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EDITORIAL: TWENTY YEARS OF FAITH AND REASON

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WITH THIS ISSUE, *FAITH & REASON* MARKS THE END OF ITS TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY year. Therefore, this is an appropriate moment for expressions of gratitude. We are thankful, above all, to the Lord for His grace in sustaining the journal through both peaceful and stormy times. We are also grateful for the competent and energetic work of *Faith & Reason's* editorial staff since the beginning. Twenty years ago, Jeffrey A. Mirus launched an ambitious project, which he called "a journal in pursuit of Truth," from his office in the history department of Pembroke State University in North Carolina. After one year and three issues, Mirus brought *Faith & Reason* with him as he joined in an even bolder undertaking: the founding of a college "dedicated to full Catholic truth in higher education." Since that time, *Faith & Reason* has been honored to call itself "the journal of Christendom College." Mirus edited the journal until 1985. He was succeeded by Timothy O'Donnell, who was editor of *Faith & Reason* until he became President of Christendom College in the Fall of 1992.

From that time until last year, the journal was under the able direction of Father James McLucas. I personally want to thank Dr. Mirus, the founder of *Faith & Reason*, and his successors and my predecessors Dr. O'Donnell and Fr. McLucas for maintaining the Catholic fidelity and high academic standards of this unique journal. I also want to thank our associate editors, the members of the editorial board, and each of the staff members who have labored (some of them for many years) to produce and distribute each issue of *Faith & Reason*. Finally, we are indebted to all our contributing authors for their outstanding and often courageous scholarly work, and all our readers for their interest and support through the years.

The twentieth anniversary of *Faith & Reason* is also a good opportunity to reflect again on the vision that has animated this journal since its foundation: a vision that could be expressed by the phrase "integral Christianity," or perhaps even by the word "Catholicity"-understood in the sense of the universal penetration of Faith into every facet of human existence.

Fundamentally, an "integral Christianity," a Catholic vision of the whole universe, is based on the mystery of God's plan for all of creation, which St. Paul succinctly expresses in Ephesians 1:10-"to recapitulate all things in Christ." This means, as John Paul II has reminded us in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, that "Jesus Christ is the center of the cosmos and of history" (1). The principal and determinative feature in the whole of God's plan for the world and human history is the event of the Only Begotten Son of the Father becoming incarnate. This event achieves its complete realization in that great, dramatic action of the *human obedience* of the Son, which begins in the womb of the Virgin Mary and reaches its fulfillment in His bearing the sins of the world and rising from the dead as the firstborn of a new creation.

Thus, the central fact of man's history is this magnificent and gratuitous invitation to the whole human race to share in the infinite life and love of the Trinitarian God by being "incorporated" into the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth in the mystery of the Church. It is this fact which gives meaning to *everything else*. Therefore, a truly "Catholic" mentality must be founded on an awareness of this fact and its decisive character-an awareness of the truth that every sphere of human existence and indeed every detail of human existence *belongs to Christ*, and therefore every aspect of life must be ultimately measured and valued in terms of its relationship to Him and to the drama of the redemption of the world in Him. Christ is "King"-He is the Lord of all creation and the Lord of history; He possesses every circumstance and measures everything within the vastness of the love of His Heart.

Faith & Reason is committed to taking seriously the Lordship of Jesus-and the integrally Christian vision that follows from it-precisely as it pertains to the intellectual life. Reason-that splendid faculty whereby man engages reality and discovers its essential characteristics-is not thwarted or compromised or violated by the obedience of faith. On the contrary, the act of faith brings reason into a more profound relationship with the very Source of its being and vital activity. The act of faith elevates and transfigures human reason, and it "liberates" human reason from the chains that have weighed upon it throughout history-the chains of vanity and illusion, indolence and sloth, hypocrisy and ideology, intellectual blindness and superficial curiosity. Faith transforms and liberates reason because by faith man enters into a relationship with the One who has saved man, who has saved the whole man-man with his reason and his freedom and every other aspect of his humanity.

We believe that this salvation has real, concrete consequences for the intellectual life. The act of faith is reasonable in itself, and the content of faith is capable of being elucidated in a poor and humble but nevertheless genuinely "scientific" fashion by the work of theology. But also, faith introduces a new energy into the whole scope of rational reflection - into

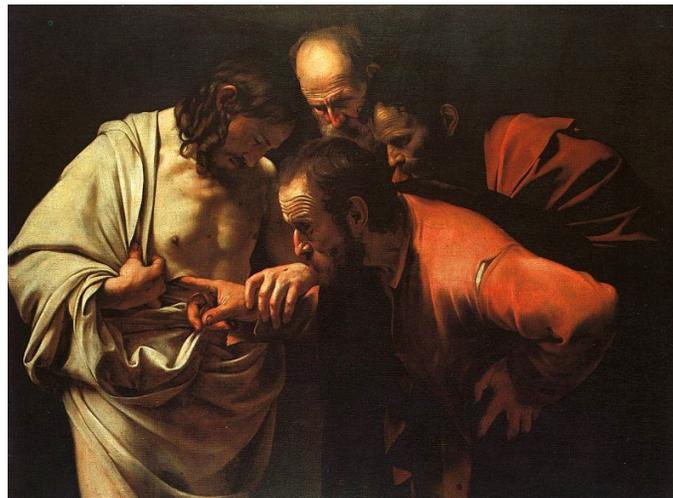
the study of philosophy, politics, history, literature, the principles and methods of the natural sciences, the world of culture and the problems of contemporary society. We are convinced that faith in Christ strengthens all of these intellectual disciplines. Faith enables man to grasp the ultimate significance of whatever it is that he is studying-its locus within the wisdom and intricate coherence of the Divine plan which governs all things sweetly. And faith also purifies and strengthens man's intellect and invests it with a special ardor to embrace Truth wherever it can be found, because it knows by faith that all truth reflects the face of Christ.

Therefore, an integrally Christian vision of the intellectual life is expressed not only in the "fides quaerens intellectum" of theology, but also in the recognition that faith governs all of the intellectual disciplines in light of their ultimate purpose, and acts as a "leaven" whereby the whole range of the intellectual life flourishes and grows.

This vision accounts for the uniqueness of *Faith & Reason* as an academic journal in the world of scholarship today. It is important to note that the "university"-as an institution in Western culture-came into existence precisely as the vehicle and expression of an integrally Christian vision of the intellectual life. However, the original ideal of the university has undergone a process of disintegration over the last several centuries. Beginning with that historical epoch known as the "Enlightenment," the divorce of faith and reason has been proclaimed in the name of the liberation of human thought and the recognition of the "autonomy" of the natural and human sciences. However, the end result of this large and sweeping "experiment" of modernity has become evident in our day: man's gaze upon reality has become "fragmented,"

lacking the ordered unity of *wisdom*, and subjected to the manipulations of popular fashion, realpolitik, cliquishness and factionalism masquerading as erudition and scientific consensus, or the open brutality of revenge, slander, and unbridled ambition.

Faith & Reason seeks to be, for its contributors and its readers, a place to redis-



cover and renew the integral Christian vision that constituted the original inspiration of Catholic university life. Just as Christendom College was founded to concretize the Catholic ideal of a university education and make it available to undergraduate students of today, so also *Faith & Reason* seeks to extend this ideal to a wider audience of professional scholars and others who possess a genuine love of learning.

Moreover, no one should think that “integral Christianity” means a fundamentalistic domination by theology over all the other branches of knowledge. We recognize and revere theology as “regina scientiarum,” but the great Catholic university tradition has never advocated that all the intellectual disciplines should be absorbed into theology. Rather, theology’s “royal” character stems not only from the sacredness of its immediate object, but also because—as John Paul II recently stated—it presents “the point of view which unifies, in the plan of God, all the different branches of human knowledge and the various expressions of life” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 67). Within the regime of an integral Christian vision shaped and deepened by an authentic Catholic theology, all of the liberal arts, the social and human sciences, and the natural sciences have a genuine freedom. First of all, they are free from the danger of losing their place within the order of wisdom. They are free from the danger of being cut off from a living relationship to the One who gives them their ultimate significance; and they are thereby free from the intellectual diseases of one-sided distortion or a grotesque, cancerous increase in isolation from the whole. They are also free for an expansive and integral development of all their proper characteristics within

the ultimate unity of God’s loving plan for His creation, within the splendid amplitude of the mind and heart of Christ who possesses them all as His own.

We are therefore convinced that “academic freedom,” like every other kind of real freedom, can only be the freedom of belonging to Christ and to the Church through which He remains present in the world. *Faith & Reason* exists to offer an alternative to the slavery of today’s intellectual culture, an alternative to the disintegration of man’s reason into so many bits of isolated information and the alienating expression of opinions incapable of communicating with one another. *Faith & Reason* offers instead the true freedom which comes from belonging to the One who said, “the truth will make you free,” and a real community in the pursuit of that truth. We are convinced that faith *and* reason belong together because we are convinced that every being that the human mind lays hold of is a being that belongs to Christ, exists for Christ, speaks its own truth unto the glory of Christ. In the words of St. Maximus the Confessor, Christ recapitulates all things in Himself “so that the creatures of the one and only God may not remain strangers, enemies of one another, but may have a common place to express their friendship and their peace” (*Mystagogia* I).

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Editor

