

## Preface

As Mary Magdalen stood weeping outside the empty tomb, he called her by name—and suddenly she recognized him. She went and told the disciples: "I have seen the Lord."

Mary Magdalen's faith in the resurrected Christ was grounded in direct contact with the Son of God. We may imagine that once she heard Jesus call her name she no more needed to reason about whether Christ rose from the dead than we need to reason about whether light radiates from the sun.

None of us can claim the immediate, transforming religious experience of Mary Magdalen—or of Peter, or Paul, or other disciples and apostles of Christ. And few believers purport to have had the less immediate, but perhaps no less convincing mystical experiences of, say, Teresa of Avila or Meister Eckhart. Many believers experience God in less dramatic ways, as they look at the lilies of the field, the starry skies above, and are flooded with gratitude and joy—but they are well aware that others look at the same lilies, the same skies, and feel no consciousness of the divine.

Despite a relative paucity of immediate religious experience, however, people believe. And people move from nonbelief to belief, as Mary Magdalen herself did so long ago.

How do conversions occur? What role does miracle play in the process? How do time and affection and imagination and reason and will and service and grace figure into the picture—or pictures, since paths to God are multiple? These questions are among those addressed by articles in this issue of *Logos*.

In "Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*" Douglas Lane Patey traces the conversion of Charles Ryder and shows us how events in Waugh's own life, his own journey toward God, anchor the fictional masterpiece. Love is the major theme of all Waugh's works, Patey argues; in *Brideshead Revisited* love finds its proper object as Ryder's affections move from Sebastian, to Julia, to God.

"The White Nun in *Rattlebone*," by George Bellis, offers a reading of a story set in a black Kansas City ghetto in 1947, in which a renegade nun determined to win converts for Catholicism entralls a group of children with magic and miracle. Though Sister Joan loses the battle in the short run, the children's encounter with the idea of miracle lodges in their imaginations long after the white nun is gone.

How is Augustine's conversion story to be read? Khaled Anatolios provides an answer in "Quest, Questions, and Christ in Augustine's *Confessions*." Augustine's drama develops through questioning, and through attention to the role and meaning questions play in the search for God. The long process of questioning through which Augustine ascends to God is made possible by Christ's descent.

Robert Pasnau gives us a very different (though not inconsistent) reading of Augustine's autobiography in "Plotting Augustine's *Confessions*." Pasnau explores the philosophical

dimensions of the work, offering a careful analysis of Augustine's conception of weakness of will and an account of the role this conception plays in Augustine's understanding of his conversion.

In "Aquinas and the Credibility of God" Michael Torre suggests that though Aquinas is famous for his "Five Ways" of demonstrating God's existence, this doctor of the Church held that most who believe in God do so because God works miracles. Belief in God is based primarily—and quite rationally—on the saints and martyrs, men and women whose lives witness to divine truth.

"The Theocentric Foundation of John Henry Newman's Philosophy of Education," by Jane Rupert, comments on Newman's early conversion to a sense of the invisible, and on the development of this sense into a conviction that God is the ultimate ground of an objective, intelligibly unified universe. This conviction of Newman's shapes his understanding of liberal education and the idea of the university.

Thomas F. Dailey, O.S.F.S., shows us how some of Newman's ideas about the unity of knowledge and the function of the university find expression in John Paul II's encyclicals. In "Toward a Culture of Truth: Higher Education and the Thought of Pope John Paul II" Dailey suggests that the Pope helps us see universities—both religious and secular—as places where learning and service can interact to promote both an intellectual grasp of the transcendent reality of truth, and an attitude of humility, obedience, and sacrifice.

In "Scientific Method and Appeal to Supernatural Agency: A Christian Case for Modest Methodological Naturalism" Kenneth W. Kemp develops a scientifically informed and richly illustrated account of supernatural explanation, an account that allows us to accept some claims of miracles and reject others. Kemp argues that "a modest methodological naturalism" is both philosophically and theologically plausible, and emphasizes the complementarity between spheres of scientific and theological special interest.

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