related to the identification of social justice as the main aim of public policy. The application of (natural law approach) ideas of equal opportunity and the recognition of individual effort improved individual and societal well-being and reduced inequalities in

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40. Patrick W. Carey, *American Catholic Religious Thought: The Shaping of a Theological and Social Tradition* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004), 81.
41. Ibid, 82.

income distribution."[42] Patrick Carey demonstrates the broad influence of neo-Scholasticism strictly within the American context, pointing out that it "supplied the natural law tradition for John Ryan's social ethics; it also provided the intellectual foundations for John Courtney Murray's understanding of church-state relations and for Gustave Weigel's approach to Christian unity."[43] Undoubtedly, in a relatively short span of time Thomistic thought had re-emerged in a big way, and neo-Scholasticism had come to dominate Catholic thinking, and therefore Catholic higher education as well

Philip Gleason rightly takes to task any commentators willing to overlook the intellectual seriousness of the neo-Scholastic revival. It was far more than simple "party-line philosophizing." As Gleason argues, "It was, in fact, a very large and important school which at its height supported 25 specialized philosophical journals throughout the world and engaged the commitment of thinkers the quality of whose work makes it impossible to dismiss the whole phenomenon…"[44] Indeed, there is no reason to reject out of hand the educational experience on the student side, either. Alice Gallin lauds the 1953 introduction of a new curricular program at the Catholic University of America, called "Theology, Philosophy, and History as Integrating Disciplines in the Catholic College of Liberal Arts." This program sought to use those three disciplines as a means of tying the content of all coursework together for the students, proudly demonstrating the unity of knowledge that neo-Scholastic thinking continued to defend. Reflecting on the success of

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42. Luca Sandona, "Once Upon a Time: the neo-Thomist Natural Law Approach to Social Economics," *International Journal of Social Economics* 40, 9 (2013), 803. For an overview of Lonergan's own work on economics, see Frederick Lawrence, "Between Capitalism and Marxism: Introducing Lonergan's Economics," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 63, 4 (2007), 941-959.

43. Carey, 87.

44. Gleason, 116.

this program (and others that it spawned at various Catholic schools), Gallin suggests that "Seriously, this may well have been the best intellectual experience we ever offered our students in Catholic colleges."[45] Such a program, reflecting the neo-Scholastic confidence regarding the ultimate harmony of all truth, is a clear example of the old synthesis's ability to encourage intellectual hospitality. Regardless of a given student's predilection for one subject area over the other, the curriculum itself was structured in such a way as to encourage the student to be open to connecting lessons from one discipline to all the others. The honeymoon between Catholic higher education and neo-Scholasticism, however, was not to last.

The collapse of the neo-Scholastic synthesis by the end of the 1960's would drastically alter the landscape of Catholic higher education. Indeed, it is one of the major assumptions of this chapter that Catholic higher education has still not entirely 'recovered.' Still, one need not look too hard to find clear reasons for the dissolution of the philosophical system that had given a Catholic university education its focus and distinctiveness. Already at the beginning of the embrace of neo-Scholasticism by Catholic universities in the 1920's there was wide-ranging skepticism (despite the impressive academic output of Thomists noted above) regarding its worth as the backbone of a modern university curriculum. Outsiders to Catholic higher education often had "the impression of (its) being a school of philosophy accepted purely out of obedience…" As Gleason tellingly asserts, "in many cases that impression was fully

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45. Alice Gallin, O.S.U, "Theology in the Liberal Arts Curriculum of a Catholic College or University," in *Catholic Theology in the University: Source of Wholeness*, ed. Virginia M. Shaddy, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998),107.

justified."[46] While instruction in neo-Scholastic philosophy may have taught over a

generation of Catholic university students how to think, there is good reason to suspect,

also, that its prevalence may have stunted the growth of American Catholicism's overall

academic profile. For some Thomists, the synthesis represented something of a pinnacle

of human thought. It did not represent simply the best that humanity *had done*; it was the

best that humanity *could do*. There is little room for intellectual hospitality in such a

mindset. As a result, there was precious little authentic dialogue between neo-

Scholasticism and the other intellectual currents of the time, such as pragmatism,

idealism, and neo-orthodoxy.[47] Even if the neo-Scholastic synthesis had survived, it is

reasonable to suppose that it would have nevertheless guaranteed Catholic universities a

secondary status among the nation's institutions of higher learning.[48]

In his assessment of the neo-Scholastic collapse, Liddy points to the dual specter

of academic specialization and fragmentation that had already begun to loom in the

middle of the century. Liddy suggests that "a battle emerged at Catholic universities

between those advocating an overarching integrating vision that tended to be 'imposed

from on high' and…those eager to embrace the products of modernity: individual

autonomous departments with scholarly competence in specialized disciplines." Within a

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46. Gleason, 116.

47. Carey, 86.

48. The evolution of theology on Catholic university campuses beyond neo-Scholasticism was a more complex process than this dissertation can cover in full detail. Even as early as the 1920's there were indications that an exclusively Thomistic curriculum would not suffice forever. Efforts to include studies of Scripture, Patristics, history, and literature in the study of theology, coupled with the growing desire to elevate theology's status as an academic discipline, ensured that neo-Scholasticism's collapse was not purely a result of forces outside of Catholic theology departments, but also forces within. For a fascinating survey of the early efforts to bolster theology curricula at Catholic colleges, see Sandra Yocum Mize, *Joining the Revolution in Theology: The College Theology Society, 1954-2004* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 31-61.

short span of time, Liddy contends, "the church's massive commitment to neo-Scholasticism could not hold its own. (It) could not win the support of the powerful specialized departments of the universities to be their integrating language."[49] Had neo-Scholasticism been able to oppose growing academic specialization with a united front, it may have been a fair fight. No such unity existed, however, which "in itself was bound to unsettle its curricular function, for it was not unitary to start with…how could something called 'Neoscholasticism' serve to integrate and synthesize Catholic liberal arts education?"[50]

In addition to the tensions between different neo-Scholastic schools of thought, Gleason highlights two additional factors leading to the collapse of the synthesis. First, neo-Scholasticism was crushed, in a sense, by its own weight: "No form of philosophy taught on such a scale could escape being vulgarized in the process, especially if, as in this case, the aim was to teach it as a comprehensive system."[51] With students required to take ample courses in philosophy at Catholic schools throughout the country, it cannot be surprising that some teachers assigned to these courses simply were not as effective as others. Additionally, the prominent papal role in the neo-Scholastic renewal described above did not make the synthesis more palatable to those outside Catholic universities. Especially after something of an ecclesiological paradigm shift during Vatican II, papal endorsements would hardly be enough to ensure neo-Scholasticism's popularity even among Catholics at Catholic institutions. "Thomism was…well on its way to being

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49. Richard M. Liddy, "Can Lonergan Replace Aquinas?" *Commonweal* (June 14, 1996).
50. Gleason, 300.
51. Ibid, 299.

dismissed by Catholics themselves as 'official ideology,' the teaching of which amounted

to little more than 'indoctrination in the party line.'"[52]

At this point it may be worth pausing briefly to ask, why is any of this talk of a

neo-Scholastic collapse important? If it was, ultimately, overwhelmed by specialization,

is it not better to assume that the right side won? To whom should this talk of

fragmentation matter? For MacIntyre, the answer is as sweeping as it is straightforward.

"It should matter to anyone who thinks it important what conception of human nature and

the human condition students have arrived at by the time they enter the adult

workplace—and therefore to any Catholic. For each of the academic disciplines teaches

us something significant about some aspect of human nature and the human condition."[53]

A synthesis of knowledge, characterized in part by hospitality between the disciplines,

allows the insights of each department to enrich the university's overall narrative of what

it means to be human. Whatever its failings, the neo-Scholastic synthesis allowed for

such an appropriation of insights across the curriculum. In order to work toward a new

means of integrating knowledge, Liddy suggests that Catholic universities require "a

specifically philosophical vision strong enough to build bridges between faith and

contemporary specialized knowledge."[54] In order to completely understand what the neo-

Scholastic synthesis did for Catholic education, Liddy argues that one must see the true

nature of the void its collapse has left behind: it is a "vacuum of meaning." In effect,

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52. Ibid.
53. MacIntyre.
54. Richard M. Liddy, "Bernard Lonergan on a Catholic Liberal Arts Education," *Journal of Catholic Education* 3, 4 (2000), 521.

there is "no consensus on the very meaning of 'knowing' and how human knowing in one area of specialization is related to every other area and to the rest of human living."[55]

If Liddy is correct in his assessment of the climate of higher education, then he has also demonstrated why Catholic higher education could not reasonably content itself with a reactionary reinstitution (whatever that would look like) of neo-Scholasticism. To combat the fragmentation of knowledge caused (in part) by rampant academic specialization, it could hardly prove effective to proceed as if the fragmentation had not happened in the first place. Nor would it be to follow Aquinas's own lead, given that he "met the contemporary Aristotelian scientific world on its own turf."[56] Despite its virtues, neo-Scholasticism was hamstrung by its unfamiliarity with "modern scientific and scholarly ways of questioning. It was also severely hampered by an intuitionist view of knowing: reality is 'out there'; all you have to do is take a good look at it. It had little appreciation for the complex structure of human experiencing, human understanding, and human judging."[57] In that area of human cognition, no modern Catholic scholar has made a more significant contribution than Lonergan. With the neo-Scholastic synthesis gone, Lonergan's mapping out of "the basic human cognitive processes which underlie all disciplinary methodologies" offers significant possibilities for a new integrative framework.[58] Such a framework may well be capable of hospitable engagement with a variety of disciplines and perspectives, in the spirit of Aquinas's engagement with Aristotelianism.

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55. Liddy, "Can Lonergan Replace Aquinas?"
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.

Aquinas and Lonergan

Neo-Scholasticism once seemed capacious enough to provide Catholic thinkers with an intellectual framework for not only the study of the world but also for the incorporation of truth wherever it could be found. As such, as a philosophical framework it possessed a real potential for intellectual hospitality, even if the reality of its function in the Catholic Academy often fell far short of anything that might be termed hospitable. To observe that neo-Scholasticism belongs to the past rather than the future is not to declare, then, that Aquinas has outlived his usefulness. To the contrary, there have been a number of intriguing signs of life on the Thomistic front, occasionally in the form of friendly assessments of Aquinas's relevance in fields other than theology and philosophy. For instance, Sandona has enumerated a number of recent sources which regard a natural law approach as "a trustworthy epistemological basis for a new form of social economic thinking."[59] Sandona himself has advocated a more widespread appropriation of Thomistic applications in economics, suggesting it might be "particularly important to promote sustainable development, foster a balanced allocation of wealth and construct a stable financial and monetary system regulated by a supranational authority"[60] In the hard sciences, Linda Kondrick argues that even a partial retrieval of Thomistic thinking on faith and reason might prove beneficial to those struggling to integrate what they know by faith with what they learn in the laboratory: "Students who feel they must choose between faith and reason, between religion and science, can be introduced to another

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59. Sandona, 798.
60. Ibid, 804.

alternative, a holistic paradigm that allows the two, science and religion, to complement one another."[61]

Similarly, to suggest that Catholic higher education might systematically appropriate the work of Bernard Lonergan to fill the 'vacuum of meaning' left behind by neo-Scholasticism is not to simplistically move beyond Aquinas, either. Ultimately, it is certainly the case that Lonergan was "both critical and respectful of the achievement of scholasticism. In (his) view, one of scholasticism's great achievements was integration of faith and reason."[62] Indeed, Lonergan was particularly indebted to Aquinas. As David Tracy remembers, "it is not insignificant that Bernard Lonergan…spent (his) early scholastic years trying to rediscover the mind and spirit of Aquinas at the most creative period of the Thomist revival."[63] Lonergan's own doctoral dissertation (on grace) afforded him the opportunity to "reach the mind of Aquinas first on a single question, then on a much wider front."[64] Perhaps most importantly, Aquinas taught Lonergan a great deal about the task of a theologian. Specifically, it was Aquinas who showed Lonergan what it meant for a theologian to operate scientifically:

> (Aquinas) started from data; he next proceeded via a whole series of theoretic techniques to reach a strictly theological resolution of the problems set by the seeming contradictions of the original date. In short, he attempted and sometimes achieved not dogmatic certitude but that partial, analogous, incomplete but real theoretic understanding proper to the theologian.[65]

Where Lonergan most clearly moves beyond Aquinas is in his greater attention to the knowing subject, beyond merely that which might be known (the object of knowing).

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61. Kondrick, 210.
62. Cyril Orji, *The Catholic University and the Search for Truth* (Winona: Anselm Academic, 2013), 116.
63. David Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 30.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid, 38-39.

It was actually his study of Aquinas that led Lonergan to reflect more deeply on the knowing of the knower. As Tracy relates, Lonergan concluded that any final accuracy in his conclusions on Aquinas "could only be adequately achieved after he had established some real grasp of the subjective pole—the actual performance of Aquinas's own intellect."[66] In effect, rather than focusing entirely on, say, "the metaphysical expression of Aquinas's cognitional theories," Lonergan would come to critically analyze first "the psychological facts and epistemological implications which gave birth to that metaphysics. And then—but only then—for the metaphysics which brought that mind to self-expression."[67]That this was an intention behind *Insight* is clear. In its introduction, Lonergan acknowledges that there is something seemingly backward in the approach that he proposed to take to mapping out human cognition: "Among contemporary scholastics there is a broad agreement on metaphysical issues, and at the same time a strongly contrasting divergence on epistemological questions. This disparity may lend my work an appearance of wrong-headedness, for instead of approaching what is doubtful from what is assured I begin from knowledge and reach metaphysics only as a conclusion."[68] At the book's very end, Lonergan considered that he had demonstrated a clear continued relevance for the thought of Aquinas: "…I would say that it is only through a personal appropriation of one's own rational self-consciousness that one can hope to reach the mind of Aquinas, and once that mind is reached, then it is difficult not to import his compelling genius to the problems of this later day."[69]

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66. Ibid, 50.
67. Ibid, 51.
68. Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992),21.
69. Ibid, 770.

It was in studying Aquinas that Lonergan came to perhaps his greatest insight; namely, that until then there had been perhaps a stunning oversight on the part of academics precisely when it came to the nature of insight. What does it mean for one to know? What happens when someone does come to know? Are there, truly, different ways of knowing? It is precisely in his mapping out of an answer to these questions that Lonergan may have given Catholic higher education the tools to once again integrate the disciplines and thereby ground its ability be intellectually hospitable.

Lonergan and Cognition

The goal of a higher education, Catholic or otherwise, cannot ultimately be separated from an improvement in students' ability to know. Ideally, if a university is offering something above and beyond job training for a career motivated mainly by increased earnings potential, this is not merely a case of going to college to learn more. Instead, it is reasonable to suppose that students should also be taught how to know more effectively, regardless of their career path, for the rest of their lives. And this might be said for students with whatever intended course of study. All the disciplines offer students an approach to knowing, or to perceiving the world around them and their place within that world. As Terry J. Tekippe states, intelligence and reasonableness cannot simply be discarded through an act of will. So native are they, Tekippe notes, "to the human being that one would want to cease possessing those qualities only after being satisfied that it was the smart and reasonable thing to do."[70]

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70. Terry J. Tekippe, *What is Lonergan Up to in* Insight*?* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 113.

In 1957, when Bernard Lonergan published *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, he sought "an explanatory understanding of the dynamics of human understanding, that is, the basic 'method' followed by the human spirit at the basis of all other methods."[71] Such attention on the subject of human knowing—rather than its objects—was not a commonplace in contemporary Catholic thought as such a focus might be seen to challenge the objectivity of truth. Nevertheless, Lonergan persisted, writing later that he perceived *Insight* as "fundamentally an expression of traditional thinking."[72] Studying empirically the actual carrying out of the methods employed by mathematicians, philosophers, and scientists, Lonergan "traces the dynamic method of the human spirit unfolding through the basic levels of experiencing, understanding, and judging."[73] Armed with expertise in multiple disciplines, Lonergan was able to map out the cognitive process which all humans followed, regardless of their own disciplines or specializations. In opposition to the trends of fragmentation in academic life, then, Lonergan's work on insight may well represent the basis of a real and hospitable dialogue between various ways of knowing. To know how the human mind comes to know, in short, is to understand the foundation of any scholarly method.

For Lonergan, insight is the "supervening act of understanding." Indeed, insight is so central to cognition that "to grasp it in its conditions, its working, and its results is to confer a basic yet startling unity on the whole field of human inquiry and human opinion."[74] Insight is, using Tekippe's terms, that "mental activity by which the mind

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71. Liddy, "Bernard Lonergan on a Catholic Liberal Arts Education," 523.
72. Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 23.
73. Liddy, "Bernard Lonergan on a Catholic Liberal Arts Education," 523.
74. Lonergan, *Insight*, 3.

grasps the intelligible connections between things that previously had appeared disparate."[75] As such, insight is that sudden (though perhaps not as sudden as one might sometimes like) epiphany that seems to change the entire way that a given problem/question/situation is perceived. In fact, once the insight is gained, there is little chance the subject will be ever be able to consider the original issue in the same way again. As Lonergan puts it, insight "passes into the habitual texture of one's mind."[76] This is why Tekippe is on solid ground when he describes insight as a breakthrough, or even as a "release from the tension of inquiry."[77]

Always concerned with method, Lonergan believes that human cognition is inherently methodical in nature. With knowing being the goal of cognition, it is certainly legitimate to ask how learning can be ordered to the acquisition of knowledge if the knowledge to be learned remains a mystery through much of the process. The answer, according to Lonergan, "is the heuristic structure. Name the unknown. Work out its properties. Use the properties to direct, order, guide the inquiry."[78]

While insight may be central to the cognitive process as mapped out by Lonergan, it certainly is not the beginning of that process. We are propelled through the process of cognition, it seems, by a "primordial drive," a "pure question." Lonergan notes, "But no one just wonders. We wonder about something."[79] Humans, like animals, begin with sensory experience. Such experience for humans, however, has always encouraged the formation of questions in the human mind that seeks to make sense of that which has

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75. Tekippe, 11, 50.
76. Lonergan, *Insight*, 28.
77. Tekippe, 51, 59.
78. Lonergan, *Insight*, 68.
79. Ibid, 34.

been experienced. The answers to these questions might be termed *insights*. Once insights are obtained, they may lead to the development of a concept, by which "the universal grasped by the insight under particular conditions is expressed in general form."[80]

Even a concept is not the end of the process of knowing, however. No matter how clever an insight or how all-encompassing a concept may seem to be, they often raise questions of their inherent truthfulness. As Lonergan readily acknowledges, "among the more conspicuous properties of understanding is its liability to incompleteness, inadequacy, error."[81] Insights can be entirely coherent, but that is not enough. Are they, in fact, true? There is, then, need for a third level in the cognitive process, one in which insights are subjected to "an affirming or denying, an agreeing or disagreeing, an assenting or dissenting."[82] This is the level of judgment, which entails a personal commitment in way that the previous levels do not. As Lonergan posits, "It is on this third level that there emerge the notions of truth and falsity, of certitude and the probability that is not a frequency but a quality of judgment."[83]

Initially, Lonergan had intended to end *Insight* after the thirteenth chapter. He found, though, that if he "went no further (than chapter 13), my work would be regarded as…incapable of grounding a metaphysics…"[84] Not surprisingly, then, Lonergan continued onward. For him, the link between cognition and metaphysics was as necessary as it was clear. "Just as the notion of being underlies and penetrates and goes beyond all other notions, so also metaphysics is the department of human knowledge that underlies,

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80. Tekippe, 86.
81. Lonergan, *Insight*, 295.
82. Ibid, 297.
83. Ibid, 298-299.
84. Ibid, xxi.

penetrates, transforms, and unifies all other departments."[85] It will come as little surprise

at this point in the chapter that Lonergan's thinking takes an explicitly Thomistic turn. In

chapter 15 of *Insight,* Lonergan introduces the terms—already familiar to any student of

Thomism—*potency*, *form*, and *act*. The function of the mind corresponds to the nature of

reality, in a manner not unlike the relationship between a key and lock.[86] The nature of

the process by which people come to know the world around them indicates something

about the nature things within that world. *Potency*, Lonergan writes, "denotes the

component of proportionate being to be known…by an intellectually patterned

experience of the empirical residue." *Form*, according to Lonergan, "denotes the

component…to be known, not by understanding the names of things, nor by

understanding their relations to us, but by understanding them fully in their relations to

one another." *Act*, Lonergan contends, "denotes the component…to be known by uttering

the virtually unconditioned yes of reasonable judgment."[87] Clearly, there is here "an

astounding similarity to the doctrines of the Aristotelian and Thomist tradition."[88]

Has Lonergan made things overly-complicated? After all, is there not a constant

temptation to simply equate the entirety of the cognitive process to the level of

experience? As Tekippe helpfully points out, it would be utterly incoherent to render a

judgment to the effect that there is no such thing as judgment. As far as conception goes,

"A person may coherently conceive of a universe in which there is no conception. What

one cannot coherently do is to conceive *this* universe as having no conception, because

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85. Ibid, 415.
86. Tekippe, 125.
87. Lonergan, *Insight*, 457.
88. Ibid, 545.

the very act of conceiving this universe as having no conception would constitute at least one exception."[89] Finally, again, it would be "incoherent to have an insight that there is no such thing as insight."[90] Logically, therefore, Lonergan's theory of the cognitional structure is entirely self-justifying.

Insight and Fragmentation

The fragmentation of knowledge described briefly in the introduction of this chapter is a significant challenge for the Catholic intellectual life, and therefore to Catholic higher education as well. This is in no small part because of the way that it hampers the Catholic university's ability to be a community-practitioner of intellectual hospitality. The various disciplines can easily tend to exist in their own silos, quite isolated from the others. This inability for different academic departments *within* a Catholic university closely parallels the way that fragmentation leaves hamstrung the efforts of Catholic intellectuals to hospitably engage the other. Robert M. Doran, SJ, suggests that the "fragmentation of knowledge…has…grown only more acute, and with it the potential for ideological stalemates, mutual recriminations of all sorts, and the denial through silence of the very existence of those with views other than our own."[91]

How might a Catholic university respond to such a powerful trend that is so very detrimental to the long tradition of Catholic education? One intriguing response has been the proliferation of interdisciplinary courses, programs, and lecture series on Catholic campuses that seek to break down the barriers between disciplines by bringing academics

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89. Tekippe, 103.
90. Ibid, 103.
91. Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup, *Communication and Lonergan: Common Ground for Forging the New Age* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1993), ix.

of various areas together while simultaneously helping students to recognize connections between what they learn in one course with what they have learned from courses in an entirely different discipline. While such interdisciplinary endeavors are entirely worthwhile, they do not seem to have the campus clout necessary to integrate the entire university curriculum in the way that the old Neo-scholastic synthesis had in an earlier era. As Haughey asserts, "a modern university needs more than interdisciplinary research to come to a sense of a common work or to the experience of being in a common enterprise."[92]

It is here, armed with this basic outline of human cognition, that the potential for Lonergan's thought to serve as a catalyst for integration in Catholic higher education might be seen. Indeed, the integration of all knowledge seems to have been a goal of Lonergan's behind the writing of *Insight* in the first place. Early in the book Lonergan would claim that "our concern is to reach the act of organizing intelligence that brings within a single perspective the insights of mathematicians, scientists, and men of common sense."[93] The integration of knowledge would require the various disciplines to be hospitable toward each other, engaging in a vigorous and rigorous dialogue. Lonergan, Haughey rightly notes, was convinced that such dialogue would be most successful if "authentic personal subjectivity and collective intersubjectivity are operating in a more explicit manner. Why? Because of the fact that the cognitional operations we all are equipped with are invariant, hence universal."[94]

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92. Haughey, 9.
93. Lonergan, *Insight*, 4.
94. Haughey, 43.

Lonergan's theory of cognition guaranteed that his outlook was not at all shaped by a kind of ivory tower mentality. Lonergan sees a distinction between the kind of intelligence one might expect to find in, say, a laboratory and a garage, but that distinction implied no qualitative advantage for one over the other. "There is intelligence in industry and commerce, in finance and taxation, in journalism and public relations. There is intelligence in the home and in friendship, in conversation and in sport, in the arts and in entertainment." And the intelligence that one found in each of these areas, Lonergan believes, followed the same process of experiencing, understanding, and judging: "In every case, the man or woman of intelligence is marked by a greater readiness in catching on, in getting the point, in seeing the issue, in grasping implications, in acquiring knowhow."[95] Distinguishing between science and common sense, furthermore, did not mean that a person is simply forced to adopt one or the other as the way of knowing that would be predominant in his/her life. Rational choice, Lonergan contends, "is a choice of both, of science to master the universal, and of common sense to deal with the particular."[96]

In a university, similarly, there is significant potential for Lonergan's theory of cognition to serve as the intellectual basis for hospitality. This hospitality will be a means not only for bringing Catholic and non-Catholic perspectives into engagement with one another, but it will also serve as the basis of hospitality between the disciplines, helping them to work toward greater integration of knowledge. For the scientist, the levels of experiencing, understanding, and judging would unfold in the forms of "experimentation,

95. Lonergan, *Insight*, 196.
96. Ibid, 203.

hypothesis formation, and verification." For the historian, they would be manifest as "research, interpretation, and historical judgment." An accurate account of human interiority as it manifests itself in the various methods employed by the human spirit is the basis for a philosophical vision strong enough to integrate the various scientific and scholarly methods."[97] As Liddy adds elsewhere, if "Catholic college administrators and faculties…would reflect upon and discover, with Lonergan's inspiration and guidance, the basic human cognitive processes which underlie all disciplinary methodologies," then the Catholic university would be a place characterized by widespread "interdisciplinary communication in pursuit of the common good of the university and of society."[98]

Lonergan and Method

The potential impact of Lonergan's cognitional theory on Catholic higher education is undoubtedly this chapter's primary contribution to the dissertation. The next several sections represent, in some ways, appendices of additional implications of Lonergan's thought for the Catholic intellectual life and Catholic higher education. Some of these additional implications have been highlighted by the foregoing consideration of Lonergan's *Insight*, as is the case with this brief section on Lonergan's theological method. The goal here is not a thorough review of Lonergan's method so much as an acknowledgement of how Lonergan himself seems to have been thinking of the adaptability of his thought to the Catholic intellectual life.

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97. Liddy, "Bernard Lonergan on a Catholic Liberal Arts Education,"523.
98. Liddy, "Can Lonergan Replace Aquinas?"

Lonergan may well provide a framework for increased hospitality and cooperation between the disciplines, orienting such cooperation toward a synthesis of knowledge. But who is responsible for beginning, pursuing, and persisting in this hard work? Presumably, all stakeholders in a Catholic university community have a vested interested in promoting and maintaining the Catholic identity of their institutions. That said, it is also clear that certain disciplines will, by their very nature, have a perhaps more substantial role to play. Pope John Paul II wrote that "*Theology* plays a particularly important role in the search for a synthesis of knowledge as well as in the dialogue between faith and reason. It serves all other disciplines in their search for meaning, not only by helping them to investigate how their discoveries will affect individuals and society but also by bringing a perspective and an orientation not contained within their own methodologies."[99] Theology, then, is instrumental in facilitating the dialogue between Catholicism and everything else. Additionally, theology provides the space for the various disciplines to consider the relationship between them. In circumstances where theology is perceived with suspicion or even derision by academics, though, might this not set up for failure the enterprise of promoting a synthesis of knowledge with all of the intellectual hospitality that such a project would both require and promote? For Lonergan, theology's status in the Academy could be shored up significantly not by changing its vantage point (as in preferring a supposedly more objective 'religious studies' to theology), but by being clearer regarding theology's method.

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99. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, August 15th, 1990, 19, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html.

As noted in the biographical sections above, Lonergan had had a longstanding fascination with method, which would eventually culminate in his 1971 work *Method in Theology*. Advising his readers from the beginning that a book on theological method must necessarily read differently than a book of theology, Lonergan employs his understanding of human cognition in order to define how the discipline of theology comes *to know*. Lonergan defines a method as "a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results."[100] Just as in the natural sciences—which had demonstrable success in defining their own method—theology involves a number of distinct but related processes that will encourage inquiry, inquire, evaluate inquiry, ensure that the fruits of inquiry are incorporated into what is already known, and wield the fruits of inquiry to begin asking the next generation of questions.

But is such theological deliberation worthwhile? Is any deliberation worthwhile? "To deliberate about deliberating," Lonergan believes, "is to ask whether any deliberating is worth while. Has 'worth while' any ultimate meaning? Is moral enterprise consonant with this world?"[101] Thinking about method, or perhaps better, thinking about knowing leads a person eventually to the question of God. Theology, then, for Lonergan, is an area of legitimate intellectual inquiry: "…'however much religious or irreligious answers differ, however much there differ the questions they explicitly raise, still at their root there is the same transcendental tendency of the human spirit that questions, that questions without restriction, that questions the significance of its own questioning, and so comes to the question of God." Obviously, the believer, the agnostic, and the atheist

100. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 4.
101. Ibid, 102.

may answer that question differently. In the case of the latter two, though, even "their

negations presuppose the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine."[102]

For Lonergan, theology involves a twofold movement: one involves a retrieval of

insight from a religious tradition situated in a particular cultural past, while the other

looks ahead to the future, seeking to mediate the content of that tradition into what the

culture is and will be. Thus, it is clear that Lonergan does not embrace a notion of culture

as something to be accomplished once and for all and then simply preserved. Theology

undertaken with such a classicist notion of culture would see itself as "a permanent

achievement," wherein theologians would continually "(discourse) on its nature." Instead,

Lonergan perceives culture empirically, wherein "theology is known to be an ongoing

process…"[103] Lonergan's method includes eight functional specialties in theology, with

the first four involved in the retrieval of the past while the latter four work toward the

future dimension of the theological task. These eight functional specialties include

research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and

communications.[104] Since, in Lonergan's theory of cognition, the human person engaged

in any investigation must operate on the levels of experience, understanding, judgment,

and decision, Lonergan saw that there must be four functional specialties involved in

each of theology's movements.[105] Though an individual theologian may be especially

accomplished in or focused on any one or a combination of the eight specialties, he must

also be cognizant of how his areas fit the rest of the eight if theology is to be done well.

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102. Ibid, 103.
103. Ibid, xi.
104. Ibid, 127.
105. Ibid, 134.

Otherwise, "the man with the blind-spot is fond of concluding that his specialty is to be pursued because of its excellence and the other seven are to be derided because by themselves they are insufficient. From such one-sidedness theology has suffered gravely from the middle ages to the present day."[106]

Lonergan's Trinitarian Theology

In 2015, Timothy Hanchin submitted a dissertation on Lonergan's 'Trinitarian vision of education' and the implications of his Trinitarian theology for friendship in Catholic higher education. This chapter would be remiss to avoid any engagement with Hanchin's research given its proximity to the content of this chapter as well as this dissertation as a whole. This section will attempt to distill Hanchin's work with two goals in mind. First, Hanchin's research further demonstrates the degree to which Lonergan's thought is indebted to its grounding in the Catholic tradition, especially—as indicated above—Aquinas. Second, and perhaps more importantly, this section will begin to more intentionally connect Lonergan's work to the kind of intellectual hospitality and friendship in Catholic intellectual life that this dissertation is both examining and advocating. Up to this point, the chapter has tended to speak broadly of the capacity of Lonergan's cognitional theory to drive toward a greater integration of knowledge which, we are contending, implies a significant receptivity and even hospitality to perspectives and insights encountered through engagement with both Catholics and non-Catholics alike. This and the following sections will more intentionally address the hospitable orientation latent throughout Lonergan's work.

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106. Ibid, 137.

Hanchin surveys the Lonergan corpus to propose a vision of Catholic higher education saturated with friendship. Hanchin's thesis is that "Bernard Lonergan's integral hermeneutics—the mutual mediation of the ways 'below upwards' and 'above downwards'—provides a promising heuristic for the Catholic university's self-understanding as a participation in the coordinated missions of the Son and the Spirit and therefore sharing in the life of the triune God—by exercising friendship."[107] For Lonergan, following in the footsteps of both Augustine and Aquinas, understanding one's own understanding "provides an analogy that aids us in more adequately understanding the mystery of the Trinity."[108] Lonergan's theory of human cognition, Hanchin contends, can lead one to understand God's life as analogous to friendship: "The sending of the missions of the Spirit and the Son is an act of friendship with creation extended by a God constituted as friendship."[109] Christ both represents and offers a reconciliation between God and humanity, signaling God's acceptance of and love for people by overpowering evil and fashioning out of it something good; namely, love. "The love of a divine person looks upon the evil and suffering of his friends as his own—made manifest in the sorrow and detestation for sin that Christ exhibits on the cross—and transforms his friends' evil into good so that his friends may be friends with God."[110]

For Lonergan, the Trinity is understood as a community of friends, the friendship between which is so perfect that it binds "three distinct persons…as one."[111] What, exactly, though, is the friendship between the Son and the Father? Between the Father

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107. Hanchin, 6.
108. Ibid, 111.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid, 161.
111. Ibid, 106.

and the Spirit? Can these instances of friendship be understood as identical to the procession of either the Son or Spirit *from* the Father? Hanchin suggests that "The distinction of persons is analogously conceived in terms of the dynamism of consciousness, and the consubstantiality of the Trinity is attributed to the infinite act of divine consciousness. There is an inherent relatedness of understanding, affirming, and loving."[112] For Aquinas, when one loves something, there is within the lover "an imprint of the loved reality." The object of love and the reality which is known, then, are both present within one who loves and knows.[113] The Son and Spirit process from the Father in these terms. The Father knows (Son), and the Father loves (Spirit).

Augustine had once posited that "None can love what he does not know."[114] Aquinas noted, however, that the love of a person for God does not function along a simple knowing-to-loving trajectory. God is not perfectly known, but can be loved perfectly. Aquinas, therefore, describes "a reciprocal dynamism between the faculties of the intellect and will. The will wills what is recognized as good having been grasped by the intellect in the act of understanding, but the will also wills the intellect to understand. Love is therefore conversely the cause of knowledge."[115] As will be seen in the next chapter, John S. Dunne will also grapple with this dynamic relationship between intellect and will, knowing and loving.

Lonergan's theory of human cognition accounts for the dynamic relationship between knowing and loving, which parallels the processions of the Son and Spirit from

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112. Ibid, 101.
113. Ibid, 88.
114. Ibid, 90.
115. Ibid.

God the Father. Lonergan "identified the extroverted, visible mission of the Word with development below upwards and the introverted, invisible mission of the Spirit with development above downwards."[116] By 'below upwards' one means that the development of the human person "flows from attentiveness through understanding to judgment producing loving action." This movement was clearly Lonergan's focus throughout *Insight*, which described knowing as proceeding from experience to understanding to judgment. The way 'above downwards,' on the other hand, entails a "(cascading) from loving action through judgment informing understanding and attentiveness," as in the case of the human person transformed by and in the love of God.[117] Therefore, Lonergan's theory of human cognition was not unrelated to his earlier work on Trinitarian theology, but actually reflected his understanding of the relationship between and the missions of the divine Persons.

In the previous chapter, it was shown that Merton's apostolate of friendship, despite its uniqueness, was not something he pursued *in spite of* his vocation as a monastic contemplative. Rather, he came to see that apostolate as part and parcel of his vocation, part and parcel of what it meant for him to be a Catholic, Trappist monk. Merton's intellectual hospitality, therefore, was in no small part an expression of his faith. Something similar can be said in Lonergan's case, despite the vast gulf between Lonergan and Merton in terms of style and interests. Lonergan's major contribution to philosophy is his work on cognition. His major contribution to theology is his ability to take what he had learned regarding human knowing and use it to forge a coherent method

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116. Ibid, 205.
117. Ibid, 166.

for theology to follow. Lonergan's thought, oriented as it is toward defining common ground between widely divergent perspectives, is inherently hospitable. This hospitality, like Merton's, is not something that Lonergan achieved despite his personal commitment to the Catholic faith. Instead, given the impact of Lonergan's Trinitarian theology on his theory of cognition, it is no stretch to say that Lonergan's hospitality is also a function of his own Catholic identity.

Hospitality, Friendship, and Lonergan

Dialogue of any kind requires the parties involved to navigate the tension between common ground and the real differences that distinguish them. In the contemporary, postmodern context, this can seem especially difficult given the sheer pluralism of perspectives and the widely divergent philosophical and religious systems that underpin them. For the university striving to bring all knowledge into conversation, however, the responsibility is not one it can afford to shirk. For the Catholic university, there is a desire to share the riches of the Catholic tradition, but there must also be a clear desire to find truth wherever it is to be found—even as the institution remains committed to asserting the one Source of all truth.

Where is the common ground necessary for engagement between Catholic thought and that of 'the world' to be found? Given the broad spectrum of worldviews to be found throughout the world, coupled with the astonishing diversity of cultural outlooks, is common ground simply a pipe dream? Frederick Crowe, SJ, asks "Is there a community that lies behind their differences and makes communication between the

cultures possible, allows transition from one to another as well as integration of their goods and achievements in the realm of spirit.?[118] His answer, and this chapter's answer, is that the very process of human cognition as mapped out by Bernard Lonergan provides the basic common ground from which dialogue between religions, cultures, and academic disciplines might proceed. What virtues are perhaps required to not only acknowledge this common ground despite glaring apparent differences but also to make the sustained engagement between perspectives beneficial for all involved? The obvious answer might be to posit that tolerance is the requisite virtue. Tolerance, this dissertation contends, pales in comparison to hospitality as a Christian virtue. Haughey suggests that "simply to make room for those who hold these plural worldviews" is at best "a merely tolerant hospitality."[119] Hanchin, similarly, suggests that tolerance is a weak virtue, given that it "is often non-engagement as peace keeping when navigating various truth claims in a sea of pluralism."[120] For Lonergan, the stakes of orienting one's intellectual posture toward tolerance were high: "when people merely tolerate one another's views, they cannot have any common view, and they cannot act effectively to deal with social evils, (which) gives rise to totalitarianism."[121]

Haughey is equally critical, though, of a kind of hospitality that would seek to engage the other with the ulterior motive of somehow prevailing in the end. "A host who is out to win is actually more like a would-be conqueror than a host. A host who claims to

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118. Frederick E. Crowe, SJ, "Neither Jew nor Greek but One Human Nature and Operation in All," in *Communication and Lonergan*, ed. Thomas J. Farrell and Paul A. Soukup (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1993), 91.
119. Haughey, 37.
120. Hanchin, 258.
121. Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 65.

know what the other should do or be has already failed a basic test of hospitality."[122]

Instead, what Haughey would like to see in the Catholic intellectual life—and thus on the

campuses of Catholic universities—is a more robust brand of intellectual hospitality that

is capable of promoting meaningful dialogue between the Catholic tradition and, without

exaggeration, everything else. "…a university can house plural worldviews by hearing

them, taking them seriously, engaging them. This…form of hospitality can lead to a real

growth in understanding on the part of both hosts and guests."[123]

Concretely speaking, of what might such hospitality consist on a Catholic

university campus? Haughey acknowledges that it would be multilayered and proceeds to

describe three distinct levels. The first involves the individual faculty member, who must

exhibit a hospitable openness toward the findings of her research, allowing the evidence

to take her where it leads rather than trying to "mangle the evidence in…her favor." The

second layer of hospitality on a Catholic campus, according to Haughey, would be

interpersonal. Scholars of various disciplines and even worldviews must be willing to run

the risk of disagreement that comes with serious academic discussion between them. The

institutions themselves, it seems, must provide structures within which such encounters

might take place. Finally, in what might be the most all-encompassing layer in relation to

the academic life of the university, would be a vigorous engagement with the Catholic

intellectual tradition.[124]

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122. Haughey, 37.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid, 38.

Haughey recognizes that this third layer might do with some additional explanation, devoting two chapters to an extended description of the Catholic intellectual tradition, which he calls "the fourth leg under the chair of Peter," along with Sacred Tradition, scripture, and the magisterium of the Church.[125] This intellectual tradition developed historically out of the fact that the Good News of Christ needed further, and even continual, development so as to flesh out its full ramifications and maintain its relevance as the Church worked always to preserve the integrity of the Gospel at all times. Believing in the God of all creation, Who is the source of all truth, the Catholic intellectual tradition has apparently no limit to its capacity. It is entirely committed to the understanding of all that is. As Haughey asserts in terms reminiscent of Lonergan, "where one is seeking out truth and value, one is seeking 'being,' and if that pursuit is unrestricted and disinterested, one is contributing to this tradition whether one is aware of this or not."[126]

This unboundedness of the Catholic intellectual tradition can be invigorating, but also frightening to those committed to the preservation of the truth of the faith, as well as its transmission to the next generation. It is the Church's "first line of hospitality,"[127] but it will necessarily seem to cross the visible boundaries of thought which is apparently or explicitly Catholic. For this reason, it seems legitimate to suggest that there is indeed a necessary fourth layer to the kind of hospitality needed on Catholic university campuses, one that is as unique as Haughey's third, the engagement with the Catholic intellectual

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125. Ibid, 61.
126. Ibid, 74.
127. Ibid, 68.

tradition. There must be a level of hospitality, perhaps even friendship (recall the circular relationship between the two described in chapter 2) between the university and the hierarchy of the Church. As Hanchin makes clear, tension between bishops and Catholic universities, or between bishops and theologians in particular, is best seen as a conflict between two cultures: the classicist cultures in which many clerics were formed, and the academics who have "no reference point" for it.[128]

It is in the midst of this tension, at the heart of so many of the conflicts between Catholic universities and churchmen described in chapter 1, that Hanchin's work on a hermeneutics of friendship based in Lonergan's thought becomes intriguing. Lonergan, Hanchin contends, "is in the line of Heidegger and Gadamer in radicalizing the notion of hermeneutics as part of the finite and situated character of all human knowing."[129] Lonergan was far more interested in what it meant for one to know, and what one did when knowing, than in whether a person knew anything. Hanchin proposes a "hermeneutics and pedagogy of friendship as a way that a Catholic university may participate in the ongoing missions of the Spirit and Son and therefore participate in divine friendship."[130] Lonergan himself noted the correlation between his Trinitarian theology—God as community of friends—and his hermeneutics. "He identified the extroverted, visible mission of the Word with development below upwards and the introverted, invisible mission of the Spirit with development above downwards. Like the two divine missions, the two vectors of development are distinct and

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128. Hanchin, 40-41.
129. Ibid, 177.
130. Ibid, 181.

coordinated."[131]Attentiveness to what it means to know can assist the Catholic university not only in its quest for knowledge or to integrate all knowledge, but also in its task to articulate its role within the Church. As the Church works to build the Kingdom of God insofar as it is able, the Catholic university seeks to participate in the missions and friendship of God precisely as a community of learners, coming to know in a dynamic pattern that matches and mirrors the pattern of cognition outlined in Lonergan's *Insight*.

Preliminary Conclusions

Lonergan was convinced of the value of a good general education. As he was convinced that it is simply "too easy to produce crackpots by premature specialization," he respected a general education's abilities to develop a person's assimilative powers: "If one learns to know man through the reading of literature and the study of history, one will have a basis for stepping into the human sciences that is much more useful perhaps than the study of those sciences."[132] Lonergan's theory of the cognitive process could help the university professor embrace a vision of the Catholic university precisely as a university, rather than as a multiversity that plays host to a whole series of parochial disciplines. Lonergan's is "a strikingly catholic philosophy in the deepest sense of the term. It is open, dynamic, comprehensive, historically minded, pluralistic, integrative, and critical. Lonergan takes his stand on human beings as they are, concrete existential subjects with a mature commitment to self-knowledge and self-appropriation."[133]

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131. Ibid, 205.
132. Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 206.
133. McCarthy, 156.

And it is precisely in this notion of 'self-appropriation' that the full implications of Lonergan's thought for students might be seen. Frederick Crowe, SJ suggests that Lonergan does not teach a reader about a topic so much as he helps the reader come to know the reader. In Lonergan "we find…an occasion, hear an invitation, receive a stimulus to learn something about ourselves by attending to our own interior activities."[134] The structure of human consciousness as Lonergan perceives impacts everything a person does. Lonergan's self-appropriation is a person coming "to the explicit awareness that 'This in fact is who I am: one who experiences, questions and is capable of understanding, judging, deciding, loving."[135] This self-appropriation is akin to an intellectual conversion which allows the scholar or student to convey what they have learned in a certain specialization and convey it meaningfully to scholars and students immersed in another. As Liddy optimistically posits, "Such conversion leads to 'the theory of philosophic differences,' that is, the philosophy that enables us to discern and critique the prevalent philosophies of the culture around us. It allows one to move beyond one's own restricted world…to accurately assessing the currents, theories, and philosophies of the world around us."[136]

In order to welcome students into the kind of work that a Catholic university does, perhaps there is a need for all students to attend early on in their studies to what it means for them to know. If hospitality is to be a goal of the Catholic university, or at least a virtue that is to motivate the sorts of decisions a Catholic university undertakes, students

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134. Frederick Crowe, SJ, *The Lonergan Enterprise* (Cambridge: Cowley, 1980), 33.
135. Liddy, "Bernard Lonergan on a Catholic Liberal Arts Education," 524.
136. Ibid, 530.

need to be helped in order to see how such hospitality functions. Teachers at all levels of education are routinely counseled to make sure that students know the educational goal of what they are doing at any given time. With more attention given at the beginning of undergraduate studies to what it means for students to know, students could be better able to see cohesion between the various academic disciplines. How have students come to know what they know already? What will it mean for them to know in a theology course? In a chemistry course? In a history course? Lonergan's theory of human cognition would equip students and scholars alike to better engage with those who see things rather differently they do, or at least have gone about understanding the world around them using a different method of knowing. This may be the most substantial antidote to the specialization and fragmentation of higher education today. Students aware not only of the content that a given professor is trying to communicate to them but also of what it means for them to know in the first place—regardless of discipline—will be well-placed for a hospitable engagement with multiple subjects and multiple worldviews.

A Catholic university must always be a place where the Church is able to engage with all cultures. In order for such an engagement to happen, the identity of the Catholic institution must always be strong enough to warrant the confidence necessary to be hospitable toward those cultures. As Haughey observes, "the virtue most peculiar to committed academics is their hospitable disposition towards data, in whatever guise it comes or however uncongenial it might seem to be. Hospitality welcomes others…as worthy of the room one makes for them."[137] In order to encourage the scholars and

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137. Haughey, 28.

professors of Catholic higher education to be so hospitable, there must be a means of articulating that notion so central to the Catholic tradition; namely, that a unity of all knowledge is possible under a framework of faith.

In an earlier era, the thinking of Thomas Aquinas, filtered through the neo-Scholasticism of the early 20th century, offered a synthesis of knowledge that could serve as a backbone for a distinctively Catholic curriculum. With the old synthesis long gone, Bernard Lonergan's thinking on cognition offers a possible replacement. With its understanding of how all peoples of all cultures (and from all academic disciplines) come to know, Lonergan's theory of human consciousness opens a door to interdisciplinary dialogue based on self-appropriation and the resulting awareness of how the 'other' also comes to know. This, in turn, could overcome the longstanding trends toward ever-increasing specialization and fragmentation of knowledge, helping professors help students to see a genuine wholeness in their education. Once students have been helped to see where they, themselves, 'stand' intellectually, they will be uniquely well-placed to make the most of opportunities to engage with, for instance, those speakers whom some might deem controversial.

Chapter 5: John Dunne and the Hospitality of Passing Over

Introduction

Just as it would be hard to overestimate Thomas Merton's impact on the spirituality of American Catholics in the 20th, so too would it be difficult to quantify Bernard Lonergan's influence on Catholic theology in the decades since *Insight* and *Method in Theology* were published. One of the most unique theologians to emerge from the ranks of Lonergan's students was undoubtedly John S. Dunne, C.S.C. Reading Dunne, like reading Lonergan, is an experience rather unlike that of reading most Catholic theologians. Like Lonergan, Dunne can sometimes seem to the reader that he has developed—if not his own language—then at least his own matrix of questions, quotations, and insights that he consistently injects into his books. Like Lonergan, the reader will not find in the majority of Dunne's works an explicit reliance on Church Fathers, councils, papal pronouncements, etc. Though Dunne was, like Merton, perhaps most famous for his prolific career as an author of works of spirituality, he was also an extremely capable theologian. Unlike Merton, Dunne does not comment on the particulars of current events. Like both Merton and Lonergan, Dunne's record suggests that he was an accomplished teacher, reportedly having taught more students at the University of Notre Dame than any other professor.

Also like Merton and Lonergan, and certainly of most importance for this dissertation, John S. Dunne was one of the more notable practitioners of Catholic intellectual hospitality of the past half century. Thomas Merton's apostolate of friendship led him to look far beyond the walls of his monastery in order to engage with people of

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very different backgrounds and worldviews, all the while learning and teaching. Bernard Lonergan's map of human cognition allowed him to see a breathtaking unity of knowledge, woven together by the consistent processes of human knowing. As such, Lonergan was able to see a common ground underneath all forms of knowing, that was therefore supporting people who pursue perhaps widely divergent paths to knowledge. Though Lonergan's influence on Dunne certainly shines through Dunne's work in a number of places, Dunne's intellectual hospitality possessed a distinctive style and method.

As will be seen, Dunne's earliest work, focused largely on the theology of participation found in Aquinas, is unexceptional in its style. As Dunne got just a bit older, however, his interests and even his method would undertake a drastic transformation. It was when he turned 30, Dunne would later recall, that he developed a "vivid awareness" of "life opening up all the way to death…"[1] In terms of writing style, Dunne would only occasionally resort to technical theological language for the remainder of his career. As far as his interests were concerned, death—both as such as well as his own eventual— would drive the development of his thought and inspire the process that he would call 'passing over.'

It is this process of passing over that represents Dunne's contribution to this dissertation as an obvious exemplar of Catholic intellectual hospitality. In passing over, Dunne would attempt to immerse himself in "the standpoint of other lives and times,"

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1. John S. Dunne, *A Journey with God in Time*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 8.

before "coming back to that of our own lives and times."[2] Whereas Merton's friendship extended to a large number of his contemporaries, Dunne's offer of hospitality—and perhaps even friendship—was extended most often to people long dead, to cultures quite foreign to his own, or to eras long since passed.

Dunne's books are unique, but he did not feel that he had any claim to a monopoly on passing over. Gandhi, in Dunne's estimation, was himself skilled at "(passing) over by sympathetic understanding from his own religion to other religions and (coming) back again with new insight to his own."[3] Dunne would also point to Machiavelli as a fellow practitioner, in that Machiavelli would commune for hours each evening with "the great men of former times." In addition to escaping boredom, forgetting trouble, and overcoming fear of poverty and death through these nightly experiences, Dunne contends, Machiavelli was also able to "gain from the past an understanding of the present and future."[4]

This chapter will explore the particulars of Dunne's intellectual hospitality as demonstrated in his method of passing over. Though Dunne's practice of hospitality was not identical to Merton's or Lonergan's there will emerge some obvious common ground. In all three cases, these prodigious thinkers and prolific writers were inspired to hospitality by something inherent to their own Catholic faith. Indeed, all three were able to be hospitable to the other because of their commitment to Catholicism, not in spite of it. Once Dunne's work has been thoroughly surveyed in this chapter, the dissertation will

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2. John S. Dunne, *The Reasons of the Heart*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 149.

3. John S. Dunne, *The Way of All the Earth*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), ix.

4. Ibid, 157.

finally be able to support several conclusions regarding what Catholic intellectual hospitality seems to be in practice, and what the ramifications of that might for Catholic higher education.

John S. Dunne's Early Biography

The first-time reader of Dunne might easily feel, at first, as though he has stumbled upon an author with his own language, or at least his own form of communication. Dunne seems to almost constantly invoke the same names as he tackles subjects. Dante, Gandhi, Aquinas, Buber, and many others are called upon to help develop Dunne's ideas, and it is sometimes the same quote from one of these figures that pops up several times in the same book or even in multiple books. Typically, Dunne would write a single paragraph each day. While there are certainly times, as a result, that Dunne's work reads like someone's stream of consciousness, to leave one's conclusions about Dunne there would be to miss the development that happens within each book and certainly from book to book as well. Very little of the work he published in the latter half of his life deals with classic theological categories as an exclusive or even primary focus. Instead, Dunne never seems to move entirely beyond his preoccupation with death. Not surprisingly, then, Dunne's reflections on life, time, meaning, and death always strike the reader as though there is an autobiographical thread running throughout his work.

What might seem initially to be Dunne's own personal style or language, however, may actually turn out to be nothing more than the language of the human condition communicated from Dunne's personal experience of changing standpoints. Interestingly, the reader will be best positioned to see Dunne's work as applicable to all if

he has a handle on Dunne's biography. Very much in the style of his teacher, Lonergan, Dunne's theology was undertaken by someone who had diverted his attention toward the knowing subject. Before beginning his first book, Dunne decided to write an autobiographical sketch as a necessary step before embracing the kind of intellectual hospitality that would characterize his work. Dunne, it seems, needed to know how and why he knew what he knew, in order to begin considering and engaging with the perspectives of others. Dunne's intellectual hospitality, therefore, required him to occupy a place, or perhaps even a tradition, of his own. While that early autobiographical reflection was never published, he did eventually publish an autobiographical work, *A Journey with God in Time*, in 2003. In that book, Dunne would interpret events in his life through the lens of insights he had gained rather later on.

Dunne thinks of his life as a journey with God in time.[5] Nevertheless, Dunne (not at all unlike Merton) believes that there are moments in life when the presence of the eternal can be seen or known. Dunne, born December 3, 1929, fondly recalls a childhood in which his natural curiosity was encouraged by a family that valued reading. The memory of his grandfather telling him stories suggests that his first five years were happy ones. Indeed, his grandfather's place in Dunne's life is confirmed when he says that "God has become my companion on the way, I realize now, replacing my grandfather…"[6] The decade after his grandfather's death was not as happy. Dunne remembers beginning to look at the people he encountered in those days, trying to find people who were happy in

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5. Dunne, *Journey*, 1.
6. Ibid, 3.

order to learn their secret. Dunne's habit of passing over to the perspectives of others, therefore, has very deep roots.

Dunne's earliest recollection of doing theology also dates back to when he was quite young, comparing God to sparrows. "My concept of God was of Someone as harmless as a sparrow and yet existing everywhere, like sparrows, and caring about everyone and everything."[7] Later on, Dunne recalls sleeping outside during the summers, when the vastness of the night sky would fill him with a sense of wonder that the world—and everything else—actually existed. One hears the echoes of Dunne's lifelong engagement with Aquinas and Lonergan in his contention that "The wonder was not so much a proof as a sign of God's reality. To come to God from the wonder is an insight. It means no longer taking for granted what is most taken for granted, the existence of things, and when that is no longer taken for granted, God's presence appears."[8]

Dunne's parents sent him to boarding school one hundred miles from home in Austin, after "perceiving my unhappiness…This then became my first sally in quest of happiness." Armed with his memories of lost happiness in the midst of his teenage unhappiness, Dunne compares his boarding school years to the experience of Odysseus. The time away from home was like a journey through a wonderland, encountering "dread and fascination of the mystery of life."[9] The second venture in Dunne's quest for happiness was "a spiritual quest, and it followed closely on my journey away from home." Dunne's lifelong habit of passing over seems to have begun here quite

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7. Ibid.
8. Ibid, 4.
9. Ibid, 16.

intentionally, and the intellectual hospitality it entails often seems oriented more toward

Dunne's desire to receive insight rather than offer it. "Passing over to fellow students was

passing over to fellow seekers, not finders; passing over to teachers, on the other hand,

was passing over to finders, or so I hoped."[10] From these teachers, Holy Cross brothers

and priests, Dunne hoped to find the secret of happiness. The young Dunne thought he

had found that secret in the opening lines of *The Imitation of Christ* (from John's

Gospel): "One who follows me will not walk in darkness."[11]

This discovery seems to have set the stage for Dunne's "third sally in quest for

happiness," which was "to go to Notre Dame to join the priests of Holy Cross."[12] While

at Notre Dame, Dunne would take his first steps into philosophical thinking, engaging

with Newman's distinction between knowledge and learning. Though Dunne had always

been encouraged to love learning by his family, the acquisition of knowledge struck him

as a higher goal. "To be learned was to be well read and well informed, but to have

knowledge was to have insight and understanding. It was to have vision. It was for me the

beginning of a quest of vision. My quest of happiness was changing into a quest of

wisdom."[13]

In the last chapter, it was noted how Thomism had come to reassert itself in the

Catholic Church through the neo-Scholastic revival. It is not at all surprising, then, that

Dunne's newfound quest for wisdom would take a turn toward Aquinas during his

college years at Notre Dame. During the summer after his sophomore year, Dunne

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10. Ibid, 17.
11. Ibid, 18.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid, 19.

committed to reading the *Summa Theologiae*. Apparently, Dunne employed the strategy

of reading the body of each article only, skipping objections and responses to objections.

This was nevertheless enough to shape Dunne's view of the world. "Reading it article by

article, I was getting the vision of things, how everything comes from God, how human

beings return to God, and how Christ is the way."[14] Dunne found peace and serenity in

reading Aquinas, which he also found reading Augustine's *Confessions*. Aquinas made a

more significant impression on Dunne, though, as can be seen from his decision to read

through the *Summa* over and over, year after year. With his appropriation of Aquinas's

vision of all things originating with God, and of human beings proceeding from and then

turning back toward God, Dunne was inspired to seek the very summit of academic

accomplishment: "Now an ambition took hold of me, to do with modern thought what

Saint Thomas had done with ancient thought." Dunne seems to have put no mean effort

into carrying out this goal. "I began to read Kant…But then I realized Kant was working

from Newton's science…I realized I would have to work instead form Einstein's science,

taking space and time to be the sensorium of the moving observer…I began to collect

principles like this to form the basis of a kind of *Summa*."[15]

    Upon graduation from Notre Dame, Dunne learned that the Congregation of Holy

Cross, his order, would be sending him to Rome for advanced studies in theology.

Interestingly, Dunne found that he could be receptive, and even hospitable, to places

inasmuch as those places could be the loci of others' perspectives. Dunne would therefore

look back on his initial journey to Rome as an exercise in passing over, "first of all to the

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14. Ibid, 22.
15. Ibid, 23.

ancient city of Rome, entering into the journey Virgil describes in the *Aeneid*…The

illustrious men and women of ancient Rome…were the dead for me. I was seeing them as

immortal souls, not just as figures living in our memory of them…"[16] In coming back

from this venture in passing over, of course, Dunne was coming into the Rome of the

present and his theological studies at the Angelicum. Dunne had decided to study there

given the importance of Aquinas in Dominican theology, but his continuing desire to do

with modern thought what St. Thomas had done with classical thought apparently left

Dunne dissatisfied with the Angelicum's "closure of theology on the *Summa*, and so he

"decided to transfer after that first year to the Gregorian, the Jesuit school of theology in

Rome."[17] This decision would prove to be of momentous significance for the later

trajectory of Dunne's thought.

After his first summer break in Europe, Dunne returned to Rome. This again

struck him, later on, as having been a "process of passing over, now to Renaissance

Rome as well as to ancient Rome." Dunne found himself passing over, in particular, into

the method of Leonardo and Michelangelo, as he saw it, "seeing the human body in terms

of the universe and seeing the universe in terms of the human body."[18] After the

following summer and return to Rome, Dunne found himself "passing over now to

modern Rome and modern Catholicism in its crisis of renewal in the last days of Pope

Pius XII."[19] This apparently involved reading the works of those theologians, like de

Lubac, at the forefront of the Catholic *ressourcement* as well as leading Protestant

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16. Ibid, 29.
17. Ibid, 30.
18. Ibid, 31.
19. Ibid, 32.

thinkers such as Karl Barth. Dunne learned that Barth was working on his own

magisterial work of systematic theology, and entertained the idea of asking to study with

him. When that idea did not come to fruition (Dunne does not get into details here), he

asked to remain at the Gregorian, in order to write his dissertation under the direction of

Bernard Lonergan.

Lonergan's Influence on Dunne

It was around the time of Dunne's ordination in December 1954 that he first heard

Lonergan's lectures in Rome. Dunne would recall that "I knew him in his earlier period

when he was writing his book *Insight* and before he did his later and more systematic

work *Method in Theology*."[20] It was Lonergan, ultimately, who suggested Dunne's

dissertation topic: "on the idea of participation in the theology of Saint Thomas."[21]

Dunne's first attempt to finish his dissertation was not altogether successful, as he tried to

do it somewhat hurriedly, relying largely on what he already knew from his annual

readings of the *Summa*. "Lonergan rejected this version of my thesis and told me to do it

over again, this time examining all the texts where Saint Thomas speaks of participation.

So I began a laborious process of writing down all the passages on participation and

collecting them into piles according to subject…"[22] Being, Dunne found, was simply that

something, or rather all things, exist. How things exist, however, is through participation

in Being. "According to Saint Thomas, moreover, God is Being by essence not just by

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20. Ibid, 35.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.

participation. The whole wonder of existence thus is concentrated in God. Everything other than God participates in Being and has its own mode of participation."[23]

Lonergan's influence on Dunne extended much further—or perhaps deeper—than simply having a role in selecting a dissertation topic or even in the crafting of that dissertation. Lonergan aspired to a knowing of knowing, a turn to the subject. Dunne, even decades before the publication of his spiritual autobiography, undertook his theologizing with a considerable degree of attentiveness to self. Dunne, for instance, would say that his 'search for God in time and memory' would be akin to writing an autobiography. This "would involve you in a process of bringing time to mind." This, eventually, would "carry you to the edges of your life, backward to birth and forward to death; it would give you a sense of your lifetime being a part of a larger time…You might compare your life with other lives that seem somewhat parallel; you might even compare it with lives out of epochs long past. You might wonder how far your story is simply the perennial human story…"[24]

Indeed, Dunne seems to have been captivated by Lonergan's insight into insight, his idea of understanding as "*insight into image*. Thus faith seeking understanding became for me faith seeking insight into the great images of faith, especially life and light and love, the three great metaphors of the Gospel of John."[25] Dunne would not, however, appropriate Lonergan's vocabulary or his thought without adding his own distinctive flair. Indeed, this is typical of Dunne's ability to make room in his own thinking for the

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23. Ibid, 36.
24. John S. Dunne, *A Search for God in Time and Memory*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), vii, viii.
25. John S. Dunne, *The Circle Dance of Time*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 1-2.

insights of others: "Later I came to my own notion of insight as what happens when the reasons of the heart become known to the mind. It became essential for me then to explore the realm of the heart and to understand the human heart and the heart's desire."[26]

It is especially—and certainly not surprisingly—in Dunne's earlier works where Lonergan's influence is clearest. Citations to Lonergan's work are relatively rare in Dunne's books. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to miss the imprint that Lonergan had left on Dunne's thinking. "A knowing of knowing would be like a view from a mountaintop. By knowing all about knowing itself one would know in some manner everything there is to know. It would be like seeing everything from a great height…The knowing of knowing would mean being in possession of all the various methods of knowing."[27] How could anyone familiar with Lonergan's *Insight* not, upon reading these words from Dunne, immediately think of Lonergan's vision for where his theory of human cognition might lead him? Dunne himself seems to express a similar excitement for the possibilities: "It would mean knowing how an artist thinks, putting a thing together; knowing how a scientist thinks, taking a thing apart; knowing how a practical man thinks, sizing up a situation; knowing how a man of understanding thinks, grasping the principle of a thing; knowing how a man of wisdom thinks, reflecting upon human experience."[28]Dunne, however much he may have been influenced by Lonergan, though, falls mostly into that last category as a man of wisdom. Dunne knows that God is typically imagined to be at the top of such a mountain. Dunne was firmly convinced,

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26. Ibid, 2.
27. Dunne, *The Way*, 17.
28. Ibid.

though, and indeed much of his career as a theologian reflects a commitment to the conviction, that God was not only at the top of such a mountain. "There is a wisdom at the bottom of the mountain, let us say, just as there is at the top. The God we imagined at the top had a wisdom which amounted to a knowing of knowing, a knowledge which gave him complete and inviolable autonomy. If we were to imagine a God at the bottom, we would have to imagine him possessing a wisdom which could see through autonomy itself."[29] Lonergan's theory of cognition shaped Dunne's thought to a considerable degree, but Dunne's style would remain very much his own. This is not to say, by any means, that Dunne eschewed his mentor's insistence on clarity of method in theology. Though Lonergan had not yet written *Method in Theology* when Dunne studied under him in Rome, Dunne does exhibit a tendency to be clear and up front about his method, particularly in some of his first books after Lonergan's *Method* was published in 1972.[30]

Dunne's Early Work and His Debt to Aquinas

The previous section attempts to situate the work of John S. Dunne alongside that of his dissertation director, Bernard Lonergan. The goal of this section is twofold. First, it will aim to continue the chronicle of Dunne's life begun earlier in this chapter by examining briefly his earliest work as a professional theologian. Second, it will proceed from considering the influence of Aquinas on Dunne's early work to a broader survey of Aquinas's influence on Dunne's entire corpus. Just as the previous chapters show the degree to which Merton and Lonergan were immersed in the Catholic tradition, so too will this section be crucial for at least beginning to demonstrate Dunne's own rootedness

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29. Ibid, 21.
30. See, for example, Dunne, *Reasons*, 147-152.

in Catholicism in no small part because of his rootedness in Thomistic thought throughout his career. Dunne's intellectual hospitality, like that of Merton and Lonergan, is made possible in no small part because of this rootedness.

In 1960, Dunne's article on "Two Contemporary Approaches to Theology" was published in *Theological Studies*. Within the essay, Dunne identifies and critiques the two approaches, with the one being the analytical approach of John Wisdom and the other being the existentialist approach of Rudolf Bultmann. "Though a Catholic will find much to criticize in either approach," Dunne found, "it is profitable for him to engage in discussion of one and the other as a kind of dialogue with contemporary thought."[31] Though this article clearly does not involve the writing style that makes Dunne's later work so distinctive, the sentiment expressed in this statement certainly does suggest something of Dunne's general willingness to engage with just about anyone or anything. As Jon Nilson has observed, Dunne's later works of theology are notable for his tendency to venture off of the beaten path as far as sources are concerned: "the 'sources' of Dunne's theology are not often the typical ones of Scripture, dogma, Fathers, councils, and great figures of the theological traditions."[32]

Aquinas, however, proves to be the clear exception. It has already been said that Dunne's habit of studying Aquinas annually was established early on, and that he eventually settled on the Thomistic theology of participation for a dissertation topic. In 1957, Dunne published a summary of his dissertation in *Theological Studies* under the

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31. John S. Dunne, CSC, "Two Contemporary Approaches to Theology," *Theological Studies*, 21 (1960), 46.
32. Jon Nilson, "Doing Theology by Heart: John S. Dunne's Theological Method," *Theological Studies*, 48 (1987), 83.

title "St. Thomas' Theology of Participation."[33] Finding that humanity could be by nature only what it could be by participation in God's own essence as pure act of being, Dunne discovered that humanity had been created with, as it were, a capacity for God. Though this essay is written entirely within the typical style and conventions and Thomists of the era, there is nevertheless something to that notion of man's capacity for God that would prove essential for Dunne's later work and especially his notion of passing over.

In *A Search for God in Time and Memory*, Dunne's second book and the first wherein he explicitly attends to his strategy of passing over, Dunne wonders if that passing over may be a key for understanding another person. "I must die with him and rise with him again; I must pass over with him from the standpoint of life to that of death, and then I must pass back with him from the standpoint of death to that of life." To Dunne, this was hardly an original thought but rather was essentially Pauline. "I must do in his regard something analogous to what Paul would have the Christian do in regard to Christ: be buried with him in death in order to be raised with him unto life."[34] At this point, Dunne's reflections on passing over had brought him, obviously, quite close to the heart of traditional Christian doctrine. If, as Dunne found in his doctoral work, a person has a capacity for God (through participation in God's being), in what way is that capacity impacted or shaped by the Incarnation? What would it mean, in other words, to have a capacity for Christ?

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33. John S. Dunne, CSC, "St. Thomas' Theology of Participation," *Theological Studies*, (18) (1957).

34. Dunne, *Search*, 19.

It is unsurprising that Dunne is reminded, only a few pages further into *A Search for God in Time and Memory*, of Paul's hauntingly beautiful hymn to Christ's kenosis in the Letter to the Philippians. The "logic" of Christ's kenosis and subsequent exaltation, Dunne posits, is that of "the man who loses himself as God in order that man may be born in undergoing the passion of God, for it is the passion of God to lose oneself as God in order that man may be born. So the 'name that is above every name' belongs to such a one, that is, the name of the Lord."[35] Dunne sees something similarly kenotic in the passing over he attempts: "we have first to pass over from our standpoint to (Jesus's), and only then will we be able, passing back to our own standpoint, to participate in his kenosis and exaltation."[36] Obviously, Dunne is speaking here of passing over to the perspective of Jesus[37] Himself. Dunne's use of the word *participate* in this statement, though, is a clear indication of the early work he had done to finish his doctorate. To pass over, which again is Dunne's method of intellectual hospitality, was not so much a temporary abandonment of Dunne's Catholic perspective so much as it was a (however imperfect) reflection of and participation in the being of a God Who is revealed in Christ.

Dunne also remained, throughout his career, captivated by Aquinas's vision of a person's spiritual journey: "a great circle going from God to God with the figure of Jesus as the way."[38] As he passed over to the religion of the poor, Dunne believed that "everything is converging upon Omega, or really upon Alpha: our journey together in

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35. Ibid, 22.

36. Ibid, 25.

37. While Dunne does occasionally speak of passing over into the earthly experiences of Jesus of Nazareth (see John S. Dunne, *Reading the Gospel*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 99-100), he most often discusses passing over to Jesus as a means of entering, insofar as one can, into the relationship of the Son and Father.

38. Dunne, *Reasons*, 19.

time is toward the sources of life."[39] In the estimation of Paul Kollman, CSC, Dunne's final book (for which Kollman wrote the preface) was shaped in large part by the same image of a circular journey, an "embracing paradigm of emanation from God and return to God…"[40] For Dunne at the end of his career, this vision from Aquinas was at the very heart of his understanding of how to carry out Christ's Great Commandment. To love God with all of one's mind, Dunne reckoned, was to come "to a peaceful vision of everything coming from God and everything returning to God and Christ as the way…"[41]

Similarly circular is the relationship between knowing and loving, which also comes up several times in Dunne's writing: "we take things in by knowing them, and from there to the heart, as knowing leads into loving, and from there back to the things of life, as we go out to things by loving them. Then the circle goes round again, as the loving leads into new knowing and the knowing into new loving." Does this have an impact on Dunne's central method of passing over and coming back? "When I enter into a sharing of life with others, I am entering into this round dance of mind and heart, letting others have a mind and heart-changing effect upon me."[42]

Dunne would return to this cycle of knowing and loving again in his 1993 book on the contemplative life (in which, incidentally, Dunne acknowledged "getting my conception of the contemplative life more from Aquinas," even as it had an Augustinian

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39. John S. Dunne, *The Church of the Poor Devil*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 102.

40. John S. Dunne, *Dark Light of Love*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), vii.

41. Ibid, 58.

42. Dunne, *Poor Devil*, 135.

flavor to it as well).[43] The book was written in the wake of a dream Dunne had in which

he encountered Aquinas, and asked him "Do we love with a love we know or with a love

we do not know?"[44] Knowing, according to Aquinas, "brings the things we know into us,

but loving takes us out to the things we love."[45] Dunne makes clear that this circle is not

unrelated to the first circle of moving away from and then toward God. Instead, "It is like

the great circle of love coming from God and returning to God. In fact, as loving becomes

knowing and knowing becomes loving, the circle of the soul becomes in us the great

circle of the love of God."[46]

This section has demonstrated that Dunne's entire method of passing over is

undertaken not as something apart from or even moving away from Dunne's own

commitment to the Catholic faith. Instead, it seems, Dunne's passing over is a reflection

of his prolonged study of Aquinas, and was part and parcel of his attempt to participate in

the being of God, Who is revealed in Christ. Before delving into the specific instances of

passing over that characterize Dunne's various works, the next section of this chapter will

try to establish the full breadth of the possibilities of passing over. Once the full

'landscape' of passing over is mapped out, the succeeding sections will profile Dunne's

more substantive experiences of passing over.

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43. John S. Dunne, *Love's Mind: An Essay on Contemplative Life*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), viii.
44. Ibid, 1.
45. Ibid, 2.
46. Ibid, 4.

Dunne's Method: Passing Over and Coming Back

For Bernard Lonergan, a method was "a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results."[47] Jon Nilson argues that Dunne's method, unique though it is, fits Lonergan's definition of method, and therefore "deserves more serious attention and a more prominent place in the contemporary theological conversation than it has been given so far.[48] This section, proceeding as it does from a perspective of agreement with Nilson's contention, will echo and seek to augment Nilson's own work to describe of what, exactly, Dunne's method consists. Though Dunne's work can often seem inextricably linked to his own life story, Nilson rightly sees value in Dunne's position that "My method is my journey."[49] With the journey on Dunne's mind being, essentially, life, perhaps instead of seeing Dunne's work as a highly unique expression of an individual prone to thinking theologically about his own life, it may be better understood as an expression of the experience of all of us?

"The sense of a complete relativity of standpoints," Dunne observes, "a relativity such that no standpoint, fixed or shifting, is the true standpoint, seems characteristic of the twentieth century."[50] Over the course of a person's life, one's standpoints change a great deal. As Nilson summarizes, Dunne believes "the quest for understanding is not like exploring unknown terrain from one fixed perspective. Instead, it is a journey in time from standpoint to standpoint, each of which illumines more of the unknown."[51] Passing over, then, was the means by which Dunne would seek to complement the standpoints of his own experience with those of others, further helping him to illumine the unknown.

47. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 4.
48. Nilson, 65.
49. Ibid.
50. Dunne, *Search*, 66.
51. Nilson, 66.

"Passing over means entering into the standpoint of another person, age, or culture and thereby gaining new understanding. Passing over means temporarily adopting another and different perspective on common concerns and thus discovering truths about oneself, others, and God which would not have been found solely within the confines of one's own standpoint."[52] Upon coming back to his own standpoint, of course, Dunne would find that that standpoint was not really the same as it had been, "because it has been expanded and enriched by the truths discovered in passing over."[53] Only God's standpoint is absolute, though one can discover something true in every standpoint of his life, and from every standpoint to which he passes over and then comes back. That passing over is an exercise in intellectual hospitality ought to be clear. There is an openness required to pass over, a willingness to be vulnerable in the face of what the other sees, knows, and has experienced. Where did Dunne's hospitality lead him?

Dunne's first book, *The City of the Gods*, was not the book he had initially planned to write. Dunne envisioned, at first, a book on the political theology of the ancient Greek city-states. As Nilson puts it, Dunne "had evidently planned a massive undertaking whose accomplishment would have consumed years."[54] Dunne would discover, however, that such a task, wherein "the viewpoint from which the work was to be written was fixed" and "the topics were clear and the method ready to hand," could not inspire him to see it through to completion.[55] Having recently turned thirty, Dunne found that the confrontation with the problem of death, and not political theology, was his

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52. Ibid, 71.
53. Ibid, 71-72.
54. Ibid, 67.
55. Ibid.

primary interest. Dunne's curiosity regarding death was fanned by his reading of the story

of Gilgamesh, in which the ancient hero traveled the world seeking an avenue to

immortality. Though Dunne does not use the language of 'passing over' and 'coming

back' in *The City of the Gods*, he was able to see later that that was, nevertheless, exactly

what he had done in that book. He had "engaged in passing over to cultures. I compared

cultures there in terms of their answers to death."[56] Or, as he put it again several years

later, "I had passed over to times in my first book…"[57] For the reader familiar with some

of Dunne's later work, there is no doubt that *The City of the Gods* can be seen clearly

(and quite early on) as an exercise in passing over. Dunne remarks in his preface that

"Homer said of Odysseus that 'he saw the cities of many men and learned their mind.'

We shall be seeking in our fashion to do just this, to see the cities of many men and learn

their mind, only to us the cities of men will be cities of gods more than of men because

we shall be seeking like Gilgamesh to learn their mind on life and death…"[58]

One no longer needs to read between the lines to find passing over in Dunne's

next book, *A Search for God in Time and Memory*. "*Passing over* to other lives and times

became a conscious project for me in writing this second book, and *coming back* with

new insight to my own life and times."[59] Whereas he had passed over to cultures in his

first book, in the second Dunne "became engaged in passing over to lives. It was there

that I began to use the term 'passing over' and began to study the different standpoints,

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56. Dunne, *The Way*, xi.
57. Dunne, *Reasons*, 149.
58. John S. Dunne, *The City of the Gods*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978),
viii.
59. Dunne, *Journey*, 45.

biographical and autobiographical, from which a life can be understood."[60] Nilson notes

that passing over is one of three facets of Dunne's overall method, along with the

aforementioned equation of method with journey, and, as Dunne puts it "a process of

eliciting images from feelings, attaining insight into those images, and converting

insights into a guide for life."[61] While Dunne occasionally uses one of these three aspects

independently of the others, he will also use "passing over and coming back to refer to (a)

conjunction of all three components."[62]

In his third book, *The Way of All the Earth*, Dunne passes over to religions.. To

pass over into the great religions of the world, Dunne would write three decades later, is

to enter into the "shaking of the foundations that they bring about. Buddhism shakes the

foundations of the self…Christianity shakes the foundations of life and death…Islam

shakes the foundations of our will and purpose."[63] How, or perhaps why, is a passing

over to the religions possible when they often seem separated by a gulf that may at once

seem both spiritual and doctrinal? It is possible, Dunne writes, "in virtue of (the) common

experience of a center of stillness surrounded by silence…There is a unity of religious

experience, therefore, as well as the 'varieties of religious experience,' and the unity is

that of the heart as our center of stillness surrounded by silence, while the varieties are

those of the reasons of the heart known in the various religions."[64] As Dunne put it more

directly elsewhere, "the great religions each consist of unique insights into the common

experience of humanity. There is a depth in common experience, I want to say, that is

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60. Dunne, *The Way*, xi-xii.
61. Nilson, 69.
62. Ibid, 70.
63. Dunne, *Journey*, 47-48.
64. Dunne, *Circle*, 11.

revealed in the great religions."[65] Or, again, "The possibility of passing over seems to imply that each man is somehow all men, that each life is somehow all lives."[66] Every person to whom Dunne might pass over, then, "is a microcosm, that…reflects the whole universe from a particular standpoint."[67]

In 1978, Dunne took a voyage through South America that included a five day journey up the Amazon. This trip would prompt Dunne's next experiment in passing over, which is memorably documented in *The Church of the Poor Devil*. At its most basic level, the passing over Dunne undertook in South America was simply a "passing over from one social class to another." He was also passing over, though, from one culture to another, and "ultimately, as it turned out, from personal religion, as I now see my own starting point, to the religion of the poor."[68] Interestingly, though, Dunne never seems to have lost sight of the fact that any human standpoint that seems absolute is necessarily illusive. The absolute standpoint, and the standpoint to which Dunne was aspiring, belonged to God. "So the mystery of encounter involved me in an encounter with popular religion as well as with the great religions, and an encounter with women as well as with men, but my *thou* was never really other than God, and my journey was always a journey with God in time."[69] Dunne would come to see passing over as an expansive method of theological reflection, encompassing even something so simple as reading, which "becomes a passing over into the thoughts, the lives, the times of others."[70] Even with

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65. Dunne, *Journey*, 49.
66. Dunne, *The Way*, 72.
67. Ibid, 73.
68. Dunne, *Poor Devil*, vii.
69. Dunne, *Journey*, 69.
70. Dunne, *Love's Mind*, 36.

passing over covering so much ground as to involve Dunne's reading, the God Who is revealed in Jesus seems always to serve as the backdrop of Dunne's method. It has already been seen how passing over builds upon Dunne's early work on the theology of participation found in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. Dunne sought to participate in the being of God, and that, Dunne found, depended on his willingness to pass over to Jesus Himself: "It is a matter of entering into his relationship with God, letting his God be our God, letting his *thou* become our *thou* and his *I am* become our own *I am* so he can say 'I in them and thou in me.'"[71]

This section has tried to survey the full territory covered by John Dunne's notion of passing over and coming back. This method has been traced through the course of Dunne's major works, and it has been seen how his method was an essentially hospitable one, enabling him to engage with other people, places, cultures, and eras. Sometimes this passing over involves actual travel, sometimes it involves encountering the other face to face, sometimes it is conducted through reading. Ultimately, though, it points Dunne back toward the standpoint of God, a standpoint illuminated by the person of Jesus. At this point, now that the broadest contours of passing over have been sketched, it is necessary to delve deeper into some of the specific instances of passing over so as to see Dunne's method 'in action.'

The City of the Gods

Dunne's first book, *The City of the Gods*, was published in 1965. Intending to write a work on ancient political theology, Dunne received a grant for a year of research

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71. Dunne, *Reading*, viii.

and writing at Princeton. As he read the classics at Princeton, however, Dunne found

himself focusing his attention on something far closer to home than ancient political

theology: "my feelings were all about my youth passing and my life opening up before

me to death."[72] Passing over and coming back are not explicitly mentioned anywhere in

this book, but it seems that by the time he was nearly through with the writing, Dunne

had formulated a question that would spur much of the theological work he would pursue

for the remainder of his career: "If I must some day die, what can I do to satisfy my

desire to live?"[73]

Reading the classics, in particular *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, had prompted Dunne to

take his earlier focus of ancient political theology and re-direct it toward asking how

various societies throughout history had grappled with the certainty of death. It is no

great wonder, then, that Dunne would focus a considerable part of his book on

exploring—or, as the older Dunne would have put it, passing over to—the myths of these

societies. "What we call 'myths' at the present time…are usually expressions of the

experience of earlier times, and what we are willing to regard as myths current in our

own time are for the most part what we recognize to be survivals or revivals of these

earlier myths." The myths, as Dunne saw clearly, cannot properly be understood as

artifacts that existed only on the fringes of the societies that created them. "It will not be

the accessory elements of our own culture which will be regarded as myth in the

future…but the most important element of it, the measure by which we judge earlier

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72. Dunne, *Journey*, 41.
73. Dunne, *City*, v.

myths to be myths, the standpoint which makes the modern man modern."[74] Reading

Gilgamesh led Dunne to look at these various myths as solutions to the problem of death,

something with which all societies have obviously had to contend.[75]

Dunne no doubt saw something of his own experience in the story of Gilgamesh.

At first, Dunne found, Gilgamesh "suffers from the common illusion of being immortal,

regarding death as something which happens to people in general not to himself in

particular. After he had come face to face with death too many times to retain this

illusion, Gilgamesh "sets out to acquire a name and a fame that will live on after his

death." Perhaps that way something of him might survive as a lasting testament to

accomplishments, or at least to his existence. The story, though, is dominated largely by

the third stage, "in which his whole existence becomes a desperate quest for life

everlasting."[76] For Dunne, Gilgamesh was much more, therefore, than simply the product

of his own time, or his own culture. Instead, Gilgamesh became an "image not only of

archaic man but of man himself because we can discern in his stark figure the reason why

no standpoint has remained the leading edge of human experience for long."[77] As epoch

gives way to epoch throughout history, as societies put forth different solutions to the

problem of death, humanity never, Dunne contends, ultimately breaks out of Gilgamesh's

shadow.

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74. Ibid.
75. Ibid, vi.
76. Ibid, 2.
77. Ibid, vi.

Passing over to ancient Egypt, Dunne finds the pyramids "standing witness to the Egyptian concern over life after death."[78] The Egyptians were able to see a possibility for life after death insofar as "identity was believed to consist in physical individuality and was thought therefore to be conserved as long as the body was preserved in the tomb."[79] Obviously, the ancient Egyptians were not constructing pyramids for everyone and anyone. Rather, the common people were seen to share "vicariously in the experience of the king," who "lived the life which had been lived by the dead king…"[80] The aggregate of these deceased individuals, it seems, became "an anonymous collectivity consisting of all the dead who had become Osiris."[81] Graves were robbed, however, and some bodies were not protected or preserved forever. Feeling cut off from their past, then, the Egyptians no doubt found their solution to death to be wanting.

Passing over next to ancient Greece, Dunne finds in Homer a very different answer to death, predicated in no small part on a very different relationship between the people and their gods. Whereas earlier peoples might have waged war so as to capture a goddess whose residence was claimed by two cities, Homer writes instead of Helen, a goddess fallen down to the human level. This development points, Dunne contends, to "The despair of all fellowship with the gods…"[82] Dunne finds in Homer a contention that war, since it cannot be fought to win proximity to the gods, is essentially absurd. When Odysseus rejects, in the *Odyssey*, the goddess Calypso, he proposes a solution to the problem of death rather different than that of the Egyptians. He chose "to be happy and

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78. Ibid, 17.
79. Ibid, 219.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid, 21.
82. Ibid, 34.

die rather than to be unhappy and live forever."[83] Though this seems to be, at first, a

renunciation of the quest for immortality undertaken by Gilgamesh, Dunne finds that it is

rather "not because he had no desire for immortality but because he did not want an

immortality which could be attained only through the experience of death. What he

wanted was an indefinite prolongation of his earthly existence."[84] For Odysseus, this

would have been a prolongation of his earthly existence *at home*.

Dunne surveys the confluence of historical factors that lead to the idea that the

soul is immortal, and notes how this new conviction altered the urgency of the problem of

death: "Once the soul is considered immortal, though, and thought to enjoy something

more than a ghostly existence after death in a nether world, the desire for the boundless

perpetuation of the present life tends to lose its force."[85] From there Dunne finds the

rationale behind the development of Socratic and Platonic philosophy, as well as various

forms of Eastern mysticism. Instead of satisfying the desire to live, these schools of

thought advocated a renunciation of the will to live and recommended one engage instead

"in what Plato and Socrates call the 'practice of dying.'"[86] In Christianity, too, Dunne

sees similarities to these other mystical perspectives. These similarities seem to be

outweighed by "Some fairly salient divergencies," however. Namely, Christianity's

"denial of reincarnation, of fate, of dualism, and of immortality apart from God" tends

"to destroy the significance of mysticism as an escape from the present life."[87]

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83. Ibid, 221.
84. Ibid, 71.
85. Ibid, 112.
86. Ibid, 223.
87. Ibid, 135.

But what of Christianity's answer to the problem of death? With its doctrine of only one God, and that this God is, in fact, the God of the living (to whom even the dead are alive), Christianity did not so much offer a new answer to the problem of death as it changed "the very terms of the problem."[88] A post-death existence that appears attractive no longer seems so clearly to be a thing worth strenuously avoiding. Dunne passes over to a number of other ancient and medieval perspectives before bringing *The City of the Gods* to a close, but it is telling that the end brings him back again to Christianity. Is this end the equivalent of Dunne's later notion of coming back? After learning how various peoples answered the problem of death, the end of the book finds Dunne haunted by Christ, rather than Gilgamesh. "Not having the power to lay down his life and take it up again, man cannot know about Christ's Resurrection the way he knows about facts which correspond to what he himself knows how to do or experience." "What man should do if he must some day die is be willing to lay down his life."[89] If one lays down his life as it is, and relies on God to take it up again, "released from all evil," he will discover that which is, in Dunne's estimation, "man's last and best hope, the hope Christ has brought to him, the Christ who said 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he be dead, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."[90] This initial, academic foray into the method of passing over is a clear indication of how expansive Dunne's intellectual hospitality could be. To pass over into another civilization, Dunne shows himself capable of immersing himself in the perspective of an

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88. Ibid, 149.
89. Ibid, 228, 229.
90. Ibid, 230.

entirely different (and oftentimes extinct) culture, bringing the fruits of those experiences back into his assessment of Christianity.

A Search for God in Time and Memory

Dunne's second book, *A Search for God in Time and Memory*, was suggested to him by the method he followed in the *The City of the Gods*. "I thought at first that individuals would simply be instances of the answer to death in society, but then I saw how personal memory of the past meant a similarly personal anticipation of the future."[91] Rather than seeing people merely as microcosms of their societal context, Dunne begins in his second book to consciously pass over to the lives of other individuals. This may be seen as a more daring practice of hospitality than that which involved passing over to a culture: it is surely harder to be open to concrete individuals—with all their flaws—than to more abstract groups of people. The hope, for Dunne, was to shed light on what he could not see by learning what others could.

At the very beginning of *A Search for God in Time and Memory*, Dunne tells—or perhaps warns—his reader that the journey is to be an intense one. "It is a search that will carry us on quests and journeys through life stories, through hells, purgatories, and heavens, through ages of life, through stories of God. It is the sort of thing you might undertake if you were writing an autobiography or composing a personal creed."[92] As such, time was clearly very much on Dunne's mind. His path through this book would require him to be attentive to his life, to his memory, to the way that his lifetime fit into time as such. The kind of self-awareness that would come from this attentiveness to self,

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91. Dunne, *Journey*, 43-44.
92. Dunne, *Search*, vii.

Dunne argues, will enhance "greatly your ability to understand lives other than your own. You find yourself able to pass over from the standpoint of your life to those of others, entering into a sympathetic understanding of them, finding resonances between their lives and your own, and coming back once again…"[93] Whereas Jesus was something that Dunne seemed to rediscover at the end of *The City of the Gods*, He is rather more conspicuously present here, as if always looming on the horizon. For "It is by passing over that a man makes contact with Jesus, becomes contemporary with Jesus, and it is by coming back to himself from this that Jesus in turn becomes contemporary with him."[94]

It is important to remember, though, that none of this is to say that death was no longer on Dunne's mind. To reflect on one's life, after all, may certainly involve reflecting on the end of one's lifetime. Instead, *A Search for God in Time and Memory* is still quite obviously the work of someone trying to satisfy his desire to live, despite the inevitability of death. Passing over to St. Paul, Dunne finds a perspective on death which obviously continued to be highly influential down through the time of the Protestant Reformation and even down to the present. "The sting of death is sin," Paul memorably declares to the Corinthians.[95] The antidote, then, to death's sting is the righteousness found in reliance upon Christ's own faithfulness. All people, according to Paul, deserve to die, because all people are unrighteous. "Evidently," Dunne concludes, "unrighteousness gives death its sting by making a man worthy of death and making him know that he is worthy of death. The sting is the consciousness that one is worthy of

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93. Ibid, viii-ix.
94. Ibid, xi.
95. I Corinthians 15:56.

death. What righteousness does, consequently, is not to eliminate death itself but to eliminate this worthiness of death."[96] The quest for justification, something which Paul clearly believed could not be conferred on the self by the self, was a "quest for divine acceptance."[97]

Jesus challenged the earlier, Pharisaical conceptions of God and God's justice in that He, despite being condemned to die via crucifixion, was unconditionally accepted by God. For Paul, therefore, "The news about Jesus…was the revelation of a God who was righteous in a way quite different from that which would have been expected by a Pharisee."[98] For Dunne, then, to pass over from his modern standpoint to that of the New Testament was to go from being "responsible for making our lives unacceptable or only conditionally acceptable to a standpoint where we appear to be unable to make our lives unconditionally acceptable."[99] Coming back, though, Dunne finds that Christ, "by his willingness to be our fellow, appears to have brought unconditional acceptance to us."[100]

It is unsurprising that Dunne passes over next to St. Augustine, and it is also unsurprising, given the nature of *A Search for God in Time and Memory*, that Augustine would have tremendous influence over Dunne's thinking. In thinking about his life back to its beginning, Augustine had been led to think back even further, to the very beginning of everything. This is why Augustine's *Confessions* end with chapters on memory and time. It was St. Augustine's *Confessions*, therefore, that suggested to Dunne the title of

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96. Dunne, *Search*, 35.
97. Ibid, 37.
98. Ibid, 40.
99. Ibid, 42.
100. Ibid.

his second book.[101] Unlike Paul's story, Augustine's strikes Dunne as possessing a "genuinely archetypal character," because it "is told (as) a story of experience, of the running of a gamut of experience, rather than as a tale of unique deeds and achievements."[102] It is this focus on experience rather than deeds, Dunne posits, that led Augustine to carry his search for God "to the outermost limit of his past experience, to the nothingness that preceded his conception and birth. It is here that he finds God."[103] This nothingness brought Augustine face to face with his own contingency, his own dependence on God for his very being. In this contingency, Dunne argues, Augustine saw common ground shared by himself and the entire world, finding himself "in some real sense contemporaneous with the beginning of time."[104]

In passing over to the standpoint of the modern person, Dunne observes how remarkable it is that "Christ has been able to remain the archetypal man of Western civilization in its transition from medieval to modern form."[105] Whereas medieval people could experience mediation between themselves and God in both spiritual and temporal affairs, the Reformation and 'Revolution' broke these structures of mediation down and led to a drastic restructuring of life in the West. As the preeminent Mediator between God and humanity, though, Christ could be the gold standard for the medieval mediators but also for the alienated person of modern times. As Dunne observes, "The words 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' which Christ uttered upon the cross, have become meaningful to modern man in his unmediated existence in a way that they could not be to

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101. Dunne, *Journey*, 45.
102. Dunne, *Search*, 46.
103. Ibid, 169.
104. Ibid, 57.
105. Ibid, 75.

the medieval man living in the hierarchical world of mediation."[106] The loss of mediation

between the human and the divine in early modern times leaves the individual exposed to

the brilliant glare of divine scrutiny, Dunne finds. Passing over to the standpoint of

figures as diverse as Luther, Erasmus, Calvin, John Wesley, and John Bunyan, Dunne

explores the different means of coming to terms with the loss of spiritual mediation.

From there, Dunne passes over the standpoints of the autonomous man, the

human person in an age after the temporal mediators of medieval lord and king no longer

stood between her and the God of the living. In particular, Dunne surveys the

perspectives of Rousseau, Wordsworth, and Goethe, with plenty of insights from

Nietzsche, Jung, and Sartre included along the way. Indeed, Dunne discovers that the

modern man is left with the responsibility of inventing himself, "eliciting images from

feelings, attaining insight into the images and converting insight into a guide of life…"[107]

The Way of All the Earth

In 1968, Dunne set out on his first journey throughout South America, during

which he found his thoughts settling on a new inspiration: "'Not to be afraid of Freud and

Marx,' I told myself, Freud saying religion is wishful belief and Marx saying it is the

opiate of the people, but to look for insight in the great religions of humanity."[108] This

refusal to be afraid of Freud and Marx, despite their notorious antagonism toward

Christianity, is interestingly reflective of Dunne's hospitality. Instead of throwing up

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106. Ibid.
107. Ibid, 219.
108. Dunne, *Journey*, 47.

walls and hiding behind the defenses of his own intellectual and religious tradition, Dunne desired to seek truth wherever it could be found. Dunne determined around this time, apparently, that his intellectual quest was aiming for understanding rather than certainty. "The circle of truths becomes smaller and smaller on the quest of certainty, I thought, but it becomes larger and more encompassing on the quest of understanding."[109] Dunne spent the academic year of 1969-1970 at Berkeley, where he worked on his book, *The Way of All the Earth*. In this, his third book, Dunne attempts to pass over to the great religions of the world, and into the lives of Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad.

In the midst of this search for wisdom in the great religions of the world, Dunne clearly refines—and amplifies—his understanding of passing over and coming back. "Is a religion coming to birth in our time?" Dunne asks at the beginning of his preface. Acknowledging this as a possibility, and taking Gandhi as his model, Dunne describes passing over and labels it "the spiritual adventure of our time."[110] At no point in the book does Dunne slip into a lazy assessment of the great religions that sees nothing but common ground. To the contrary, Dunne is consistently clear and fair in his delineation of the differences among the religions and the men who founded them. Nevertheless, implied in the very method of passing over is the awareness of some commonality, some shared experience that makes passing over meaningful in the first place, and coming back an enrichment of some kind. Originally, Dunne recalls, "I expected that experiments with truth would mean gaining new experiences by walking new paths…As I went on, though, I began to realize that the experiences on which the religions were based were common

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109. Ibid.
110. Dunne, *The Way*, ix.

experiences, and that the uncommon thing was insight into the experiences, the 'enlightenment' and the 'revelation.'" The title of the book, taken from the King James Version's translation of a phrase found both in Joshua and 1 Kings, Dunne chose "to mean the common experience of mankind and wish to say by it that the religions consist of insight into the common experiences of mankind."[111]

Taking Gandhi's experiments with truth as his model, Dunne delves immediately into the human problems of love and war, and examines how one's religious instinct to avoid both is challenged by the incarnate deity found in both Christianity and Hinduism. Dunne imagines one climbing a mountain "to escape from love and war, for he feared that love might so encumber and complicate his pursuit of happiness that he could never be happy, and that war might bring on the loss of everything he already possessed and of his hopes for the future besides." Though one might seek self-sufficiency through knowledge at the mountaintop, it also becomes clear that "he had lost everything else by escaping from love and war," so he turns around "and (starts) to make his way down into the valley again."[112] Though Gandhi's vow of celibacy and commitment to non-violence might seem a part of his own escape up the mountain, Dunne contends rather that they are part of Gandhi's return down the mountainside. Gandhi's celibacy was, according to Dunne, "not a retreat from the two-person to the one-person situation so much as an advance from the two-person to the many-person situation; (it) was an experiment in universal love."[113] Similarly, Gandhi's nonviolence was "not a refusal to fight so much as

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111. Ibid, xii.
112. Ibid, 23.
113. Ibid, 24.

a willingness to fight with a handicap, namely without using violence, and to run thereby

a greater personal risk in the struggles of mankind; (his strategy of nonviolence) was an

experiment in courage."[114]

In writing on the simple life of the religious man, Dunne's attention turns to the

life and teaching of Buddha, for whom both the flesh and spirit could burn with desire.

"The desire that was satisfied yesterday," Dunne learns, whether it is a bodily or spiritual

desire, "arises again today and is stronger and more insistent for having been satisfied

yesterday."[115] To live life in search of contentment, then, may well prove to be illusory.

Instead, Dunne wonders, perhaps it is well-being that ought to be the goal of the simple

life? Or possibly bliss? Dunne suggests that both Jesus and Buddha found a way to live

well, and be well, without searching for or finding contentment. Indeed, the lives of

Buddha and Jesus are quite similar in Dunne's mind, despite the life of Jesus being

"greatly telescoped." Buddha renounced luxury and lived the ascetic life for seven years

before finding a middle way between the two, which he spent the remainder of his life

trying to share with others. In much the same way, Jesus spent forty days in the desert

and had perhaps only a few years to spread the good news, in comparison with the four

decades of Buddha's public life.[116]

The brevity of Jesus's life poses a problem for any Christian, in that He did not

have an opportunity to demonstrate how to live the second half of one's life. In the

example of Buddha, however, Dunne sees that "Evidently…the ultimate length of life

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114. Ibid.
115. Ibid, 27.
116. Ibid, 28.

does not matter; the important thing is to find one's way to bliss and then spend the remainder of one's life, long or short, sharing one's insight with others."[117] But what of the person who has already reached middle age and has yet to find bliss or the path toward it? "Communicating whatever limited insight he has found might in fact be the best method of searching for the way…As one communicates the limited insight one has, one receives further insight."[118]

Passing over is, again, part and parcel of what is for Dunne a quest for understanding rather than certainty. After all, "the more intensely one seeks certainty the more uncertain one becomes. Perhaps this is because what is sought…is a state of repose, a repose of heart or of mind which is incompatible by its very nature with the restless state of seeking. One can find repose only by ceasing to seek for it." If, however, one seeks for, say, "inspiration or movement of the heart—one is likely to find what one is looking for."[119] If one is able to change her orientation in this way, she will no longer be "anxiously trying to make sure of other persons," and "no longer depressed by (her) failure to be reassured by them."[120] Things like reaching agreement between perspectives, or restoring confidence in one's own perspective, will give way to goals such as attaining insight and understanding. This will make passing over possible.

In chapter two, it was shown that Christian hospitality of any kind involves risk on the part of the practitioner. For a practitioner of Christian intellectual hospitality like John Dunne, the intellectual nature of his hospitality did not abolish or even minimize the

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117. Ibid, 38.
118. Ibid, 39.
119. Ibid, 114, 115.
120. Ibid, 43.

risks that he took. Perhaps he would find something he could consider superior to Christianity, and would therefore abandon the Gospel. Perhaps he would have come to abandon faith altogether, able to do little more than lament the lack of absolute agreement between religious traditions. The method of passing over that Dunne both followed and advocated, given its orientation toward understanding rather certainty, seems to have made any risks worth taking. Of course, the practitioner of Dunne's brand of Christian intellectual hospitality will not be the same after having passed over. "His purity of heart, his singleness of mind, his peace of soul, such as they are, will in the last analysis be those of the Gospel. And yet his understanding of the Gospel will be transformed by his understanding of the Dharma and the Koran."[121]

In short, Dunne's passing over, like all of the examples of Christian hospitality explored in chapter two, rests in no small part on a willingness to receive even as much as giving. Dunne argues that Jesus was, Himself, deeply influenced by John the Baptist, and therefore suggests that the life of Jesus "can be seen as a rich and full life of giving and receiving." There is real danger, then, for a Christian to be unwilling to pass over. As Dunne writes:

> If I try to live a life of giving without receiving, communicating my insights to others but unwilling to allow others to have an influence on me or to give me anything, I find myself becoming a troubled man before others, anxious to be well received by them, a troubled man by himself, keenly aware of the lack of intimacy in his life, a man with a troubled body, troubled by urges of sexuality and violence to take what he does not receive. The willingness to receive tends to change all this. It breaks down the unwillingness which keeps others at a distance…[122]

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121. Ibid, 130.
122. Ibid, 182.

The Church of the Poor Devil

During a 1978 trip through South America, his second, Dunne spent five days on a riverboat on the Amazon. Having come across mention of a small chapel called the Church of the Poor Devil in a guidebook, Dunne was intrigued and asked a group of students traveling on the riverboat to help him find it. What he found was a small wedding chapel that was officially called the Chapel of Santo Antonio. It was the unofficial name, though, that held Dunne's attention. "Who was the Poor Devil? I could find no answers then, but later I became so enamored of the name and intrigued by it that I decided to name a book for it, *The Church of the Poor Devil*, a book about the religion of the poor."[123] Clearly, a great deal more than the name of a chapel had struck Dunne on his journey. Having passed over to cultures, individuals, and religions in his first three books, Dunne does a little bit of all three in this one. Dunne's intellectual hospitality is extended here to the poor he encountered, poor from very different cultures than Dunne's own, and with a commitment to Christianity that seemed both familiar and foreign at the same time. As Dunne would later recall, his passing over in this book was, even here, inseparable from the overarching quest of his life: "…the mystery of encounter involved me in an encounter with popular religion as well as with the great religions, and an encounter with women as well as with men, but my *thou* was never really other than God, and my journey was always a journey with God in time."[124]

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123. Dunne, *Journey*, 67.
124. Ibid, 69.

Within the book, the Church of the Poor Devil is used by Dunne as an image for the religion of the poor. It meant, for Dunne, "an adventure in passing over from personal religion to the religion of the poor and coming to a vision of human misery and the heart's longing."[125] Dunne finds in the religion of the poor two elements, each of which were unfamiliar—or at least different, than they were in his experience of personal religion: human misery and the heart's longing. Dunne sees danger in failing to appreciate the reality of either. To take the heart's longing as an illusion, Dunne fears it would be "impossible for me to enter into sympathy with the sigh, the heart, and the soul of the poor. I am left with the conditions under which the poor live, but I have no way of getting inside the poor themselves."[126] To fail to see the reality of human misery as real would be to fail "to understand what the heart's longing means to the poor, living under conditions of poverty and deprivation."[127] Throughout *The Church of the Poor Devil*, Dunne attempts to take both to be real, so he might "come to a vision of the human road as a way leading from the human condition to the heart's desire, a way of living in our naked humanity.'[128]

Dunne vividly remembers a scene from the voyage in which the two classes of people—rich and poor—were neatly separated into two styles of living quarters on the boat; the poor had hammocks on the lowest and middle decks, while the rich (including Dunne) had cabins on the middle and upper decks. Passing alongside a village made up of many little huts on the riverside, people from the village began to row out to the

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125. Dunne, *Poor Devil*, vii.
126. Ibid, viii.
127. Ibid, ix.
128. Ibid.

riverboat on their small canoes. While the people from the cabins just watched, the people from the hammocks laughed, cheered, and threw clothes down for the people in the canoes to retrieve. The people in the hammocks, Dunne concluded, already "shared a life with the people in the canoes, while the people from the cabins stood outside of that life."[129]

The scene moved Dunne to ask if it were possible to pass over to discover the human essence that joins such seemingly disparate groups together. "Is it possible for a person from one social class to understand one from another…Is it possible for a person from one society to understand one from another…?"[130] Even if the only thing that human beings have in common is that they live alone, Dunne contends, that very aloneness is itself not nothing, and may serve as a starting point in passing over. Dunne felt lonely at the sight of other people interacting freely with one another on the riverboat, but seeing the cramped conditions of the poor on the boat made him realize also that he wanted to be alone. Despite the poor's lack of privacy, however, Dunne noticed that they still apparently had their own thoughts and feelings: "Yet there is common ground: we both live in the solitude of our heart. Really we live in the same solitude. It is as if we lived in the same wilderness, the same desert or the same forest. We can meet there."[131]

What is the result of such a meeting? What can Dunne, or anyone else for that matter, gain from passing over from personal religion to the religion of the poor? Dunne certainly experienced a broadening of horizons in passing over and coming back in this

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129. Ibid, 1, 2.
130. Ibid, 5.
131. Ibid, 8.

way: "There is an awakening of soul…I go from concern about personal destiny to concern about the common fate, from feelings surrounding my relation to the things of life to feelings surrounding the things themselves, the common joys and sorrows."[132] Whereas Dunne had once thought of his personal religion as an expression of his own situation, his own aloneness, passing over to the religion of the poor led him to see how "my longing is connected with their longing."[133] Dunne's aloneness, or indeed the sum total of his suffering, he found, is "my link to the suffering of humanity."[134]

Christ

Throughout Dunne's employment of passing over and coming back, he consistently practiced an almost breathtaking degree of intellectual hospitality. Whether he was passing over to cultures, individuals, religions, or economic classes, Dunne was always able to consider the very best of what the other had to offer, and see how his new insights might help illuminate elements of the human experience which may have been obscure to him, before. Hospitality requires a willingness to make room for the other, space within which the other might be able to become a friend. Hospitality certainly entails an openness to sharing what one has, but it is equally dependent on an openness to receive what the other might have to offer in return. Passing over is a clear example of intellectual hospitality. Dunne's investigations took him all throughout history and all over the world. His journey, though wide-ranging, rarely gives the impression of restlessness, however. What anchored him, and prevented passing over from becoming a

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132. Ibid, 56.
133. Ibid, 86.
134. Ibid, 116.

thinly-disguised intellectual waywardness? What gave him the confidence to venture into

the hospitable embrace of others, and the strength to make room for the insights of the

other within his own intellectual home? It has been shown, already, that Dunne's method

proceeds from an awareness of the human person's shifting standpoint over time. With

only God's standpoint being absolute, every perspective to which Dunne passed over had

the potential to augment his own with some new insight into the way of God's world.

This dissertation has shown how, for both Thomas Merton and Bernard Lonergan,

intellectual hospitality is not something that is accomplished or practiced in spite of one's

anchoring in the Catholic tradition, but is rather an expression of that tradition. Dunne's

hospitality is no different. This chapter has demonstrated how Dunne's early work on a

theology of participation in the thought of Thomas Aquinas contributes to his method,

developed later, of passing over. If someone exists through her participation in the being

of God, she therefore has, by virtue of her own existence, a capacity for God. The

doctrine of the Incarnation suggests this capacity has a kenotic potential. In passing over,

especially in passing over to Christ Himself, she is enabled to mirror and even participate

in Christ's own kenosis.[135]

If passing over was, from the time of the first book wherein it was a conscious

method, a means of making contact with Christ, it would seem, then, that Dunne was at

no point thinking that passing over involved risking his identity as a Catholic Christian.

Intriguingly, however, Dunne remembered elsewhere that his method of coming back

apparently *did*, at least for a short time, leave his ongoing commitment to the Christian

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135. Dunne, *Search*, 19, 22, 25.

faith an open question. During a 1974 trip to the Holy Land, Dunne had an opportunity to spend time in friendship with Jews, Christians, and Muslims and in study of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. "But the really transforming experience for me came when…I went a little apart and sat reading the Beatitudes...It was as if I were meeting Christ and he were saying 'Follow me!' I realized I am a Christian and not simply a universal man who can understand all the religions."[136] What can be made of this realization? To what extent had Dunne, truly, begun to think of himself as an entirely objective student of religion rather than a Christian? Dunne gives us little upon which to base a clear conclusion on this point. At the very least, though, it is fair to say that Dunne clearly had made himself vulnerable in his passing over and coming back. If authentic hospitality necessarily involves risk, Dunne had, undoubtedly, undertaken Christian hospitality as he sought to engage the other.

For Dunne, to be a Christian is to enter into the relationship of Jesus and the Father. Rather than suggesting that He takes our place in His sacrifice on the cross, Dunne suggests that Jesus enables us to take His place. This involves an experience of both God's intimacy with and distance from us. "What happens in Christianity, I believe, is that we enter into the 'unconditional relation,' as Martin Buber calls it, of Jesus with his God, whom he calls Abba."[137] While the feeling of God's remoteness can be frightening and real, Jesus's vantage point—and our crossing over into it—tames it with an awareness of God's immanence. Dunne quotes Buber again, in his observation that "If separation ever touches (Jesus), his solidarity of relation is the greater; he speaks to

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136. Dunne, *Journey*, 62.
137. Ibid, 65.

others only out of this solidarity."[138] It is this vantage point of Jesus that makes Christianity remain distinctive and appealing to Dunne. His most extensive reflections on Jesus are found in his 2000 work, *Reading the Gospel*. Reflecting on his (at that point) nearly half a century-long career as a theologian, teacher, and writer, Dunne writes that "My own odyssey of reading and traveling has been an experience of the mystical unity of the great religions. It is in coming back, though, and going deep in my own religion, in planting my oar deep in the heart of my homeland that I've come to perceive the uniqueness of Christianity."[139]

Preliminary Conclusions

As a young man, Dunne intended to do with modern thought what Aquinas had done in his *Summa*. This synthesis of knowing may never have been completed, but Dunne nevertheless serves as a clear exemplar of the goal of a university—Catholic or otherwise. Dunne always understands his standpoint to be a dynamic one, ready at any time to be augmented by whatever broadening of horizons might come from passing over into the perspectives of other people, other cultures, or other religions. For the passing over to be fruitful, however, there must be an initial perspective and there must be an intention of coming back to it with the fruit of what has been learned.

Dunne was, by all accounts, an accomplished professor, but his method demonstrates less teaching than, for instance, Merton's apostolate of friendship. This can no doubt be attributed largely to the fact that many of the perspectives to which Dunne passed over were perspectives of people long since passed on. Dunne does not provide as

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138. Dunne, *Circle*, 16.
139. Dunne, *Reading*, 5.

systematic a method for intellectual investigation as Lonergan, but he does propose in passing over a method that really anyone with a standpoint might follow (even if it is someone who has not given cognition much attention). Dunne's intellectual hospitality is therefore different than the other two brands surveyed by this dissertation. There would seem to be a ready applicability of Dunne's method for both students and scholars of Catholic universities who seek to be hospitable in both the classroom or the public lecture hall. Just as one might run great risk in opening up his home to a needy passerby, John Dunne ran the risk of damaging his commitment to Catholicism as he passed over to the various perspectives he did over the course of his career. Nevertheless, that commitment gave him a frame of reference by which to measure the insights that he learned, and also an intellectual home into which to invite the other in the first place. Dunne's hospitality is further indication of the need for a solid grounding within a tradition. One might easily be captivated by the breadth of Dunne's quest to pass over, but one must also appreciate the importance of Dunne's mooring in Catholic, and especially Thomistic, thought.

If a Catholic university is successful in welcoming students into conversation with the Catholic tradition, students may, following Dunne's lead, have little reason to fear the perspectives of even the most controversial of professors, authors, or guest speakers. In order to pass over, in effect, students need something to which to come back: they need a place to call their intellectual home. For the Catholic intellectuals on campus, Dunne's brand of intellectual hospitality is certainly a call to be mindful of their role in forming their students, but it is simultaneously a call for courageous engagement with the other. Even for non-Catholic students there are significant ramifications of Dunne's brand of

intellectual hospitality. Though a Catholic university's role is not to proselytize, all students should be invited to run the risk of passing over into Catholic perspectives and benefitting from anything good and true that they find within those perspectives. Indeed, even most of the Catholic students themselves could find passing over into Catholic perspectives to be an exercise in becoming vulnerable in the search for truth.

Though Dunne's books do not read like those of most theologians, there is a clearly Catholic vision running throughout his written work. He never seems to have 'outgrown,' for instance, the Thomistic sense of all things proceeding from and ultimately returning to God. Also, Dunne never left Jesus out of the picture, seeking always to make contact with Him as he sought to participate in Jesus's kenosis by emptying himself out through passing over to the other. Not all members of a Catholic university community, of course, would opt to see their learning as a participation or reflection of Jesus, but this hardly seems crucial. These same faculty and students are already contributing to the mission and identity of the Catholic university to seek the truth wherever it is to be found, even if they are in profound disagreement over the Source of that truth. In the same way, the intellectual hospitality of John Dunne, though thoroughly Catholic, can be applicable to all.

Chapter 6: Hospitality in Catholic Higher Education

Overview

Hospitality is the Christian virtue which makes room for the other to become a friend. While this virtue is no doubt most often considered in physical terms of providing for a guest's bodily needs, there is in the life of the church a need for intellectual hospitality as well. Intellectual hospitality involves the welcoming of someone with a different worldview into conversation with mutual enrichment and even friendship being among the goals. These goals can be achieved regardless of whether any disagreements persist, so long as the other has been hospitably welcomed into a dialogue that involves the practitioner of hospitality accurately reflecting his own point of view, while critically engaging the perspective of the other to both offer and receive truth wherever it is to be found.[1] After a brief recap of the previous five chapters, intellectual hospitality and its potential in the Catholic intellectual life of today will be considered. This consideration will necessarily require an acknowledgement of potential limitations in the practice of hospitality and the difficulty of cultivating intellectual hospitality as a virtue. The unique approaches of Merton, Lonergan, and Dunne to overcoming these difficulties will be explored before I conclude with some recommendations on how intellectual hospitality might be promoted in Catholic higher education.

Chapter one demonstrated the need for a retrieval of hospitality and its application in Catholic higher education. In particular, the ecclesiological shift both signaled and

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1. The "cause of truth" has been described as "the honour and responsibility of a Catholic university…" John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, August, 15, 1990, 4, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html.

further propelled by the Second Vatican Council reoriented the relationship between the

Church and the world. With a new willingness to engage world, the Church had a greater

need for universities capable of hosting the encounter between the very best of Catholic

thought and the many other perspectives that characterize the modern world. With such

openness, however, came challenges to institutions' Catholic identity. Faculty hiring and

invitations to speakers who might be openly antagonistic toward Catholic teaching have

raised questions about how Catholic identity is to be protected or maintained in an era

when the prevalence of vowed religious on campus can no longer serve as a sufficient

assurance of Catholic identity. At the same time, a refusal to engage with the modern

world would also confront Catholic higher education with challenges.[2] Without a robust

intellectual life rising to meet contemporary circumstances, the Church's interpretation

and presentation of the Gospel could easily grow stagnant. Catholic universities could

quickly be relegated to the second tier—or worse.

In the current context, how can a Catholic university navigate the tension between

a desire for the open inquiry proper to a university and the need for fidelity to the

Catholic tradition? The ancient Christian virtue of hospitality represents the most

significant answer to that challenge. Often enough, hospitality has been given as the

rationale for welcoming controversial speakers onto Catholic campuses. Surely

hospitality as a virtue, however, reaches far beyond the welcoming of controversial

speakers to campus and has an entire range of applications at a Catholic university. But,

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2. And would run directly counter to the Second Vatican Council. See The Second Vatican Council, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: Guild Press, 1966).

what are they? And, what exactly *is* hospitality? Must a university's hospitality necessarily involve letting anything and everything happen, or can it have limits?

Chapter two described hospitality as a virtue that encourages both a strong sense of identity and a posture of welcome to and charity toward others. Since Henri Nouwen's retrieval of hospitality as a virtue, it has become clear that hospitality requires a willingness to embrace one's own particularity in order to receive the other. One cannot welcome someone else into his home if he is homeless, either literally or intellectually. In order to make space where the other can become a friend, there needs to be a place where space can be made. In the contemporary context, characterized as it is by widespread fragmentation and specialization of knowledge, intellectual hospitality likewise requires grounding in order to avoid being left adrift. Chapter two also noted a close, circular relationship between hospitality and friendship. The openness that comes with hospitality allows friends to be made, while friendship functions as a school of charity, drawing us out of ourselves and teaching us to grow in the concern for others that makes hospitality possible.

Chapter three presented Thomas Merton as an exemplar of how this circular relationship between hospitality and friendship functions. The Merton who became famous for *The Seven Storey Mountain* would be transformed in the 1950s by his experience of teaching and befriending his fellow monks at Gethsemani Abbey. This transformation instilled in Merton a new desire to share his contemplative perspective with the world in an apostolate of friendship. Throughout the latter half of his monastic life, Merton was able to engage with a stunning range of people with widely divergent

perspectives. Throughout this truly hospitable dialogue, Merton displayed a constant willingness to impart wisdom from his own Catholic tradition even as his dialogue partners taught him a great deal in return. It was Merton's rootedness in Catholicism that freed him for engagement with the other.

Chapter four described the particular challenge posed to Catholic institutional identity in Catholic higher education by the fragmentation of knowledge. Indeed, this must also be seen as an obstacle to a Catholic university's ability to be hospitable in that it encourages the separation of the disciplines and limits one's ability to see common ground upon which dialogue might take place. This chapter described the former prominence of the neo-Scholastic synthesis as well as its ability to synthesize knowledge and be hospitable. With the collapse of neo-Scholasticism, Catholic higher education lacked a unifying vision for how all knowledge might be united. Bernard Lonergan's map of human cognition may well represent the best potential basis for such a vision in that it suggests a common ground beneath the methods of any and all academic disciplines. As was the case with Merton, Lonergan's openness to the other was not unrelated to his commitment to Catholicism but was rather made possible because of it.

In chapter five, John S. Dunne was presented as a third and final example of a Catholic thinker who had clearly possessed and practiced the virtue of intellectual hospitality. Much of Dunne's career centered on his unique method of passing over into the perspectives of others and then coming back to enrich his initial position with the insights he had gleaned by passing over. Throughout Dunne's works, he passes over to people, places, social classes, religions, and civilizations. This ability to be open to the

other is again not something that requires an abandonment of his Catholic worldview, but is rather an expression of his commitment to the Catholic tradition. In particular, Dunne's deep familiarity with Thomistic thinking led him to see passing over as reflective of his participation in the life of the God Who is revealed in Christ.

Disagreements over Catholic identity often seem to take place between two poles: the one is the open inquiry appropriate to the task of any university, and the other is fidelity to the Catholic tradition and Catholic teaching. I join what is likely a healthy majority in trying to maintain a tension between the two while offering a friendly critique to any who would emphasize the one while neglecting the other. To those prioritizing open inquiry, I would suggest that it is shortsighted to suppose that students can walk before they can run. Undergraduates deserve an opportunity to situate themselves in an intellectual tradition before they are left to consider the magnitude of knowledge to which the university will expose them. Without such a grounding, these undergraduates will find it very difficult to cobble together anything close to resembling a cohesive worldview. To those primarily concerned with fidelity to Catholic teaching, I would point out the sheer dynamism which has characterized Catholic thought down through the ages, and more recently the thought of such Catholic intellectuals as Merton, Lonergan, and Dunne. Indeed, Lonergan's thinking on the importance of moving beyond a classicist perspective on culture is helpfully illustrative on this point. The work of the Catholic university may partially be bound up in the transmission of the wisdom of the ages, but there is also a need for the university to conceive its work as an ongoing process of

bringing that wisdom into a critical encounter with human learning as it continually unfolds.[3]

Intellectual Hospitality

The Christian practice of hospitality has long entailed something more substantial than simply providing for the physical needs of a stranger or guest. Of course, it would hardly be hospitable to disregard the hunger, thirst, or discomfort of the guest in one's home. One of the defining characteristics of a distinctively Christian hospitality, though, is the importance of recognition. The person knocking on the door of one's home, whatever their condition and however inconvenient their presence on the doorstep might be, remains someone created in the image of God and someone for whom Christ died. Christian hospitality recognizes, therefore, the inherent dignity and value of the stranger or guest.

What would recognition require in the practice of intellectual hospitality? If one is in conversation with someone of a very different intellectual or faith perspective, what would it mean to *recognize* his/her dignity and value? The answer, I contend, is to critically engage with that person's worldview. To seek, as far as one is capable, to understand the outlook of the other and to seek whether there is anything worth appropriating therein. Such a critical engagement, as has been shown in the cases of Merton, Lonergan, and Dunne, does not mean a lazy acceptance, or even tolerance, of all that one's dialogue partners have to say. Nor is it undertaken with the stubborn posture of the apologist who is unwilling to see the true or the beautiful anywhere but in the mirror.

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3. See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), xi-xii, 123-124.

How does one know if one is engaging critically while remaining hospitable? While this is a difficult question, the answer may well be found in the ancient Christian insistence on dwelling together in common life as an integral part of hospitality. If one's critical engagement with the other takes his/her thoughts seriously, accepting and rejecting anything that deserves to be accepted or rejected, all the while retaining the ability to dwell together, an authentically Christian intellectual hospitality has been achieved.

What separates intellectual hospitality from mere civility, or good manners? The answer here seems to be that true hospitality involves feeling a loss of self.[4] It challenges us to expand our understanding of who our neighbors are, and it reminds us that those who are different—and even those we may have once perceived as adversaries—are people. It also has the ability to shake us out of our complacency. To enter into the perspectives of others may well lead me to question the status quo with a clearer vision. Intellectual hospitality may help me to ask whether cultural norms in our nation, in our city, in our church, or on our campus actually are obstacles on my path of discipleship.

Limitations

Any discussion of limitations on Catholic intellectual hospitality will necessarily be an uncomfortable one. To suggest that there may be limits to how hospitable a Catholic thinker, or even a Catholic university, ought to be will no doubt strike many as backward, and perhaps even painfully reminiscent of an earlier era in Catholic higher education. And yet, practitioners of Christian hospitality always run into limitations, and

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4. One is reminded here first and foremost of Christ's mission, characterized by the hospitable embrace of humanity. This mission, according to St. Paul, was a kenotic one (See Philippians 2:6-11). Within the context of this dissertation, the clearest example of one losing the self in order to emulate Jesus in fully engaging the other is likely Dunne. See John S. Dunne, *A Search for God in Time and Memory*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 21-25.

always have to come to terms with them, however painful it might be. To suggest that intellectual hospitality might be different, that it might be possible to be intellectually hospitable with no limitations whatsoever, may be more reflective of hubris than hospitality.

What, then, are the limitations? Are there perspectives out there with which Catholics simply should not engage? Are there people whose ideas simply should not be allowed on a Catholic university campus? Are there, for instance, certain non—negotiables in the *Catechism* that might serve as a shibboleth for entrance to the campus? It would be hard, after surveying the work of Merton, Lonergan, and Dunne, to answer any of these questions in the affirmative. And yet, all three of those thinkers were formed in an intellectual tradition before their hospitality was sharpened. Rather than asking if there are 'untouchable' perspectives out there, it seems a great deal wiser to prescribe a more introspective path. Catholic universities might ask themselves, for instance, whether their core curricula are, in fact, forming students, or at least encouraging them to enter into an intellectual tradition. They might even ask whether their faculty is strong enough in relevant areas to warrant inviting, say, a famous abortion rights activist to speak on campus. Will the theology department be able and willing to engage students on the issue? Are there scholars on campus with backgrounds on bioethics who might, similarly, engage students? If a socialist politician, or a wealthy capitalist with questionable business dealings of some kind are to be invited to speak on campus, are there members of the faculty who will be able to lead discussions on Catholic social teaching in order to ensure that students will be able to engage those speakers critically while also engaging

with the best of Catholic thought? Given the diversity of Catholic institutions of higher

education, it is difficult to prescribe any 'one size fits all' kind of approach to intellectual

hospitality. To ignore limitations out of hand, however, seems clearly short-sighted.

Merton, Lonergan, and Dunne each suggest something about how to cultivate the virtue

of intellectual hospitality.

Merton

As a young man, Thomas Merton had been as fully immersed in the world as one

could likely be. Eventually, he would flee to the monastery so as to escape from the

world which he had written off as full of obstacles to the spiritual life. Had Merton's

outlook never developed beyond where it was in the writing of *The Seven Storey*

Mountain, he would be a poor source of lessons for the Catholic intellectual life or

Catholic higher education of today. As has been shown, however, Merton's career saw

his thinking develop tremendously, to the point where he was willing to fully engage the

world he had once left behind. A series of important eras in his life served to draw

Merton out of himself to recognize the significance of the other, and even the need for the

other in one's intellectual (and even spiritual!) growth.

After his dismal year at Cambridge, Merton's life took a clear turn for the better

when he enrolled at Columbia University and found a group of men with whom he had

what were likely the first substantial friendships of his life. This circle of friends

contributed much to Merton's embrace of the Catholic faith and the Catholic intellectual

tradition, though they do not seem to have led Merton to a plan of engagement with

perspectives beyond that tradition. Instead, when Merton became Catholic and eventually

a monk, he apparently thought that his journey had reached its climax. The experience of teaching in the monastery, however, shook Merton out of his self-centered spiritual sensibilities to the point where he was able to see something good in other people. Merton's commitment to the rhythm of monastic life and his grounding in the life of his Trappist community helped him to see his solitude as a connectedness to God's world.

This insight eventually led to a proliferation of interactions, both through letters and in person, with people from all over the world and with various views of the world. All the while his apostolate of friendship was being carried out, however, Merton seems to have always appreciated the importance of retaining his identification with a distinctly Catholic outlook. Indeed, his transition toward a more eremitic style of monastic life even as he remained a monk at Gethsemani Abbey demonstrates something of a deepening of his connection to his Catholic monastic grounding rather than a distancing. That Merton was able to sink his roots ever deeper into solitude and his own tradition even as his apostolate of friendship kept his attention all over the world seems to have rested on two points. First, he realized that he would not be able to enter into meaningful dialogue with the other if he himself did not occupy particular intellectual ground. Second, the centrality of Christ in the Catholic worldview was crucial to Merton's unique brand of intellectual hospitality. He was able to develop his idea of the *point vierge* because of his conviction that God could be found at the center of all people, and because he also perceived the world as being permeated by Christ as the Word of God.

Lonergan

A watershed moment in Bernard Lonergan's intellectual development was his early reading of John Henry Newman. Newman's lesson that one should take all difficulties head on was of immense significance to the man who would tackle such a heady topic as human cognition (to say nothing of his other projects). Though neo-Scholasticism's shortcomings are fully appreciated here, it is interesting to remember that Lonergan learned his Aquinas while neo-Scholasticism was at its peak. While Lonergan himself was aware of the limitations of that school of thought as it functioned at the time, he clearly saw the value of having a philosophical framework that might synthesize all knowledge. Rather than starting with the first principles of the Thomists, however, Lonergan would work from the process of human knowing first, and only reason from there to any metaphysical conclusions that might be articulated. While Lonergan's work required that he consider a wide range of academic disciplines and even non-academic paths to knowledge, the goal of a synthesis of knowledge apparently made any risks worth taking in Lonergan's mind. Indeed, the very writing of *Insight* was a majestic demonstration of intellectual hospitality in that Lonergan could not do justice to the topic while working within the confines of how a theologian might think, or a philosopher, or any member of any single discipline.

Dunne

John S. Dunne was well on his way to being a stylistically typical Thomistic theologian when his thirtieth birthday led him to consider death with an intensity that

drove the remainder of his theological reflections. Even before that, though, the roots of

his intellectual hospitality can be seen in his recollections of intending, as a young man,

to do with modern knowledge what Aquinas had done in his own time. To put it simply,

Dunne saw early on that he would have to make room in his thinking for the insights of

someone like Albert Einstein if his thinking were to be as expansive as he wanted it to be.

Though Dunne never wrote his modern *Summa*, he did have an illustrious career as a

teacher and author, in no small part because of his unique theological method of passing

over and coming back. In order to undertake this method, Dunne needed to be someone

to come back to. That Dunne was, like Merton, rooted in his Catholic worldview is clear.

Whatever difficulties there may have been in specific instances of passing over, Dunne

found strength in the way that passing over reflected the mission of Jesus insofar as

passing over required him to empty himself in order to enter into the perspective of the

other.

Recommendations

Intellectual hospitality certainly requires the practitioner to make room where the

other can become friend and the insights of the other can be critically appropriated into

one's own perspective. The legacy of all three Catholic practitioners of Catholic

intellectual hospitality seems also to suggest that this hospitality must also include an

appreciation of the potential sacramentality of one's conversation partners. Rather than

looking at the other simply as, say, a non-Catholic or even a potential Catholic, Merton,

Lonergan and Dunne each appear to have recognized the manner in which the other

might help them advance in their awareness of God's presence in all that is true,

beautiful, and good. Such hospitality has a number of applications on a Catholic university campus. Scholars ought to be hospitable to those working in other disciplines, as well as to the new ideas in their own fields that drive the academic realm forward. Students ought to be hospitable to what will likely be a wide range of new ideas, whether those ideas come from professors, classmates, or guest speakers. These people may very well see the world similarly to how a particular student does, but they may not. Indeed, some of them may even be antagonistic toward a student's Catholic worldview, but this is not necessarily a reason to deny them a hospitable welcome. It also does not mean that Catholics on campus may not learn something valuable from engagement with their ideas. The Catholic university must be hospitable to these same people, as well as to those other members of the Church who have real questions about what a Catholic university should be like. That devout Catholics of various sensibilities have different notions of how a Catholic university should function is a real blessing in that it shows a degree of vitality in contemporary Catholicism. Relatedly, the Catholic university must also be hospitable to the local bishop, who will be uniquely well placed both to help the university maintain its connection to the broader Church as well as communicate to that broader Catholic community the ways in which the Church benefits from a particular university's work.

None of that should sound objectionable. The real difficulty comes, of course, in cultivating this kind of intellectual hospitality on a Catholic university campus. As has been seen, the Church has long been aware—and especially so since Vatican II—that it needs to straddle the twin dynamics of identity and mission. The Church needs to protect

the integrity of the Gospel, but it also needs to boldly carry that Good News into new and potentially ever-changing contexts. Hospitality, as it has been described here, is precisely the virtue needed to help the Church fulfill these two obligations. Catholic universities, often on the front lines of the Church's engagement with the world, seem to have begun realizing this. Hospitality is often given as a justification for the presence of controversial speakers on campus, which certainly makes sense. It is hard to imagine a strong rationale for inviting controversial speakers without any mention of hospitality. As I have tried to make clear, however, hospitality is, like all virtues, a difficult undertaking. To simply throw open the doors and let whatever happens happen is not hospitality. To use hospitality simply as an excuse for maintaining the status quo is not necessarily legitimate, either. I have explored the work of three notable practitioners of Catholic intellectual hospitality. In all three cases, there was clear boldness in their willingness to engage the other, but in all three cases there was a corresponding grounding in the Catholic tradition that made that engagement both possible and meaningful. If a Catholic university is going to truly strive to be hospitable in a manner consistent with what hospitality has entailed throughout Christian history, any use of the term *hospitality* must imply not only an openness, but also a rootedness. Conversations cannot take place between someone and no one.

The most basic recommendation that could be made at this point would no doubt be for a Catholic university to ensure that students read the works of thinkers like Merton, Lonergan, and Dunne, so that they might be given clear examples of what kind of hospitable posture ought to characterize their own intellectual journeys during their time

on campus. And certainly, while basic, this recommendation could certainly do something to stimulate discussions on intellectual hospitality amongst the faculty as well. This dissertation cannot be content to rest on this very modest suggestion, however.

Catholic universities, presumably like other institutions of higher learning, exist for a number of reasons. At least one of those reasons is the conviction that the world needs Catholic insights. This is comparable to Thomas Merton's belief that the world needed to hear the insights of a Christian contemplative. One would be hard-pressed to produce a lengthy list of Catholic intellectuals more deeply engaged in dialogue with non-Catholics than Merton. It is interesting and important to emphasize, then, that Merton's apostolate of friendship did not have its origin primarily in a desire to learn, but rather in a desire to teach. As any Catholic educator—at any level—will no doubt echo, however, no matter how focused one is on teaching, one will always find herself learning from her students. For a Catholic scholar on a Catholic university campus to invite students into a vigorous engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition need not imply a covert form of proselytizing. Students, even at the undergraduate level, need the kind of intellectual formation that will enable them to find an intellectual home. The core curriculum of a Catholic university is where this formation should happen. Certainly, the theology department plays a key role in this engagement with the Catholic tradition, but other departments are also responsible for leading students in an engagement with the best of Catholic thought. An interesting place to begin this process might be in instituting,

for all theology majors, a required course in catechetics.[5] To develop such a course on the methods and practice of catechesis would require faculty in the theology department to give serious thought to what well-formed Catholics ought to know, or at least to have thought about. This could easily lead to any necessary development in the theology department's general education course offerings. The Catholic university, in order to be hospitable, needs a means of ensuring that all students know the basic vocabulary of Catholic discourse, as well as some way for students to see how that vocabulary gives structure to the matrix of ideas that makes the Catholic tradition something distinctive.

The goal, of course, does not have to be to make all students Catholic. What must happen, rather, is that all students see the manner in which an intellectual tradition functions. It is not outrageous to think that, say, a Muslim student could leave a Catholic university as a better Muslim because he has been both hospitably invited into conversation with Catholicism as well as exposed to a detailed glimpse into how an intellectual tradition benefits those who work and think within it. If all students on campus are entering into a substantial engagement with the Catholic tradition, there is far less reason to fear the presence of controversial speakers on campus, just as Merton's formation left him confident enough to engage meaningfully with his various dialogue partners. The professor's task may well demand a willingness to see students of all backgrounds as potential friends. Given Wadell's understanding of a circular relationship between friendship and hospitality, this posture of openness to friendship with students

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5. A similar suggestion is made in Berard L. Marthaler, O.F.M.Conv, "Catechesis Isn't Just for Children Anymore," in *Theological Education in the Catholic Tradition*, ed. Patrick W. Carey and Earl C. Muller (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 62-66.

will sharpen the professor's ability to be hospitable to both ideas and the people who propose them. Students will notice this hospitality on the part of their professors and will seek to appropriate it to the extent they can. In this time that many sense to be characterized by alienation and loneliness, to be recognized by an educator as someone possessing dignity and capable of making valuable contributions to classroom discourse could be a potent antidote to feelings of desperation and disenfranchisement, or even of pessimism regarding the very possibility of truth.

Educators at all levels are routinely trained to always make students aware of the goals of a given task or lesson. Catholic universities would do well to extend the wisdom of this training to the general institutional mission to be a place of learning. Students come to learn, but might benefit greatly if they are encouraged to think about what it means for them to learn, what it means for them to know, in the first place. Lonergan's work on human cognition suggests that all humans, regardless of specialty or expertise, follow a predictable pattern in coming to know what they know. It is not uncommon for Catholic universities to require students to take an introductory philosophy course as a part of the general education requirements. Could such a course be adapted to include a section on knowing? If so, that might do a great deal to help students see an underlying unity in what they learn across the disciplines. Perhaps each year the faculty in the various academic departments could collaborate with upperclassmen majors to contribute a unit on their particular path to knowing for the freshmen to consider with all the others amidst an introductory course of some kind. Such interdisciplinary collaboration could involve all on campus in a vigorous discussion on how the various disciplines fit together

into the university's search for knowledge. Haughey has written about the importance of *catholicity* as a name for the university's task of helping students to see how the things they learn fit together into a whole. Haughey has suggested that, if a university, characterized as it is by its various departments and disciplines, is to "have the plural efforts converge into a more coherent whole," it will be possible only if faculty themselves "can better understand their own understandings and see that the operations of consciousness are universal."[6]

Furthermore, this is a venture that could be repeated consistently, if not each year, especially given the constant expansion of knowledge in the modern world.[7] For the Catholic university, in particular, dedicated as it must be to highlighting the belief in the one Source of all that is true, the fruits of such a venture could be central to how it, as well as the professors and students who labor within it, go about loving God with all of their minds. To have achieved the self-appropriation that Lonergan describes, to be aware of their own knowing, will enable students to better practice intellectual hospitality. Students will be able to more clearly articulate what they know and how they know it, and they will also be better able to appreciate what others know, even as they might still disagree. For modern students, accustomed as they are to talk of tolerance and inclusion, to be invited into a university where their education will allow them such an awareness of their own perspectives without an expectation that they must sacrifice their

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6. John C. Haughey, SJ, *Where is Knowing Going?* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 54.

7. As such, Catholic universities have been called to a "continuous renewal." John Paul II, 7.

own particularity in the interest of conversation with the other could be extremely appealing.

I also strongly endorse the presence of interdisciplinary programs and courses on Catholic university campuses. While such projects may not be able to fully take the place of a synthesis of knowledge[8], they can help to encourage intellectual hospitality on the part of students, who will be asked to understand and even appreciate the insights that come with different methods and disciplines. Additionally, interdisciplinary collaboration of various kinds can help to foster the kind of personal relationships across disciplinary lines that can make a university faculty a real community of thinkers and educators. As was seen perhaps most clearly in the case of Thomas Merton, community life in general and specifically teaching in the midst of that community life can have a tremendous impact on an individual's ability to look beyond the self to engage the other in substantial ways. This willingness to engage is a beginning of hospitality and a path to potential friendship.

It also seems that the Catholic university needs to give reflection on questions of morality a key place in the core curriculum. While many might agree that this would be important so as to lead students to reckon with Catholic notions of morality, it is also likely in questions of morality that students will most clearly be led to see and appreciate the manner in which all knowledge is tradition-bound. While this lesson could be learned in discussion of perhaps any topic, topics pertaining to morality will likely make this

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8. Which remains a goal of a Catholic University. See John Paul II, 16.

clearer because of the sheer diversity of moral perspectives past and present.[9] Regardless of which discipline plays host to such lessons, students engaging in reflection on morality and its implications will see the way that knowledge is mediated by traditions. This should serve as a cornerstone of the Catholic university's invitation to all students to consider their own intellectual homes, Catholic or otherwise.

If the Catholic tradition is presented to students or faculty as a static reality that has been accomplished once and for all, it will no doubt stifle inquiry and crush any real hospitality. This was ultimately the problem with the neo-Scholastic revival of the last century. It failed to express the full richness of the Catholic tradition in a manner capable of engaging modern thought and incorporating critically the insights found therein. The passing over of John Dunne is a potent reminder that to be rooted does not need to imply an apathy toward the other or a lack of intellectual dynamism. Every standpoint is only temporary, and we can advance from one standpoint to the next by entering into the perspectives of others and then coming back, enriched, to our own perspective. Dunne's passing over represents a powerful example of how students of all backgrounds might go through their university studies. Just as a Catholic student might find her understanding and appreciation of the Gospel enhanced by an exploration of Hinduism or her understanding of Catholic social teaching enhanced by a reading of Marx, so too might the agnostic student find her worldview enhanced by discovering the manner in which the Scriptural authors pursued some of the same questions about life that she may also be asking. Relatedly, to be an authentically Catholic university does not mean that students

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9. For commentary on the impact of history and context on moral decision-making, see Daniel C. Maguire, *The Moral Choice*, (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 309-342.

are never tasked with reading the Talmud, the Qur'an, Marx, Nietzsche, or Freud.

Instead, the hospitality of the Catholic university welcomes all into a dialogue with

Catholic thought while also modeling the importance of occupying an intellectual home.

Unlike Merton, Dunne's hospitality proceeded primarily from a desire to learn from those

to whom he passed over. As his lengthy tenure at Notre Dame attests, however, Dunne

clearly found that this desire to learn lent itself to teaching, as well. This corresponds, of

course, to the very nature of hospitality as a Christian virtue as it has been understood and

practiced down through the ages. If hidden within my hospitality is a desire only to give

and re-form, I am not so much a host as an aspiring invader. If my hospitality is an

extension only of a desire to receive, true hospitality will be impossible because I am not

functioning as a person occupying any real space. Dialogue with me will be impossible.

For any of this to happen, it does seem necessary that a Catholic university have a

critical mass of faculty who are willing to champion the identity and mission of their

particular institution.[10] It seems likely that, within that critical mass, there will need to be

a cadre of Catholic scholars who themselves are able and willing to practice Catholic

intellectual hospitality so as to model it to students and colleagues. For a Catholic

university to fulfill its obligations to the Church, the world, and its faculty and students, it

must be a community characterized by hospitality. Thomas Merton believed that if he

could unite within himself the perspectives of East and West, then a lasting unity of

peoples would ultimately be possible.[11] In the same way, I suggest that a Catholic

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10. Charles E. Curran, "The Catholic Identity of Catholic Institutions," *Theological Studies*, 58 (1997), 108.

11. Michael Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 306.

university can only be a place of hospitality toward ideas and people if it is home to scholars who are themselves able to practice Christian hospitality. The practice of intellectual hospitality will give Catholic universities the language they need to function as high-quality institutions while also witnessing to the Gospel the Christian's vocation to perfect love. Though some, or even many, on a Catholic university campus may not subscribe to this vocation for themselves or their university, they may nevertheless contribute to the university's work simply by carrying out their regular work of teaching, learning, or research. Just as Merton was convinced that Christ permeated the cosmos as the Word or Wisdom of God, the Catholics on campus will know that all truth discovered can ultimately be traced back to God.

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