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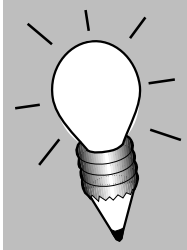

Featured in this issue:

Reforming our thinking about courtship and sexuality

by William Craig

Kathleen van Schaijik's insightful article on dating and courtship addressed a topic of tremendous practical importance. Having worked full-time in the Pro-Life movement for the past eight years, I am convinced that fostering an authentically Christian view of human sexuality is critical in our battle against the Culture of Death.

The prevalent view on sexuality in our culture is essentially pagan. One could argue that the day has arrived, as hoped for by Alex Comfort—a leader of the sexual revolution and author of *The Joy of Sex* —"when we regard chastity as no more a virtue than malnutrition." Christians have an obligation not only to instill in their children a proper vision of human sexuality, but to act as salt and light to a world that is sinking ever deeper into a cesspool of carnal license. While some progress is discernible, especially with the recent proliferation of abstinence programs, much work remains to be done. Even these abstinence programs generally focus on avoiding sexual activity, and not on developing a true Christian ethic of human sexuality.

It is tragic that the "biblical approach" to courtship, which Mrs. Van Schaijik criticized, has emerged as the predominant Christian alternative to our culture's hedonistic dating and courtship rituals. While laudable in its intent, this approach does a disservice to its adherents by depriving them of the experience of discerning romantic feelings, developing self-control, and learning to interact emotionally in ways that will make them better spouses when the "Right One" comes along.

The Catholic Church's teaching on human sexuality and love is incomprehensibly beautiful. If that beauty is conveyed, dating and courtship rituals can be revolutionized to reflect the Gospel. Such a revolution would require several interrelated steps:

We must preach in the area of human sexuality faithfully and with passion. If we do not proclaim the Gospel as it relates to human sexuality, pop culture will fill the void. We have an obligation to preach the Truth, especially as it relates to these critical issues. God's message has a power that does not come from us, and He has placed these Truths deep within every human heart. Young people will respond to the truth and the beauty of our message if shared clearly and with passion. The Gospel is just as fresh and vibrant as ever.

We must preach and teach specifically on these

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Is St. Thomas's thought egoistical?

by Patrick Lee

I have frequently heard at FUS the idea that St. Thomas Aquinas's thought is egoistical, that is, that Thomas's thought does not really recognize the fact that we sometimes care for someone for his own sake, as opposed to merely as a means toward our own fulfillment. Or perhaps, it is said, since Thomas was a great saint, he did recognize this occasionally, but this insight does not square with the basic tenets of his philosophy or theology.

Why not? Well, the idea is that he taught that every agent always acts for its own perfection or fulfillment, and that whenever a rational agent acts deliberately the agent acts for his her own happiness. And so if Thomas's views were correct, the argument goes, every time we acted toward other persons we would be viewing them as mere means, and not as ends in themselves.

This is a serious misinterpretation. To show

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short takes

The influence of Puritanism

Your recent article on courtship gives me something to think about. I had thought highly of the opinion of a Protestant minister's wife I knew who said she wished her first kiss had been at her wedding. I am rethinking that idea.

Because of the strong influence of Puritanical ways of thought on the Christian culture in the United States (both in the Protestant world and in the Catholic world through Jansenism), I think Christians need to watch out for ways of thinking that seem very orthodox/conservative, but in reality lack a fullness of truth. I myself write children's stories as a hobby. Under the influence of fundamentalist Protestant fears of New Age/pagan encroachments, I always feared to go too far in writing fantasy or even science fiction. I felt a load lift off my back when I read an article entitled "Unicorn Hunters," in a prominent Catholic magazine which exposed this way of thinking as Puritanical, and mentioned several Catholic children's story writers who use fantasy as a way to promote the Truth, including C.S. Lewis, Madeleine L'Engle, and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Jeff Zare
FUS class of '97

Thank you, thank you!

When I picked up the latest issue of *the University Concourse* and spotted an article regarding courtship, I had to sigh. I fully expected a typically Steubenville affirmation of this oddest of rituals. I was, however, most pleasantly surprised, and not a little impressed, to find that someone had actually taken a Catholic (not to mention common sense) approach to dealing with the topic. As an engaged person on campus, I find your treatment of the love that leads to marriage refreshing. Thank God that someone has finally focused on how beautiful a dating relationship has the potential to be!

My fiancé and I both are very grateful that you chose to address the fallacies of the courtship theory—an idea that is, we believe, inherently unCatholic. One can only hope that on a campus so justly famous for its vibrant Catholicism this richer understanding of love will finally come to supplant its Protestant cousin.

Catherine Egan
FUS junior, English/drama major

What about Bonaventure?

One of the biggest problems I have with Ben Brown's articles is his assumption that his definition of a "liberal arts education," of a "university" and (seemingly from his latest submission) a "truly Catholic vision" are the correct ones. While he is eloquent and passionate in defending his beliefs, he does so by pointing to things not yet agreed-upon.

Similarly, it would seem that many contributors take it for granted that Newman's idea of a university is the proper model for FUS (and indeed any "true" university) to follow. Is it not possible that an alternate view of education, its ends and purposes, might be just as worthy of our consideration? St. Bonaventure, for example, held to a position that education was intended to be in service to man; that knowledge in one sense may be an end in itself, but that it was also a means to other ends? And would Ben Brown & co. see it as a betrayal or perhaps less "Catholic" if FUS would choose the Bonaventurian model over Newman's?

His argumentative words to Professor Kelly were unwarranted, especially since Professor Kelly made no

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the University Concourse

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We welcome submissions from faculty, students, administrators, staff, alumni, parents, trustees, benefactors and friends, on any topic of interest to a general university readership, provided they are courteously expressed and framed with a view to advancing the welfare of FUS and/or Catholic culture at large.

We recommend opinions be kept to fewer than 1,500 words.

Contributions should be sent to e-mail address **katieandjules@attglobal.net** or through our website: **www.TheUniversityConcourse.com**.

Please include your full name, phone-number and e-mail address, if you have one.

We will consider printing submissions anonymously or under a pen-name; however, in general we wish to encourage open, "face to face" discussion. In either case, the editors require the full name and phone-number of the author of each opinion.

Distributism or the Free Economy?

by Kevin Schmiesing

Mr. Storck's reply in the latest issue of the *Concourse* is a helpful clarification of his positions. While I am in agreement with his assertion that Catholics ought to look both to the state and to individual and private efforts in building a just and humane society, I would nonetheless like to point out some concerns that his article raises. I do not presume to speak for others besides myself, but I suspect that my views are shared broadly by many Catholics who, genuinely concerned with living out Catholic social principles, disagree with the interpretation of those principles set forth by "distributists" such as Mr. Storck.

On Mr. Storck's first point—the ability of the state to influence moral opinion—we are agreed. Anyone other than the zaniest of libertarians will grant that law has an educative value. I assume Mr. Storck would agree that the objection to "legislating morality" is based on a false dichotomy, and that, to a significant extent, laws against murder, tax code favors toward families (e.g. child tax credits), even speeding penalties, are all based on a moral vision and the belief that certain things are good and certain things are evil. The question at hand is the prudential one: just how far should the state go in attempting this task? For reasons I will elaborate later, I believe it wise to limit strictly the direct action of government on this score.

On the issue of material wealth, the situation is more complex. Mr. Storck is right to criticize the tone of Messrs. Zoric and Welker's article insofar as it celebrates riches without noting the inherent dangers. He errs, however, in failing to note the real human benefits of material progress. Consider the devastating floods around the world in the last few years, from Honduras to Venezuela to Mozambique. To a significant extent, the extraordinarily high number of casualties these disasters brought was due to a lack of infrastructural development such as flood prevention measures and quality housing. Floods of a similar ferocity in the United States would have been far less destructive of human life. Many such examples could be cited. While I have no quarrel with Mr. Storck's contention that material goods generally do not "[bring] men closer to our Lord," in a direct fashion (for exceptions, consider the material goods of bibles, rosaries, edifyingly beautiful tabernacles, works of art, etc.), this should not call into question the genuine human benefits of material development.

In this context, too, Mr. Storck cites John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus* on the dangers of materialism and consumerism. Again, there is no disagreement. To less effect, he quotes John Wesley on the relation between increasing riches and decreasing religion. I doubt this claim stands the test of history. Once one gets beyond the crassest of historical generalizations (e.g. that wealth has increased in Europe since 1500, while religious practice has declined), this relation breaks down. Look at the United States during the twentieth century. A strong argument could be made that the 1950s saw increasing religious practice and vibrant churches concurrent with unprecedented economic prosperity. The general and difficult-to-pin-down relation between economic progress and religious practice aside, it is indisputable that wealth can be used for good or ill, that it is fundamentally a morally neutral object, and that it has moral character only in relation to human action. I hope, for instance, that Mr. Storck would not object to Thomas Monaghan's acquisition of incredible wealth, honestly gained and now generously given.[1]

I hope, for instance, that Mr. Storck would not object to Thomas Monaghan's acquisition of incredible wealth, honestly gained and now generously given.

I will run out of space if I try to address each of Mr. Storck's criticisms of the current economic system. Suffice it to say that if one accepts the principles of a "free economy" (a term the Pope has endorsed as better than "capitalism"), no one claims there will be no hardships (poverty), no painful adjustments (downsizing), no attendant evils (consumerism). The point is that the free economy, with minimal state intervention, can often address these problems better than the alternatives. Wealth creation, not wealth redistribution, is ultimately the most effective answer to poverty. Layoffs are difficult and corporate managers should do their best to avoid them, but the economic efficiency that results from the ability to modify and adjust to changing technology and changing conditions will ultimately provide more and better jobs. Consumerism is a genuine problem in an affluent society, but it is a moral evil that has to do with human attitudes, not merely with the possession of goods.

In the end, the debate comes down to a question of alternatives. If not the free economy, then what? Mr. Storck offers "distributism." If by that he means simply

the broader distribution of property, I am all for it. But if he intends to utilize state power to achieve the ends he has in mind, I would urge caution. Here I return to the point about limiting governmental power. There is no principle, Catholic or otherwise, that defines precisely to what degree the state should intervene in the economy. My argument, based both on principle and on experience, is that, when in doubt, we should tend toward less rather than more state intervention. The principled part of the argument has to do with a concern for human freedom. I embrace John Paul's formulation of freedom as always being oriented toward the truth (as opposed to license). But it is also a point of Catholic moral theology that virtue is dependent on freedom; i.e., there is no virtue in a coerced act. When we seek to harness state power to moral concerns more properly and more effectively addressed by the Church, we create problems. The Pope's recent apology for the abuses of the Inquisition and the Crusades highlights the fact that the excessive entanglement of Church and state usually has pernicious consequences for both.

From the experience of the last hundred years, we can see the disastrous consequences of vigorous state power. Besides the evidently evil totalitarianism of fascism and communism, statist abuses have had other manifestations. In the U.S., the government has waged a "war on poverty" for more than 30 years, with little effect other than a deepening of dependency and despondency. The usurpation of the proper roles of mediating institutions such as families, churches, and local organizations, has resulted in the enervation of these organizations without a compensating increase in social benefits. In short, we would do well to follow the principle of subsidiarity and call on the various levels of government to assist only when the task at hand is beyond the competency of local groups.

Perhaps Mr. Storck agrees with these last two paragraphs. If so, then I would ask, in what way does his distributist vision differ from that of the free economy? Here a more detailed explication of the distributist program is needed. Mr. Storck refers to the creation of "guilds" that would ensure that property serves its end of human welfare, but that would not be "organs of the state." It is difficult to envisage such entities. If the power of state coercion is not behind the decisions of the guild, what is to guarantee that the guild's programs are carried out? If the enforcement of the guild's guidelines is dependent on its internal discipline (i.e., if one does not comply, one is ejected from the guild), then it is not clear how the guild differs from contemporary organizations such as the American Bar Association, nor how the creation of more such guilds would fundamentally alter the makeup of contemporary economic life.

If all Mr. Storck advocates, then, is the employment of moral suasion in a call for simpler living, more generous aid and care for the impoverished and marginalized, and more voluntary efforts to ensure that all people participate in the productive process through ownership of property, our positions do not differ. I would say we both support the current system of free economy, at least in its essential characteristics. If, however, he envisions using government's coercive powers to implement limitations on profit, burdensome regulation of business, or a redistribution of wealth, I would advise that he think seriously about the consequences, moral and economic, of that route. It might be better to approach social problems in the way John Paul speaks of the Church's approach to evangelization: "the Church's method is always that of respect for freedom."[2]

Mr. Storck is clearly no socialist. But it is possible, as the Pope has observed, for those ostensibly opposed to socialism (including capitalists and distributists) to fall into the fundamental anthropological error at the heart of socialism. One aspect of that error, he writes in *Centessimus*, is the belief that "the good of the individual can be realized without reference to his free choice to the unique and exclusive responsibility which he exercises in the face of good or evil."[3] It has become a truism of historical experience that economic, political, and religious freedoms tend to stand or fall together. Upholding these freedoms will not ensure that people will always choose what is economically or politically or religiously *good*. But, if the insights of *Dignitatis Humanae*[4] and the current pope's corpus of writings are correct, the curtailment of freedom in the name of the good ultimately fails to serve the good, because it undermines the foundation of virtue, which is free human decision. And it is the formation of a truly good society, we can all agree, that is our goal. ■

Dr. Schmiesing graduated from FUS in 1994. He now works for the Center for Personalist Economics in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

[1] Thomas Monaghan is the founder and former owner of Domino's Pizza, who has funded, among other charitable projects, the formation of Ave Maria Law School.

[2] Pope John Paul II, *Centessimus Annus*, no. 46.

[3] Ibid., no. 14.

[4] *Dignitatis* is the *Declaration on Religious Freedom*, a document of the Second Vatican Council.

Shakespeare and the Catholic question

by Glen Cascino

Some Washington area subscribers told me of your existence and suggested I enter the Shakespeare debate, on the somewhat groundless theory that I am knowledgeable in the "Identity of Shakespeare" debates. Maybe I am a johnny-come-lately here, but the standard Oxfordian/Stratfordian angle doesn't often factor in an alternative thesis that may satisfy the points of both parties and may be of special interest to your readers—The "Shakespeare was Catholic" argument.

Since I am borrowing heavily from the scholars in this field, I might as well name them—John Henry DeGroot," The Shakespeares and the Old Faith," Ian Wilson, "Shakespeare: The Evidence," E.A.G. Honigmann, "Shakespeare: The Lost Years," and Peter Milward, S.J, "Was Shakespeare Catholic?" The general thesis is that William Shakespeare (of Stratford) had a rather large number of connections to the Catholic Recusants of the Elizabethan period (including his father and his daughter.) He himself may well have been a practicing Catholic for all or part of his life. His father's Catholicism is evidenced by an unmistakably Catholic will found secreted in the ancestral home in the 18th century and the succession of Elizabethan Stratford schoolmasters who had Catholic sympathies might be indicative of his own formation as a youth. Many believe that Shakespeare disappeared from Stratford society only to "reappear," however briefly, in Lancashire, where he was associated with a noble family running what amounted to a clandestine seminary for the Jesuits. From there, he became enamored of the theatre, got cold feet about a vocation, and eventually made his way to London. The rest is, as they say, "history."

Clearly, if Shakespeare was a Catholic, he in effect would have had to hide that fact.

Clearly, if Shakespeare was a Catholic, he in effect would have had to hide that fact. Even if he evolved into a "church Catholic" (i.e., outwardly conformed) he would still have had plenty of reason in Elizabethan England to lie low. Perhaps this explains the paucity of evidence (i.e., the lack of a paper trail) about him, and the strangeness of the evidence that does exist (the cryptic memorial in Stratford church, the vague will, etc.) Why call extra attention to yourself when you were already writing plays referencing purgatory as if this was an every day occurrence?

I write without benefit of reading either Charlton Ogburn or Joe Sobran, though I am acquainted with their basic points. While there are some striking connections between Oxford's life story and elements of Shakespeare's plays, I have often wondered why this constitutes "evidence" of his authorship. Could not Shakespeare of Stratford have been party to court gossip in which details pertaining to Oxford were well known? Oxford's life does indeed sound like excellent material for a play or two; this does not mean he wrote them. For all I know, Oxford and Shakespeare knew each other and might have collaborated with each other to the degree allowed by their respective stations. The fact that we don't have a piece of paper showing this doesn't mean it didn't happen.

I will not go into the detail of the Catholic allusions in Shakespeare's plays, which were rather remarkable for their time. I will not go into his ownership of a "mass house" in central London or the fact that Catholics may frequently have authored two wills, one "official" and one unofficial in which their true wishes were known. I will also not dwell on the fact that the Stratford grammar school provided more than enough classical training for a budding natural genius, which we may safely assume young Shakespeare to have been. But I do argue here that there is ample evidence to see Shakespeare of Stratford in this light in hopes of buttressing his claims against the Oxfordians. Shakespeare was not a rudely-educated country bumpkin, but the well-off son of a respected merchant who was educated far beyond the norm of his time. He lived during the time of the Counter-reformation in a region notoriously conservative regarding matters religious. You do the math.

As a parting point, I would also caution readers from the 21st century against evaluating 16th century people by our own standards. Late Medievals did not particularly think it important to scribble down autobiographical notes about themselves for posterity. Even if they did, the fact is that very few of those writings would have survived into the modern era. Fires happen, documents fall into ruin, things get lost and people wishing to avoid being hung, drawn and quartered don't advertise themselves. While this may disappoint modern day detectives, it is a fact that every honest historian will admit. Let the "paucity" of evidence about Shakespeare stand and let his genius be recognized for just what it was: a unique gift of God. ■

short takes

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mention of Brown's articles. Brown was simply using Kelly's article as an occasion to restate his position, only this time it was particularly arrogant. For him to suggest that FUS should not call itself a university because we're not living up to his (medieval) model is beyond the pale.

I, for one, appreciated Professor Kelly's expression that FUS is trying to serve both needs (stronger liberal arts core *and* strong professional training), and his expression of support for their respective goods. His attempt to peacefully resolve this debate by recognizing the fact that the faculty and the University are even attempting to wrestle with this thorny issue was noble. It certainly did not deserve to be treated so disdainfully by Brown.

The core curriculum at FUS may indeed need improvement. I have no quarrel with those who advocate for a stronger liberal arts core for all students; as a matter of fact, I thank Ben Brown for his persuasive writing in past issues, as it has helped me arrive at the realization that I do support a stronger core. But there are important considerations that the faculty and the Core Curriculum Task Force must address. What I and others have tried to do in a hitherto congenial manner is to remind *Concourse* readers that these issues (professional, and indeed, life preparation for FUS students) are not ancillary issues—they are central to the debate. I think it's irresponsible when these serious considerations are not sufficiently mentioned in the quest for a liberal arts ideal.

Jason Negri

A personalist point regarding economics

Mr. Thomas Storck and I are in nearly total agreement as regards economics and morality. His comments in the last issue of the *Concourse* were an excellent effort toward bringing dogmatic economic liberals to the insight of serious problems with the capitalist spirit.

I would just add one point to Mr. Storck's insights, and that is a clear sense of personalism. We must keep in mind that politics deals with persons who can know why they choose one course of action over another. The ultimate goal is not "moving men and women to act justly," but rather encouraging them to desire justice and to act justly because they have an insight into why it is right. This point must be very clear when talking about distributism or other kinds of political action. When a valid insight (such as the problems with capitalism, which the distributists understand) is obtained, there is a temptation to immediately implement the idea. This impatience circumvents the arduous task of leading others to gain the insight and desire a change of life, which is the only acceptable way in dealing with free citizens in the political order. Though political action has its role to play, this goal is in fact better achieved through cultural channels such as writing—the method Mr. Storck has currently employed.

Philip Harold
FUS senior, philosophy major

Thomas

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this, I will briefly examine two of Thomas's ideas: beatitude and love of benevolence.

Beatitude

Thomas says that (when acting deliberately) we always act for *beatitudo*. This is often translated as "happiness," but I think it should better be translated simply as "beatitude." The term "happiness" often today denotes a state of *feeling* contented, whether one is really fulfilled (perfected) or not.

Thomas defines *beatitude*, following Boethius, as follows: "the state perfected by the possession of all goods" (*status omnium bonorum aggregatione perfectus*). So, according to Thomas, whenever we choose we are acting, implicitly at least, to contribute to an ideal condition, the condition we conceive as being ideal. But different people, and even the same person at different times, may effectively place their beatitude in different conditions. That is, not everyone (and not even the same person at different times) acts for the same ideal condition, but everyone has some ideal condition or other he or she aims at in each deliberate act.

Thomas is concerned also to explain what we *should* aim at as our beatitude, that is, what our beatitude *really* or *objectively* is. This condition, beatitude in the objective sense, involves our real fulfillment or perfection (our complete beatitude also includes supernatural communion with God, which is over and above our natural fulfillment, but I abstract from that issue here). But according to Thomas we are not simply individuals. We are, by the nature of the case, members of communities: friendships, family, city, Church, eventually, the whole universe, of which God is the ruler.

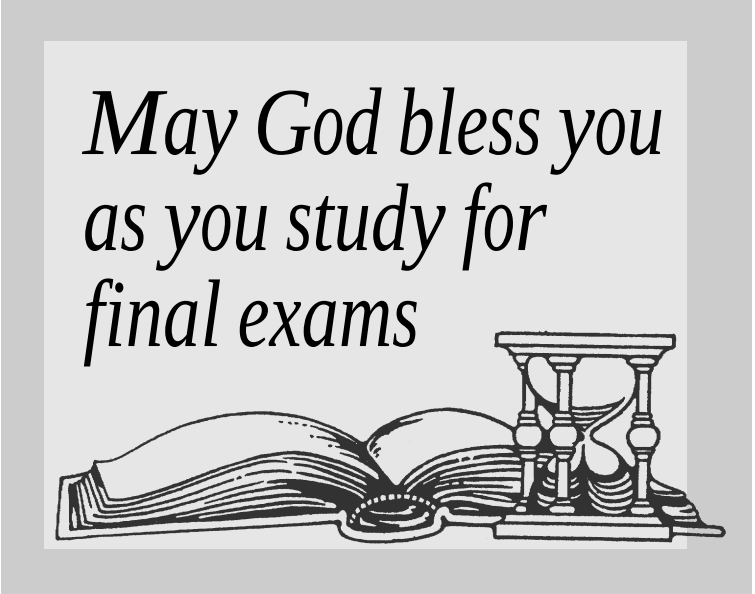
That is, in what we are, we are in communion with other persons. Therefore, our real fulfillment, our beatitude, cannot consist merely in our individual perfection. Therefore, to act for my beatitude in a morally upright way is to act not just for my own *individual* fulfillment, but also for the fulfillment of all those people with whom I am in communion in these various communities. My fulfillment includes the fulfillment of my wife, my children, my friends, and so on. If I work in order to feed my family and myself, am I being egoistical? No, but I am working for my fulfillment, my beatitude, because my fulfillment includes their fulfillment, since I am in communion with them. (On this see *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 60, a. 5; I-II, q. 109, a. 3)

Love of Benevolence or Love of Friendship

St. Thomas clearly teaches that we should love God and our neighbor with a love of benevolence or love of friendship, and not just with a love of concupiscence. A love of concupiscence is the love I have for a thing or condition that I will *to* some person (either myself or another). Thus, I love steak with a love of concupiscence because I will it to myself (or to my friends). The love of benevolence or love of friendship, on the other hand, is the love I have for the person *to whom* I will good things or conditions. Thus, when I love steak with a love of concupiscence at the same time I am loving myself (and my friends) with a love of benevolence or friendship. Or if I will that my children learn and remain healthy, I am loving learning and health with a love of concupiscence, but I am loving my children with a love of friendship. Now, according to St. Thomas, I should love God (even on the natural level) more than myself with a love of benevolence or friendship, and I should love my neighbor, which includes all other human beings, with a love of benevolence or friendship. (The distinction between love of concupiscence and love of benevolence is also central to John Paul II's account of love in *Love and Responsibility*; the first he calls love as desire and the second love of goodwill, pp. 80-84.)

One might object that for Thomas the love we have for another cannot be genuinely for his own sake, since it is based on an ontological union, or "solidarity," with that other, and so we love the other only as a part of ourself, the way one loves one's pet, for example (cf. John Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person*, p. 179-180). However, Thomas's claim is that *love of friendship*, not just love of concupiscence, arises from this extension of natural love of self outward to others. Second, Thomas explicitly contrasts this love of friendship of another with love of someone or something merely as part of oneself (*cf.* his *Commentary on Dionysius's On Divine Names*, #406).

Third, the ontological union with the other is a



necessary condition of the extension of one's love of friendship to another; it is not its sole cause. The goodness (or value?) of the other, Thomas insists, is the primary cause of one's love of the other (*Summa Theologiae,* I-II. q. 27, a. 1). Fourth, Thomas explicitly argues that *extasis*, or a certain standing outside oneself, perhaps best translated as *transcendence*, is especially an effect of love of friendship of another (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 28, a. 3). Fifth, Thomas says we are called to love God *more than ourselves* with a love of friendship (*Summa Theologiae,* II-II, q. 26, a. 3), a nonsensical claim if love of another amounted only to loving him as part of oneself.

After original sin, says Thomas, we have a tendency to make ourself the center and to love other people only with a love of concupiscence. That is wrong. God should be at the center and our love for ourself should be an effect of our more primordial or primary love for God, which will also involve a love of what he loves, namely, our neighbor (*Summa Theologiae,* II-II, q. 25, a. 4; q. 27, a. 3). This teaching is not a mere *obiter dictum* or something only conceded in response to an objection—as if he glimpsed the truth just on rare occasions. Rather, it is central to his whole vision of reality, central to his vision of the return of all rational creatures to God, through Christ.

So, while Thomas did not say the last word on love, his thought is not egoistic. ■

Dr. Lee is Professor of Philosophy at FUS.

Courtship

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topics. Unfortunately, our message on human sexuality is astonishingly counter-cultural. Even within the Catholic Church, we have experienced more than thirty years of a widespread belief that one can ignore Church teaching on sexual matters and still remain a "good Catholic." It is unlikely that a young Catholic has ever heard a single homily or discussion of the Church's teaching on any of these topics. It is incredibly important not only to expressly state the Church's teaching, but also to provide compelling arguments that further reflect "ever more clearly the biblical foundations, the ethical grounds and the personalistic reasons" behind these commandments of God given for our benefit. A brilliant example of this approach is Pope John Paul II's teaching on the Theology of the Body. We must address these subjects, especially in Catholic schools, Religious Education Programs, and in marriage preparation classes.

We must demonstrate a profound trust and respect for those facing these issues. Allowing young people to face these critical issues prior to marriage, as these situations naturally arise, can be a great opportunity for growth for them, despite the risks involved. Young people do not need to be told to avoid all intimacy, but rather, that with God's grace, they are capable of self-control, and that we feel that they can be trusted to develop emotionally in this area. Permitting "full" courtship and dating requires a great deal of parental interaction, supervision and communication.

We must develop a proper religious foundation in our children so as to prepare them for the challenges they will face in the future, including issues involving human sexuality. Parents must provide their children "an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgement, and self-mastery—the preconditions of all true freedom," in addition to educating them in the Faith. Children trained in these critical skills are well positioned to not only survive adolescence and the dating process unscathed, but to continue to grow in sanctity.

I pray that God raises up many from FUS who will accept the challenge to be leaders in bringing about this Catholic revolution in dating and courtship. ■

Mr. Craig resides in Michigan.

Editor's Post Script

Fr. Michael's Achievement

A student recently described FUS to me as "a delightful, wonderful and fantastic swimming pool of God's grace and love that I am currently splashing around in."

It is, to be sure, an *unusual* description of college life, but I thought it beautifully apt for my *alma mater*.

It has been announced that Fr. Michael is retiring this summer, but it is marvelous to behold how he leaves behind him not only a pool of grace at FUS, but new springs popping up in unexpected places throughout the parched terrain of modern Catholic education . His vision for renewing, enlivening and deepening the faith of students is taking root in other schools now too, like Ave Maria College, where my husband and I and other alums now live and work, and where still more are coming—bringing with them what they have gratefully received. There is a marvelous sense that we are only just beginning to see the wonder of what God has done through Steubenville.

Eternal thanks to our dearly-beloved out-going president! (since there is no earthly measure for what we owe him.)

May God grant him a retirement as restful as his work has been fruitful! ■

Charity may be severe

Five years of work on the *Concourse* has taught me that this point cannot be stressed enough (given that we've all grown up breathing the poisonous gas of pop psychology): *There is no essential conflict between criticism and charity*—even between very harsh criticism and charity. If there were, we would have to say that Love Incarnate was being uncharitable when he called the Pharisees "snakes" and "vipers' brood," or St. Paul was being uncharitable when he called some of the early Christians "fools."

The beneficence of our criticism is not measured by its mildness, but rather by its intention and its justice. Is it directed at the good? Is it true? *These* are the questions we should be asking about criticism that comes our way, not "Was it pleasant to hear?" "Was it sandwiched in praise?"

Just try to imagine Jesus following the conventional wisdom about "constructive criticism": "I really want to commend and honor you Pharisees for your zeal; I'm just suggesting that there might be some room for improvement in this one area. There's no *question* that you have a valid point when you stress the importance of keeping the Sabbath; *definitely*, we need to keep the Sabbath; I'm just saying maybe if you expressed your concern differently it might be more effective. But, in any case, I really want to affirm you for your great leadership of the Jewish people." ■

On the other side of the same coin

Here's another thing that keeps amazing me: how readily even very intelligent Christians will identify a mild-toned opinion with a charitable or "balanced" one. Never mind that the opinion does not settle any difficulty; never mind that it reveals an extremely superficial grasp of a deep and complex issue; never mind that it mischaracterizes or passes thoughtlessly over the carefully presented concerns and insights of others; never mind that it throws no new light on a problem. It was expressed so congenially; it wasn't "emotional;" it was vaguely affirming; it didn't hurt anyone's feelings; it was, therefore, an exemplary piece of Christian discourse.

We *really* need to get a better grip on the relation between charity and truth. ■

Shakespeare debate update

Speaking (as Mr. Cascino does on p.5) of Shakespeare and religion, a recent article of Joseph Sobran's on the subject adds this fascinating piece of evidence to his case for Oxford:

"A few years ago an independent scholar named Roger Stritmatter found that Oxford's personal copy of the Bible is heavily marked, and that hundreds of verses Oxford marked correspond to verses cited in the Shakespeare plays. For example, Oxford underlined the verse in which the shaft of Goliath's spear is compared to "a weaver's beam." In *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* Sir John Falstaff boasts: "I fear not Goliath with a weaver's beam." Coincidence? If so, there are a hundred such coincidences pointing to Oxford."

No one could call it proof, but it is another little probability converging with the numberless others. ■

Beware of economic Puritanism

Thomas Storck has offered a convincing critique of capitalism from the point of view of Catholic social teaching, but I have a bone to pick with his distributist alternative. Perhaps I misunderstood, but it sounded like he was saying that no one should be allowed to become wealthy. "For if private property has a purpose and end… it surely is to allow a man to make a decent living for himself and his family by serving society. But one living, not two or three." Philip Harold expressed something similar when he urged us to examine our economic consciences with questions like this: "Do we eat and drink for the sake of our bodily needs only, or with a view toward the maximum pleasure?"

Though I doubt either author thinks so, such statements and questions seem to suggest that there is something illicit in a Catholic's having and enjoying wealth that greatly exceeds his material needs. But, not only is such an idea not to be found in the teachings of the Church; it is out of sync with the history of Catholic life and culture.

The Church shows a preferential love for the poor; she also warns us about the spiritual perils of material abundance; she exhorts us to give generously of our substance. But she never comes *close* to saying that there is something morally *wrong* or even compromising in being wealthy. If there were, there would be no such thing as a rich saint, while in fact there have been many.

Poverty-lived-virtuously gives witness to the next world; wealth-lived-virtuously reveals the beauty and plenitude of this one. Where we personally fall in the cosmic scheme of economic witnessing to God's glory is a private question of circumstance and vocation. Am I called to sell everything I have and give it to the poor? Am I called to live moderately in the middle; or am I called to live leisurely and add to the material splendor of Catholic culture on earth? Only my conscience can say. Similarly only my conscience can settle for me particular questions of what to do with what wealth I have. And it seems to me the question to ask is not: "Do I *need* this [cell-phone, say, or beautiful painting]?" but "Is it *good* for me to buy it? Is this a right use of my money at this time in my life?" This is a question no one else can answer for me, since it depends so entirely on my own inward and outward circumstances, my sense of value, my myriad responsibilities, my unique make-up of strengths and weaknesses, my interior impression of God's call in my life—what Newman calls my "illative sense."

In the much-needed critique of consumerism and the system that engendered and sustains it, let's take care not fall into a kind of economic Puritanism that equates abundance with extravagance and pleasure with self-indulgence. ■

What the education debate is and isn't about

To clear up some apparent confusion: Here is what proponents of a stronger core curriculum are *not* saying about FUS' education.

They are not saying that we should do away with professional programs and offer nothing but humanities courses. They are not saying that professional training is useless. They are not saying such training is unimportant, and that every student should choose his major as if he expected to enjoy a lifetime of leisure. What they *are* saying is that training for a career is not *the essence of higher education*; its essence is the strengthening, expanding, deepening and perfecting of the mind. (They add, by the way, that perfecting the mind is excellent preparation for any graduate program or career, as well as for evangelization.) They say further that to achieve the proper end of education, a strong *foundation* in liberal arts is the time-tested, tradition-hallowed, insubstitutable means. Next, they point to the fact that despite some truly wonderful course offerings, the FUS *core* is comparatively weak and in need of fundamental reform so that it includes more liberal arts more thoughtfully arranged.

And for this they get labeled extremists, elitists and medievalists, who are trying to remake FUS after the image of Thomas Aquinas College. How does this happen? Where does it come from?

The Core Curriculum Task Force has just unveiled its proposal for a new core, which apparently represents only a minor improvement over our current core. For instance, it still includes only one philosophy course. Professor Lee, who is on the Task Force, told me that he hasn't been able to find a single other Catholic university that requires so little philosophy, nor one that dedicates as few total credit hours to the core. Shouldn't that tell us something? He used the analogy of a father who asks himself whether he is spending too much time away from home. One way—not the only way, but a helpful way—of finding out would be for him take note of what other Catholic fathers do. If he discovers that *every* other Catholic father he knows is spending significantly more time with his family, he would have a pretty good indication—not a proof, but an indication—that some lifestyle adjustment on his part was in order.

If we continue this debate next year—and I hope we will, since we have a long way to go before we reach something like consensus—let's make sure we dispute with one another's real views and concrete proposals, and not with caricatures and straw men. ■

The Weimar Republicans

Were it not for hope in God, the chilling parallels between the Elian events and events in Germany in the 1930s would be enough to make the soul sink. There is the media campaign to make an ethnic minority appear despicable—to make the general public believe them capable of anything, to make us agree that unprecedented, illicit, government-ordered use of armed force is "appropriate" when dealing with such people. There is the impatient desire of the majority to sweep the issue under the rug, to put it behind us and move on, to ignore its implications, to deny that there are large principles and literal lives at stake. And then there are what a recent caller to the Rush Limbaugh show termed "the Weimar Republicans" (e.g. Jeb and George Bush) who, keeping a finger in the political winds, are lying low, issuing harmless "statements," and waiting cravenly for the issue to pass out of the headlines before too many people notice their non-leadership.

Who can rally behind a presidential candidate who won't stand for principle even at a moment like this? ■

Drawing Out an Analogy

Ralph Sharafinski's issue 4 article on baptism in the Holy Spirit included an illuminating analogy taken from the early Church:

"The early fathers used another analogy to speak about this release of the Spirit. They compared it to a green log that is thrown on a fire. It will not ignite immediately because it is wet. As it lies on the fire it dries out and eventually bursts into flame. The bursting into flame is Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It comes to the point of being consumed by the fire, and then generates light and heat."

I find this a helpful way of grasping the phenomenon that so many cradle Catholics (and others) have experienced: though we may have been members of the Church all along, at a certain moment in our lives we experience a sudden dramatic spiritual awakening—an awaking so piercing and powerful that we feel as if we had hardly been Christians up until that moment.

If it's not irreverent, I'd like to draw this analogy out a little, to throw light on a different phenomenon. It is easy for "charismatics," who are joyfully and gratefully amazed by their own experience of conversion, to misapprehend and judge falsely the religious experience of others. We have a tendency to say, in effect, "I perceive you are not in flames, as I am. Therefore, you are still wet and green, like I was; you need to come closer to the fire." We forget that logs in very energy-efficient wood stoves can be reduced to embers without ever "bursting into flame." There may be occasional flickers of fire and light, but nothing stunning. And these logs, though they give off less light, produce much more heat.

Let us rejoice continually in the myriad workings of Grace, and reverently refrain from projecting our own experience onto others. ■

Dear Class of 2000

How beautiful it is to think of you going out into the world, bringing with you the grace and blessings and knowledge you have received at FUS over the last years! Thrilling to contemplate what you can do for the world and the Church!

(Only two more years and AMC and OLCC will have graduates too!)

If you send us your address for next year, we will make sure the *Concourse* meets you there, and keeps you connected to the lively, now-intercollegiate intellectual atmosphere of your undergraduate years.

How to support the Concourse by buying books

A perennial question for us is how to make *the Concourse* financially independent without needlessly burdening our readers and subscribers. We think we have found a good way. Our Managing Editor and website designer (my husband) has put a link to Barnes and Noble on our website. They will give the *Concourse* 5% of the sale for any books bought through that link. So if you read the *Concourse*, and if you buy books on-line, please do it through our website!! It won't cost you anything extra, but it will be a great help to us. ■

Thanksgiving

I owe special gratitude this year to fellow editors Ben Brown and Michael Houser, who have been exceptionally generous and helpful in their work for the *Concourse*. Ben is heading for graduate school in the Fall; Michael for Austria. Both will continue as editors, thank goodness. Pre-theologate student Scott Johnston has graciously agreed to take up the practical slack left in Ben's wake. He has joined the editorial board and will handle FUS on-campus distribution next year.

For tireless dedication and perpetual good cheer, Justine Schmiesing stands alone. To paraphrase P.G. Wodehouse: "Among all possible design-editors, she's the only possible one." She volunteers all the layout work for the *Concourse*. And the light-hearted, tension-diffusing and humorous illustrations you find in our pages are chosen by her.

The other editors: Mark Fischer, Susan C. Fischer (sister-in-law, not wife of Mark), David Schmiesing and Jules van Schaijik have been extra involved and

Announcing: The fifth annual Concourse Grand Prize

Dinner for two at the Grand Concourse Restaurant in Pittsburgh.
To be awarded to the author of the article (excluding those by staff and board members), which, in the judgment of the editors, best reflects the Concourse ideal of fruitful Christian discourse.

This year's winner is
Philosophy Professor at
Our Lady of Corpus Christi Institute,
Dr. Ronda Chervin
for her issue 7 article titled, "Idol worship of the 'A' and the student/professor relationship"

The editors chose this article from among several worthy contenders, for its friendly, interrogative spirit, and because it provides a great example of a particular Concourse principle—namely, that one need not have a finished view on a given topic in order to make a valuable contribution to an worthwhile discussion. To raise questions and invite dialogue is to foster the kind of lively intellectual exchange that is the essence of the University Concourse. The following excerpts from her article will serve to show how deserving it was of this year's prize:

Over the years, I have questioned whether the fixation on grades so prevalent in our times might have to do with a paradigm shift. Perhaps the ideal of the sage or expert instructing the receptive student/apprentice has been replaced subtly by a new model: the paid coach and his/her trainees…

Yet I don't want to be too hasty in fixing on the sage/disciple model as always the best one. If one looks at the shadow side of the traditional sage/disciple model we might wonder about the opportunities for arrogance on the side of the professor and slavish sometimes mindless devotion on the part of the student. In the case of a mentor whose ideas are false or even demonic, this paradigm is particularly ominous. On the other hand, regarding the trainee/coach image, on the positive side, are we not pleased when student evaluations are allowed to influence the administration of a college to dethrone a professor who might be totally inept or irresponsible in the teaching role? If the most intelligent and diligent students cannot achieve an "A" in the class because, say, the professor refused to explain things clearly, isn't that a fault of the professor rather than of the students? Would the stress experienced by these students at getting "B's" or "C's" in the class be a sign of neurotic insecurity or a legitimate objection to an unjust state of affairs?

Baffled by the intricacies of these questions I sometimes dream of gradeless free college education. Then I recall some experiences of teaching community education classes without grades and with a nominal fee. No tension, but often almost no willingness on the part of the student to read the books suggested by the admired professor or even to come regularly or on time to the classes.
I have written this article in the hope that readers of *the University Concourse*, interested as they are in dialogue and growth, will provide insights in this area so important for all Christus Magister teachers, students and administrators.

supportive this year. The editorial work has been more of a team-effort than ever before. I am so grateful to all of them.

Thanks also are due to Jody Trupiano, who has been our faithful subscriptions manager since September. (Now that Jules and I are finally settled stateside again, we will begin sending subscriptions out from Ypsilanti rather than Steubenville, which should cut down significantly on the time between publication and mailing.)

Finally, thanks be to our advisers, and even more to those who have contributed to the *Concourse* by sending in articles. I have been especially pleased that so many faculty took time out of their busy schedules to send us something this year. I hope many more will next year. It makes our discussion that much more interesting and fruitful.

May your jubilee summer be full of rest and joy! ■

Also announcing: The second annual Baby Grand Prize

A $30 gift certificate to Barns and Noble
To be awarded to the author of
the best "Short Take"
This year's prize goes to
Anne Schmiesing
for her very thoughtful issue 3 contribution to the discussion of liberal arts.

Our thanks and congratulations to both authors.