

Preface

FAUST IN GOETHE'S *Faust Part One* and *Faust Part Two* brings to poetic presentation the powerful drive for self-fulfillment and mastery over the world that characterizes modern Western attitudes. Faust's declaration concerning the theological virtues takes on special significance in this light because it could provide a clue concerning the status of the theological virtues in much modern thought:

I curse loves's sweet transcendent call,
My curse on faith! My curse on hope!
My curse on patience above all!¹

Faust is, of course, a highly complex character driven by contradictions that he seeks valiantly to reconcile, and at the end of Part Two he is redeemed by love, but we nonetheless are entitled to regard these curses as expressing a significant component of that character. The addition of Faust's curse on patience to his curses on love, faith, and hope perhaps offers a clue concerning the animosity toward the theological virtues expressed here. Why does he not only add patience to the long list of curses culminating in the contempt expressed for love, faith, and hope, but also curse patience with the greatest enmity?

Patience stands in opposition to the tireless striving that constitutes the core of Faust, a striving affirmed by the angels as they bear the spirit of Faust to heaven: "*He who strives on and lives to strive/ can*

earn redemption still" (Part Two, lines 11,936–37). Patience describes the openness, receptivity, and restfulness of the contemplative attitude. The patient person is prepared to bear suffering, to endure, and to take upon oneself what the world gives. In a world dominated by self-assertion and striving for power, patience looks like weakness and surrender. The person who strives for self-fulfillment and even autonomy through action might well stand guard against infringements on self-assertion and will view the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love with hostility. Faust helps us see how the impatient modern emphasis on the acquisition and exercise of power for the sake of maximizing human autonomy makes the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love seem somehow quaint or remote.

Josef Pieper in his account of the theological virtues also helps us see why they exist in opposition to any attitude in which striving for human mastery and autonomy predominates. Self-fulfillment, self-actualization, and self-assertion presuppose that our human potential lies fully within ourselves, limited only by the extent of our efforts to bring ourselves to expression through self-determined actions. On a campus in Minneapolis there is a sculpture titled "The Entrepreneur," showing the figure of a man with hammer in one hand and chisel in the other carving himself right out of the stone from which he is magnificently emerging as the self-made man. This figure does not need to look in awe and wonder and humility toward a Creator on whose formative love he depends. This figure has no need of the theological virtues, tied as they are to a fulfillment through divine grace beyond one's own power to control. Pieper illuminates this aspect of the theological virtues:

Theological virtue is an ennobling of man's nature that entirely surpasses what he "can be" of himself. Theological virtue is the steadfast orientation toward a fulfillment and a beatitude that are not "owed" to natural man. Theological virtue is the utmost degree of a supernatural potentiality for being. This supernatural potentiality for being is grounded in a real, grace-

filled participation in the divine nature, which comes to man through Christ (2 Pet 1:4).²

Recognition of the theological virtues requires recognition of human dependence on God, recognition that we find the highest model of human potential in the revealed figure of the Incarnation, so that we cannot complete ourselves through our own efforts and in proud self-mastery. The antagonism toward the theological virtues expressed by Faust at one moment in his development exemplifies a deep antagonism between the modern drive for complete technical mastery of life and the theological virtues through which we would learn to open ourselves to grace bestowed on us from beyond our reach.

Any attempt to provide an account of a “modern attitude” or worldview necessarily fails to capture all aspects of the intellectual life of the period under scrutiny, since culture is usually composed of multiple voices. Especially in modern cultures we should expect to find a variety of cultural traditions existing in tension and conflict with one another—this too is conveyed in the character of Faust. We do find important modern thinkers and artists who give fresh expression to the beauty and power of the theological virtues, as the reference to the philosophical work of Josef Pieper has already demonstrated. Often such thinkers and artists find ways to convey the tension existing between the theological virtues and dominant attitudes within the broader culture. A surprising and wondrous example of such an artist is the great Catholic composer Olivier Messiaen (1908–92), whose challenging music proposes, as indicated in the title of his last large-scale orchestral work, to open up “Illuminations of the Beyond.”

The titles of many of Messiaen’s compositions call to mind the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, while the music guides the careful listener through a detachment to practical and habitual attitudes and invites the listener to enter a receptive, sometimes prayerful disposition in which the beauty of revealed truths can be

contemplated. He seems to have recognized that the dominant musical styles in the Western tradition in the twentieth century were insufficient for his deeply religious musical purposes, and so he forged his own distinctive (and challenging) musical language and sound. His musical language draws on sources ranging from ancient modal melodies and harmonies, plainchant, and rhythms from India, to an enormous variety of bird songs captured with precision in Messiaen's own manner of notation during ornithological travels all over the world conducted throughout his life. Pianist Peter Hill observes the deep extent to which Messiaen's Catholic faith entered into his music: "Even the structure of the music seems permeated by his faith, with complexity of detail embracing truths of great simplicity (a combination which has traditionally given Catholicism its appeal to sophisticated minds, and which, similarly, may go some way to explain the potency of Messiaen's music)."³

Consider, for instance, Messiaen's 1964 composition for wind, brass, and percussion, drawing its title from the Latin text of the Nicene Creed, "Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum" ("And I look for the resurrection of the dead"). As is typical of Messiaen's style, each of the five movements focuses on a particular aspect of the promised resurrection of the righteous on the last day, with each movement framed by biblical quotations and with the music evoking moments such as the human yearning and hope for salvation, a faith-filled glimpse of the Incarnation guiding and soliciting such hope, the voice of Christ calling on the dead to rise, and the joy of the multitudes basking in divine love in the fulfillment of the promised revelation. How is it possible to reach beyond the limit of death and portray through complex patterns of music that which is beyond worldly experience? Messiaen does not attempt to represent a narrative within his music: he regards the whole that he contemplates to be available to us through faith, hope, and love, and with extraordinary confidence—even audacity—he finds musical patterns through which we might in some sense experience what the theological virtues promise.

Messiaen's final large work, "Éclairs sur l'au delà . . ." ("Illuminations of the Beyond . . ."), was first performed in 1992 by the New York Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta about six months after Messiaen's death. This work displays Messiaen's musical exploration of revealed truth beautifully. Again we look beyond worldly experience to glimpse the fulfillment of what we know in faith to be promised. Each of the eleven movements takes up a particular aspect of the promised salvation, each movement given a context through quotations from Revelation, Matthew, Psalms, Job, and other sources, and each movement in the musical language cultivated by Messiaen throughout his life's work offers an imaginative audible glimpse into the eternity promised by Christian faith, hope, and love. Messiaen's music, widely performed and recorded during his life, has flourished notably in concert halls since his death—for instance, the Philadelphia Orchestra under Christoph Eschenbach is featuring Messiaen's music throughout the 2003–4 season, with a performance of "Illuminations of the Beyond . . ." scheduled for February 2004. It would be an overstatement to suggest that the only access to Messiaen's music is through the Catholic faith that he drew on in most of his compositions, but the success of his music surely suggests the potential still available through great art to turn the attention of a culture to a religious dimension of experience from which many thought we could dissociate ourselves.

In this issue of *Logos* we find many different reflections on the ways in which a culture that has tried to close its ears to the call of theological virtues nonetheless finds itself touched by their power, in addition to other historical and cultural explorations of the ways in which faith enters into the drama of history.

In what ways can Catholicism enable culture to flourish in an age dominated by an indifference to religious concerns? This question is addressed powerfully by **William A. Frank** in "**Western Irreligion and Resources for Culture in Catholic Religion.**" Frank carefully develops an account of what he calls "Western irreligion," examining

the various sources, manifestations, and consequences of historical developments in modern Western culture that have made it difficult for religious values to enter into the intellectual horizon of modern life, resulting in the tendency for many people to “act in the conviction that the immanent realm of history and material existence is the final horizon for human life.” He then examines the concept of culture, viewing it as shaping and mediating “one’s personal encounter with the fundamental interests and values of life” and showing that “culture signifies a quality of soul.” The article next takes up an inquiry into the nature of religion, showing how religion involves an openness to transcendence expressed in “the personal and communal actions of worshiping and reverencing God” and shapes the human person in fundamental ways. The final section of the article proposes a variety of ways the Catholic religion can foster the fruitful development of culture in a wide-ranging and insightful discussion of topics such as natural science, history, literature, the fine arts, and political life.

Christopher Ruddy looks at contemporary religious attitudes and takes his cue from reflections on the Church in the modern world in “*Gaudium et spes*” from the Second Vatican Council as he considers the “signs of the times” and brings to appearance hopeful indications of renewed values that will strengthen the relationship between the Catholic Church and culture. The title of his article identifies the key values he illuminates: “**Heroism, Hospitality, and Holiness: Generational Perspectives on the Church-World Relationship.**” Ruddy describes certain features of Catholics born after the Second Vatican Council who have a certain distance between themselves and many of the controversies that entered into the reflections of the council, and he seeks hopeful signs within the culture of our time that indicate ways in which the Church continues to enter into the life of the world. Ruddy suggests that many of his students find inspiration in the bold challenges set before them by John Paul II, recognizing that his students respond positively to the acknowledgement that a certain kind of heroism might be called

for if one is to live fully in accord with a sense of discipleship in the modern world. Such heroism, however, is always tempered by love and so hospitality complements heroism in a loving embrace of the world. The culmination of discipleship is holiness—"a belonging to God in Christ"—and Ruddy focuses on the qualities of "poverty, beauty, and the spirituality and structures of communion" as manifestations of holiness. The article concludes with a hopeful view of the ways in which a culture that seems at times indifferent or hostile to religion nevertheless expresses a yearning for God: "The world, which, paradoxically, despite innumerable signs of the denial of God, is nevertheless searching for him in unexpected ways," in Ruddy's eloquent account.

Novelist Graham Greene's characters present the encounter of faith with modern culture with particular poignancy, and **Michael Torre** regards three of the protagonists in Greene's fiction as especially noteworthy from this perspective. In "**Greene's Saints: The Whiskey Priest, Scobie, and Sarah,**" Torre seeks a deeper understanding of the spiritual qualities most fully captured in Greene's best efforts. After carefully considering the limitations of Greene's novels and the shortcomings of Greene himself as indicated through biographical sources, Torre guides us to a vivid understanding of what makes these three characters successful exemplars of a Catholic sensibility in the modern world, pointing above all to the ways in which these characters are touched by the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Torre argues that the theological virtues are "deeper, harder, and greater than the cardinal virtues," even though our age tends to prefer the cardinal virtues, such as courage, over a virtue such as faith. The most valuable aspect of Greene's best fiction, in Torre's account, is its ability to display "souls in whom the theological virtues are, as it were, 'at war' with the cardinal virtues." These three characters, like Greene himself, are marked by deep flaws but are nonetheless deeply touched by grace in their experience of faith, hope, and love, and Greene is able to show the operation of grace in the inner life and actions of these characters. The

article makes a convincing case that we can regard Greene, in his best work at least, as “the artist of ordinary Catholic souls seeking to love God despite their sins.”

We are fortunate to have an article in this issue by a writer widely and justly admired for his fiction and essays, **Ron Hansen**. His article, “**Art and Religion: Hopkins and Bridges,**” explores the complex friendship of nineteenth-century poets Gerald Manley Hopkins and Robert Bridges. Hansen provides an illuminating contrast between the religious indifference of Bridges—an indifference in many ways characteristic of the broader culture in which he lived—and the profound religious development of Hopkins. “In many ways, Hopkins and Bridges were opposites, but in just as many ways they were destined to be friends,” Hansen suggests, and his biographical account enables us to see in detail the ways in which their work was shaped in fundamental ways by their different responses to the dominant cultural qualities of their time. Bridges, in his development, reflected the influence of a culture that had become almost hostile to religion, while Hopkins, formed in fundamental ways by his conversion to Catholicism, found himself out of touch with the dominant tendencies of his day but was inspired by faith to write poetry that outlasted the shallower cultural tendencies and preferences of his period. Hansen judiciously assesses the strained relationship between these two figures. Historical perspective adds a striking touch as Hansen notes that Bridges, at the height of his literary fame, “could not have foreseen how interest in his own poetry would languish just as interest in Gerald Manley Hopkins grew.” Hansen’s focus on these two poets enables us to view in illuminating detail the relationship between art, religion, and culture.

In an article by **Glenn W. Olsen**, we have an opportunity to trace some of the historical and cultural developments that eventually contributed to the religious indifference found widely in Western culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In “**Humanism: The Struggle to Possess a Word,**” Olsen examines that key term of

Western cultural development and strives to overcome many of the simplistic and mistaken views of Western cultural development with regard to humanism that are widespread in contemporary intellectual life. The simplistic “grand narrative” according to which Renaissance humanism enabled Western culture to emerge from the religiously obsessed darkness of the Middle Ages has held sway in popular consciousness far too long, and Olsen provides in its place a critical and careful examination of the relationship between religion and humanism since the Renaissance. The article demonstrates the divergent understandings of Western historical development that have come to the foreground in different periods and enables us to see that humanism and religion long have been intertwined in complex ways.

Rafael E. Tarragó calls our attention to another way that popular grand narratives distort the place of religion in historical development in his accounts of Elizabethan England. Tarragó’s opening sentences provocatively set out the problems inherent in the popular but flawed account: “Queen Mary I of England is called Bloody Mary because she persecuted Protestants during her short reign (1554–58). Her sister, Elizabeth Tudor, persecuted Catholics during her long reign (1558–1603) and she is called Good Queen Bess.” His article, “**Bloody Bess: The Persecution of Catholics in Elizabethan England,**” reviews a number of historical sources to provide a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the persecution of Catholics in Elizabethan England and argues that Elizabeth’s persecutions cannot be justified by claiming they were motivated by political rather than religious purposes.

A different popular misconception of a religious aspect of history is confronted by **Patrick Henry**. It is important that we overcome the view that Jews were uniformly passive during the persecutions of the Holocaust: “Blanket statements concerning ‘Jewish passivity’ . . . fly in the face of current research.” In “**Madeleine Dreyfus, Jewish Activity, Righteous Jews,**” he provides a moving account of the heroic activities of Madeleine Dreyfus to rescue Jewish children

in France in the early 1940s. She was eventually captured and survived eighteen months of imprisonment, becoming a prominent Adlerian psychologist until her death in 1987. Her story provides a basis for examining the qualities of character and spirit that enabled many in a time of danger and crisis to exhibit a deep love for all of humanity, a love that defied the hatred all around them: “In that world obsessed with difference, the people who made a difference were in large measure those who insisted on the essential similarity of all human beings.”

One prominent contemporary example of intellectual and cultural efforts to keep a wide gap between practical life and religious perspectives is found in widespread views of economics and economic activity. **Edward J. O’Boyle** criticizes the attempt in mainstream economics to establish the primary concepts of the science on a narrow individualistic understanding of the human person. In “**Getting the Hard-Core Concepts of Economics Right**” O’Boyle argues we should “replace the individual with the person, the outdated individualism that lies at the core of conventional thinking about economic affairs with the personalism that emerged in the electronic age.” O’Boyle demonstrates the need to reconstruct mainstream economics by putting economic concepts back into the cultural contexts from which they have been disembedded so that the defects resulting from such abstraction can be overcome. The article offers a set of recommendations that will contribute to the reconstruction of economics as a science more truly attuned to the nature of the human person especially as we come to know the person in the light of a religious understanding.

John Berkman in “**The Consumption of Animals and the Catholic Tradition**” examines the complex history of the topic named in his title with a focus on the “distinctively theological reasons Catholics have chosen to abstain from consuming animal flesh.” Regarding most general accounts of this topic as inadequate, Berkman explores medicinal, ascetical, and eschatological arguments

that have been put forward in the Catholic tradition for abstaining from the consumption of animals, moving toward this conclusion: “Although Catholicism has never been a ‘vegetarian’ religion, it has always concerned itself with appropriate eating practices, especially the significance of abstaining from animal flesh. Furthermore, Catholic theology is certainly compatible with—and arguably encouraging of—a diet that perpetually abstains from animal flesh.”

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Notes

1. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust Part One*, trans. David Luke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 49 (lines 1604–6) and *Faust Part Two*, translated by David Luke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
2. Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 99.
3. Peter Hill, ed., *The Messiaen Companion* (Portland, Ore.: Amadeus Press, 1994), 4–5.