

# Preface

WHILE PREPARING THIS ISSUE OF *Logos* we received the sad news that two members of our editorial board have recently died: Avery Cardinal Dulles, SJ, of Fordham University and Peter E. Hodgson of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Both Cardinal Dulles and Dr. Hodgson have been editorial board members since our first issue in the spring of 1997. As I looked back on their extensive academic accomplishments I realized that the nature and the range of their writings provide an opportunity to reflect on the fundamental purpose of this journal of Catholic thought and culture.

Fr. Robert P. Imbelli in the foreword to a recently published collection of lectures delivered at Fordham by Cardinal Dulles offers an appropriately resounding appraisal of his theological writings: “One of the most heartfelt accolades the early Fathers could bestow on a theologian was to praise him as a *vir ecclesiasticus*: an ecclesial man. I can think of few theologians of our day who so merit the title as Cardinal Avery Dulles.”<sup>1</sup> Imbelli goes on to emphasize the importance of Dulles’s theological work in regard to the Second Vatican Council: “Few have contributed so magisterially to the elu-

cidation and appropriation of the council's ecclesial vision as has Avery Dulles."<sup>2</sup>

In particular, Imbelli judges that Dulles understood profoundly the simultaneous efforts of the council to draw upon modern scriptural and patristic scholarship by returning to the sources of the Catholic tradition in the spirit of *ressourcement* and the effort to illuminate the appropriate development of the tradition through an encounter with the cultural and historical circumstances of the contemporary world in the spirit of *aggiornamento*. "Dulles holds together the creative tension that characterized the labors of the council" in pursuit of the fulfillment of these two goals, observes Imbelli.<sup>3</sup>

We could say that the cultivation of this "creative tension" to open an array of perspectives on the ongoing interaction between Catholicism and culture aptly describes one of the central purposes of this journal. In an effort to seek a deeper understanding of the thinking of Cardinal Dulles on this topic, I turned to the chapter "Vatican II and the Recovery of Tradition" in his 1988 book *The Reshaping of Catholicism*.<sup>4</sup> Here he examines the concept of tradition presented in the Vatican II document *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*. He first frames the issues faced in the development of the document as an opposition between two views: an objectivist and authoritarian view of tradition that holds the content of tradition to be fixed and unchangeable as established in a particular set of forms in which that content comes to expression; and a modernist view of tradition that regards it primarily as a process that is variable in content. It is easy to see how in the social and cultural upheavals of the last several centuries those who were concerned above all about preserving the identity and continuity of tradition might fix their grip on a particular form of expression as the unchangeable content of tradition and those who sought an ongoing reconciliation with cultural change might be too ready to abandon the concept of the content of tradition and focus instead on tradition as a continuous process of change. Dulles shows the error and inadequacy of each view, affirming that the content of tradition for the Catholic Church

is “God’s gracious manifestation in Jesus Christ of his being and his saving will,” while also affirming the “self-renewing” dimension of tradition through which tradition develops to address more directly and fully the changing cultural and social circumstances in which Catholics encounter the truths of the faith.<sup>5</sup>

The relationship between tradition and innovation in religion is thus a dialectical one of mutual priority and dependence. If tradition . . . is a matter of dwelling in the already given, innovation may be seen as a process of breaking out. Paradoxically, it is by dwelling in the tradition that we get the force and insight to break out and, so to speak, see for ourselves. But what we see by the help of tradition, we then offer as an enrichment of the tradition. Understood in terms of this dialectic, tradition is not an incessant repetition of the already given. It demands, and in a sense includes, its own opposite, innovation.<sup>6</sup>

Dulles points to the thought of Maurice Blondel as the key guide to this dialectical understanding of tradition and offers an account of Vatican II’s debt to Blondel seen in the second section of *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, “Handing on Divine Revelation.” According to this document, tradition develops because

there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke, 2:19, 51) through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through Episcopal succession the sure gift of truth.<sup>7</sup>

Because Catholic tradition is dynamic at its core, as Dulles shows, the broader blossoming of Catholic intellectual and cultural tradition also exhibits this dynamic and in a certain sense dialectical

quality as thinkers and artists are shaped and informed by the content of tradition and then offer fresh and vital expressions of faith in the language and artistic media that most fully challenge and engage a particular culture at a particular place and time. Because faith and God's grace flow through every dimension of life, the exploration and flowering of Catholic tradition is illuminated by the many different intellectual and artistic disciplines and practices that constitute the polyphony of culture. Historical research and historically informed readings of the intellectual and artistic works throughout the temporal and spatial span of the Catholic tradition bring to light the complex developments of tradition in countless forms. Here, then, we find a strong articulation of the purpose of an interdisciplinary journal of Catholic thought and culture that brings together the fruit of such deep explorations into the rich and expansive development of Catholic tradition. Providing a forum for such investigations is especially important in the culturally diverse and to some extent culturally fragmented contemporary world: by presenting insights gathered from a wide range of academic disciplines, art forms, and historical periods, the countless aspects of the development of Catholic tradition can be considered and contemplated.

As it happens, another very important contemporary force affecting the reception of Catholic tradition in the modern world is brought into focus in Peter E. Hodgson's final book, *Theology and Modern Physics*.<sup>8</sup> The technological reconstruction of the built environment and the inevitable predominance of scientific modes of thought and concepts in the modern world establish a pervasive horizon that influences the way in which religious claims to truth are understood and evaluated. It is not uncommon these days to hear accounts of science and theology that view them as mutually exclusive modes of thought, one empirical and rational, and the other based in private sentiment and wish fulfillment. Hodgson, however, recognizes the deep truth embodied in the longstanding claim of the Catholic tradition that reason and faith are compatible. Through in-

vestigations into the earliest roots of the modern scientific tradition in ancient cultures, Hodgson demonstrates that the scientific goal of understanding the world around us has always been strongly shaped and influenced by the beliefs about the world that have their roots in religion. Rejecting the historical narrative that portrays the development of science as a movement toward liberation from religious belief, Hodgson argues that it was the particular religious beliefs of Christianity that enabled the development of the scientific tradition in the first place, thereby explaining why science developed in its modern form in Christian Europe. Hodgson proposes that “the essential presuppositions of science, that matter is good, orderly, rational, contingent and open to the rational mind are all to be found in the Old Testament. . . . The birth of Christ further ennobled matter and replaced the debilitating cyclic time of previous civilizations by a linear time of purpose and progress.”<sup>9</sup> Conditions conducive to the emergence of modern science developed only gradually but as Christianity gave rise to the new universities in which philosophical and scientific questions could be critically examined together with Christian theology, “the birth of modern science finally took place in Europe in the High Middle Ages when for the first time in history there was a civilization permeated by Christian beliefs.”<sup>10</sup>

But having established that the beliefs about the world sustained and developed by Christian tradition provided foundation and support for the development of a scientific tradition, Hodgson carefully notes that scientific thinking by its nature cannot supplant Christian faith. What we know through scientific thinking is uncertain and tentative because always it is subject to later scientific verification or rejection and the knowledge achieved is never final.

The incomplete and uncertain knowledge provided by scientific research gives no ground for theological conclusions, and it is still less justifiable to see it as a new way to God. Thus to interpret the big bang theory of the origin of the universe as evidence of creation, and hence of a creator, is

to overstep the limits of science in an unacceptable way. At the very most, the discoveries of modern science can suggest questions about the meaning of it all, but the answers must be sought elsewhere.<sup>11</sup>

Here too, then, we find an important mission for an interdisciplinary Catholic journal such as *Logos*. By publishing the work of thinkers who go well beyond the contemporary controversies in which religious and secular modes of thought and belief become entangled, we seek to provide guidance and ongoing illumination into a deeper and truer perspective on the interrelationship and interdependence of the many approaches through which the contemporary world seeks understanding.

The first three articles in this issue exhibit in an exemplary manner the simultaneous reaffirmation of the content of Catholic tradition and the development of that tradition to engage powerfully the conditions of modern culture. The articles approach Francis Poulenc's 1956 opera *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and the earlier play by the same name by Georges Bernanos from which Poulenc drew the libretto and examine the historical event upon which the opera is based, the play by Bernanos and the opera by Poulenc, the significance of the artistic presentation of martyrdom, and the broader views and cultural context in Bernanos's polemical writings. The historical event that gave rise to the play and opera is the martyrdom of sixteen Carmelite nuns who were guillotined in 1794 during the French Revolution and were beatified by the Church in 1906. Christian martyrdom as a witness to the truth of the faith is simultaneously an exemplification of the truth at the core of tradition and a development of the tradition through the engagement of that truth in direct repudiation of the particular cultural and historical forces that set themselves in opposition to that truth. Martyrdom as a development of the tradition speaks to the conditions of a particular time, in this case the period of the French Revolution. One hundred and fifty years later, Bernanos and Poulenc turned to that historical

martyrdom and found the artistic means to renew its significance in a manner that directly engaged the cultural condition of France and Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. The three articles then bring to bear scholarship in the areas of literature, music, history, political science, and theology to consider and analyze the development of tradition exhibited in these events and works.

The first article is by **Mark Bosco, SJ**, titled “**Georges Bernanos and Francis Poulenc: Catholic Convergences in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*.**” Bosco reviews the historical event on which the two works of art are based and then asks how it could have happened that works that exemplify traditional Catholicism so powerfully could have been well received in the cultural atmosphere in France in the early part of the twentieth century and in that light how Bernanos and Poulenc participated in a Catholic revival in France at that time. The intention is to help us unveil how “we can understand *Dialogues of the Carmelites* as an artistic production that is at once a Catholic story of heroism and faith and yet speaks to the modern world, an opera for the post-war period of Europe in the 1950s and one resonant with our contemporary struggle with Christian faith and martyrdom.”

**David L. Gitomer** then focuses on the concept and artistic representation of martyrdom, proposing that representations of martyrdom can be considered a genre in literature, art, and music. His article, “***Dialogues of the Carmelites* as Witness: Patterns of Christian Martyrdom in Scripture, History, and the Arts,**” brings together a consideration of martyrdom as Christian witness and as a powerful element in aesthetic representation. Gitomer reviews martyrdom in Christian and non-Christian traditions across a broad historical scope, focuses on the Christian concepts of atonement and substitution as they unfold in the opera, and in particular considers the importance of narratives of Christian women martyrs in the early Church. This context enables him to bring out the way in which “for the Carmelite women of the opera, the journey toward martyrdom reveals the formation of a position against the sud-

den and radical change in the political structure of revolutionary France.” Gitomer’s article argues that works of art play a particularly important role in engaging us aesthetically in the mystery at the heart of martyrdom and in reflection on the meaning and significance of martyrdom.

“**Bernanos: Polemicist and Prophet of our World**” by **Andrew J. McKenna** grapples with the difficult issues surrounding the political and cultural positions with regard to France and Europe especially in the nonartistic writings by Bernanos. The article focuses on the ways in which Bernanos revived and developed the concept of honor. “It was the notion of honor . . . that fueled Bernanos’s criticism of his own Church during the Spanish Civil War; it motivated his early allegiance to the French Resistance headed by Charles de Gaulle, whom he identified very early on as the general saw himself, ‘chef et symbole de l’Honneur français’ during the German occupation of his country.” McKenna highlights both the polemical and prophetic roles adopted by Bernanos in his nonfiction writings (while noting that Bernanos denies that he assumes those roles), and shows how Bernanos developed a radical and powerful critique of modernity while drawing upon the resources of his Catholic faith.

We are deeply honored to present a previously unpublished lecture by the great teacher and philosopher **Yves R. Simon**, who died in 1961. “**Personality and Opinion**” was presented as a lecture in 1957 and has been recently transcribed. Simon pursues a clear account of the role of personality in dealing with matters of opinion and opens with a powerful affirmation that sets the tone and the perspective for the essay as a whole: “I wish to start by remarking that there are things that are above opinion. Let us be convinced of that before we begin to reflect upon opinion itself. There are things that involve certainty, and qualified certainty, and there are things that are not matters of opinion.” He then proposes that the propositions of faith belong to the first and most important category of things that carry certainty and are thus above opinion and then adds that “with regard to a number of ethical subjects there are natural

certainties that are far above matters of opinion.” This observation sets the context for the key question pursued in the essay: Why are we often tempted to treat things that are certain as though they were merely matters of opinion? The social fact that broad consensus rarely exists even with regard to matters of certainty poses the condition in which we are tempted—and Simon says the temptation is grave and “treacherous”—to falsely regard certainties as though they were merely matters of opinion. The essay examines issues of personality that stand in the way of proper acknowledgment of certainties and then examines the difficult issues pertaining to the possibility of attaining certainty in moral action, arguing that in moral action there can be certainty in the direction of our action even though because of the contingencies in the world of action certainty might not be obtainable with regard to the outcome of an action.

**Paul Hoyt-O’Connor** provides an illuminating example of Catholic tradition being brought to bear in an examination of contemporary economic issues. **“The Human Good and Lonergan’s Macroeconomic Dynamics”** examines the writings on economics by Bernard Lonergan with a focus on both his account of the human good and the contributions he made in “analyzing the productive, commercial, and financial routines comprising modern exchange economies.” The article suggests that Lonergan’s work helps to extend the Catholic common good tradition and provides a resource through which we can better envision how to arrange our economy in accord with that tradition. He shows how Lonergan develops an understanding of the historical dimension of the human good and brings into focus the necessary interdependence between individual identity and social solidarity. Hoyt-O’Connor quotes Lonergan offering an account of the close relationship between the social systems of exchange that constitute the economy and the good of the person: “The human good then is at once individual and social. Individuals do not just operate to meet their needs but cooperate to meet one another’s needs.” The article goes on to examine Lon-

ergan's argument that God's grace plays an important role in the development of human history: "In addition to transforming individual psyches, minds, and hearts, grace also becomes a principle for a new community whereby human beings participate in a new set of interpersonal relations." Economic activity in this account requires "an educated exercise of human liberty" and only on such a basis can we structure our economic lives in a manner that is in accord with the cultivation of the human good: "By explaining the intelligibility of economic process and communicating what should be our intelligent responses to it, he hoped that persons might be led forth into a fuller participation in the human good."

**Roger Duncan** in "**Drinks and Dinner with Kierkegaard**" examines Kierkegaard's account of the categories of the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious, and brings these categories to bear in a consideration of T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* and Isak Dinesen's *Babette's Feast*. A person who lives on the level of the aesthetic is immersed in the realm of the senses, capable of responding to the many forms of the beautiful, but is locked into a "fundamentally selfish style where people are easily wounded and equally easily elated by the sensuous immediate." Those who advance to the ethical life are capable of serious commitment and exhibit fidelity to deeply held values. The religious dimension marks a fulfillment of human development:

if the ethical as the sphere of duty takes the individual into the service of something higher than ego, religious existence continues that orientation but adds the adventure of a quite specific mission, tailored to the individual and so specific to him that he cannot explain himself to anyone, not fully anyway. Abraham serves as the hero of the religious dimension, the knight of faith who sacrifices everything in the hope of the fulfillment of the divine promise.

Duncan then draws upon these categories in a discussion of Eliot's play, discovering that Eliot supplements Kierkegaard's categories by

giving emphasis to the significance of love and communion at the ethical and religious levels of life. In his examination of *Babette's Feast*, Duncan finds that an excessively rigid construal of the ethical dimension is disrupted by the experience of beauty on the aesthetic level and the rediscovery of a sense of mission on the religious level is achieved. He concludes the article with reflections on the importance of supplementing Kierkegaard's categories with the consideration of the importance of love and communion as suggested by the two literary works he has examined and suggests that a more Catholic understanding of these categories is thereby achieved.

In "**The Cost of John Dryden's Catholicism**," **Bryan Berry** argues that Dryden's long poem, *The Hind and the Panther*, marks the culmination of his poetic career and states that "it also is the only major work in English literature devoted to the thesis that the Roman Catholic Church is the one holy catholic and apostolic church instituted by Christ." The article brings to light the many ways in which Dryden paid a price for his apologia for the Catholic faith, including the ways in which Dryden's reputation continued to suffer as a result long after his death. He extends the view of Dryden's accomplishment in this poem to include the observation that it also marks the culmination "of nearly two centuries of religious controversies . . . between Protestants and Catholics, and between Anglicans and the precisians, or Puritans, who peopled the ranks of England's varieties of Dissenters." Berry's article is an important reconsideration of *The Hind and the Panther* and could even be considered an act of justice in reasserting the value of Dryden's accomplishment more than two hundred years after his death, an accomplishment that did cost Dryden dearly as Berry amply demonstrates.

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Editor

*Notes*

1. Robert Peter Imbelli, "Foreword" in Avery Cardinal Dulles, SJ, *Church and Society: The Lawrence J. McGinley Lectures, 1988–2007* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), ix.
2. *Ibid.*, x.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Avery Dulles, SJ, *The Reshaping of Catholicism* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 75–92.
5. *Ibid.*, 83, 88.
6. *Ibid.*, 89.
7. Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, 1965, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html) (accessed February 2009).
8. Peter E. Hodgson, *Theology and Modern Physics* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).
9. *Ibid.*, 224.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, 225–26.