

The Maritain Notebook

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION / VOLUME 24, ISSUE 1 / SUMMER 2016

President's Letter

The best way to begin this letter is with a heartfelt “thank you” to Michael Torre, our outgoing president, and Fr. Justin Gable, O.P., our outgoing Vice President. Michael is a true gentleman, a fine scholar, and a man of vision—especially for the American Maritain Association. Fr. Justin, in countless particulars, has been invaluable and indefatigable. Together they have shown the wisdom conjoined with friendship that uniquely contributes to the common good. We owe our gratitude, as well, to Alice Osberger, our bookkeeper nonpareil, who is stepping down after many years of service.

Fortunately, all good things do not end, at least not abruptly. Yes, there is a changing of the guard. Nevertheless, it is only partial. James Jacobs and I will do what we can to follow the lead of Michael Torre and Fr. Justin Gable. Heather Erb joins us as Treasurer with a pledge to take firm hold of our finances. Veterans Giuseppe Butera and Joshua Schulz will continue as our Book Series Editor and Webmaster, respectively. Travis Dumsday will serve as Assistant Editor. As a late and only fitfully blooming Thomist, I am grateful for each of these stalwarts. Together, we aim to serve.

Updated news of our 2017 Conference is readily available on our Website. The theme is *Metaphysics and Politics*. Our plenary speakers include Stephen Brock (Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Rome), John Hittinger (University of St. Thomas, Houston), Daniel Philpott (University of Notre Dame), Alice Ramos (St. John's), and Eleanore

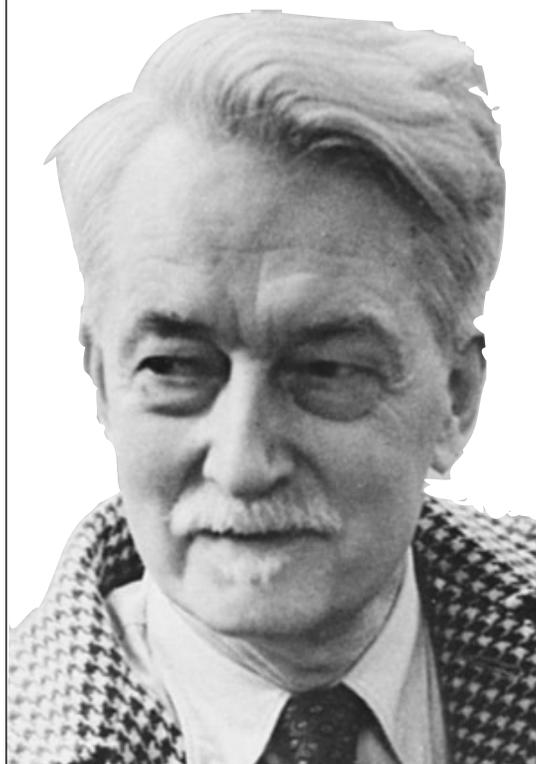
Stump (St. Louis University). In two ways, the Conference venue is a novel one. For the first time, we will meet in New Orleans. (The Holiday Inn has given us an excellent price but *please register early*.) For the first time, as well, many of our sessions will convene at a sponsoring seminary, Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology. We expect that another strong volume will emerge from the Conference, and anticipate that the newest volume in the series, edited by Heidi Giebel, will be on hand for purchase. Our Fall *Maritain Notebook*, of course, will bring the latest on our 40th Annual Conference.

The New Orleans meeting will restore an opening presidential address of the sort that John Trapani provided. Here's a preview. The friends of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain welcome all who will have us. Not surprisingly, some guests sharply criticize either Jacques or

Raïssa. Though we think we have splendid friends, truth remains the best of friends. Still, there is a duty to raise high a flag dubiously felled. One of last year's plenarians argued that Jacques Maritain's views about sex differences and marriage, as presented in *Untrammelled Approaches*, seem “disastrously wrong on every front.” Yet Sr. Prudence Allen, R.S.M., a plenarian from the year before, praised the same text as an “extraordinarily rich” expression of the “genuine complementarity between man and woman.” It is time to revisit a flag so contested!

I close with a pair of requests. First, Michael Torre encouraged us to consider new themes, naming at least a philosopher's dozen in his last “President's Letter,” for our coming conferences. Please send your ideas, *sooner rather than later*, since in New Orleans we will want to announce a fresh topic and our next conference site. Second, Alice Osberger has urged that we “recruit, recruit, and recruit.” The American Maritain Association officers agree wholeheartedly. Ours is not a business, so we do not need to “grow” it. Nevertheless, ours is a circle of friends, and we do need to widen it. Introduce us to new friends!

~James Hanink



The Maritain Notebook

Published in the Fall and Spring. Please contact the editor regarding books for review, guest columns, news and announcements.

Dr. Joshua Schulz
Editor: *The Maritain Notebook*
Philosophy and Theology Dept.
DeSales University
Center Valley, PA 18034
joshua.schulz@desales.edu

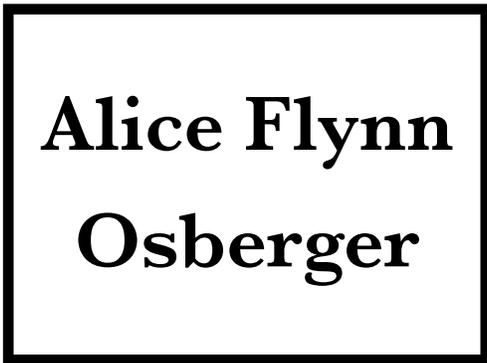
Encomium

THE MARITAIN NOTEBOOK / SUMMER 2016

After raising three children (all of them graduates of St. Mary's College and of the University of Notre Dame), Alice Flynn Osberger began working for Notre Dame in 1977 and became Ralph McNerny's Administrative Assistant shortly thereafter, in 1979, when Fr. Hesburgh appointed him to be Director of Notre Dame's Medieval Institute and Jacques Maritain Center. She stayed on as his Assistant in 1987, when Ralph relinquished the duties of the Medieval Institute but remained Director of the Center. She has been the "heart" of that Center for almost 40 years, serving for some 30 years under Ralph (who died in 2010) and now under John O'Callaghan.

In 2005, Anthony O. Simon, who had crafted the position of Secretary-Treasurer of the American Maritain Association from its inception, handed over his responsibilities to Ralph. He was at that time the President of the AMA and John was then his "right hand man and heir apparent." Alice was perfectly placed to help take up where Tony had left off. Since then, she has kept the AMA financial records and its data base up-to-date (John, as Ralph, courteously allowing the AMA to make use of her services). Indeed, as our Constitution indicates, for the past eleven years she has taken on several tasks each of our Secretary and our Treasurer.

Ralph passed on the AMA Presidency to John Trapani, who served for six years, and he passed it on to me, in 2012. I thus had the pleasure of working closely with Alice for over three years. John had already indicated to me what a treasure she was for the Association



and so I in my turn was to discover, again and again. Not only were our financial records and dealings in good hands, not only did she keep track of our membership and bring out our yearly Directory, but she was usually the first contact anyone interested in our Association was likely to have. Probably more than anyone else, she was the Association's face to the world. Her consummate professionalism, unflagging patience, and constant aid—both to new members and to the officers who had the good fortune to work with her—has been exemplary. She has been our rock and our great good fortune!

Alice is now handing on the responsibilities she had assumed from Tony Simon. However, she remains at the Center and she still remains connected to us. No doubt, she will be passing on from time to time queries of new members and will serve as one to whom our new President can look for information and moral support. Indeed, she is presently occupied in a new task: integrating the holdings of the Yves R. Simon library, which Tony has passed on to Notre Dame, with the holdings of the Jacques Maritain Center. Tony knew he was placing his treasured library in good hands.

Alice has told me that her wish for the Association "is that each member comes to know how hard the officers work to make the organization so vibrant." For my part, as one of those former officers (and I know I speak for John, as well), I would wish the same for her: that each of our members would know and appreciate how tirelessly and how faithfully she has ever served the Association. We all hope that she will be continuing at the Center for years yet and thus that we will have the opportunity to continue to interact with her. Alice, for me and for us all, a deep, deep "thank you"!

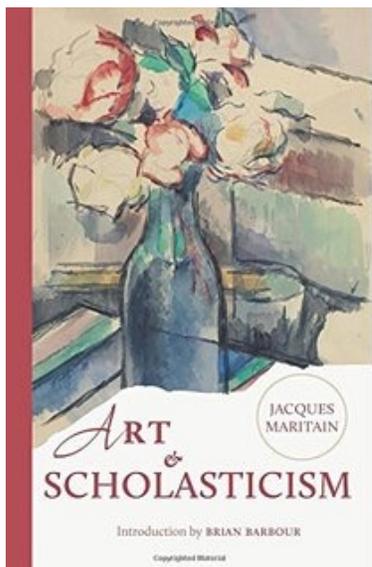
~Michael Torre

Call for Essays and Reviews

The Maritain *Notebook* needs volunteers to write 1,000 word book reviews and *Advice for Thomists* essays. If you have suggestions for articles, books for review, or know persons (including graduate students) who might be interested, please e-mail the editor at joshua.schulz@desales.edu. Thanks!

New and Noteworthy

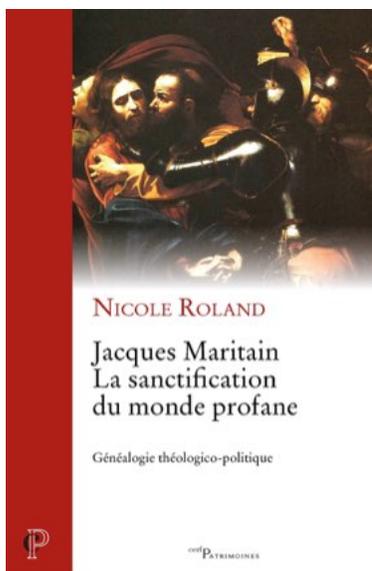
THE MARITAIN NOTEBOOK / SUMMER 2016



ART AND SCHOLASTICISM, WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY BRIAN BARBOUR

Art and Scholasticism is Jacques Maritain's classic argument for an objective view of both art and the artist. Understanding that the beauty of art is rooted in the transcendental property of Being, Maritain explores how artists must be disciplined by the *habitus* of their craft if their art is to be of more than ephemeral value. Like T. S. Eliot, Maritain sees the artist as essentially a maker or craftsman and not the vatic orifice of romanticism's myth. Maritain provides a strong dissenting perspective on the lazy, self-flattering artistic assumptions of the past two centuries.

Barbour's introduction gives a fascinating summary of Maritain's philosophical background, his conversion to Catholicism and work in Thomistic thought, and the importance of *Art and Scholasticism* in understanding aesthetics—be it in poetry, painting, music, or literature.

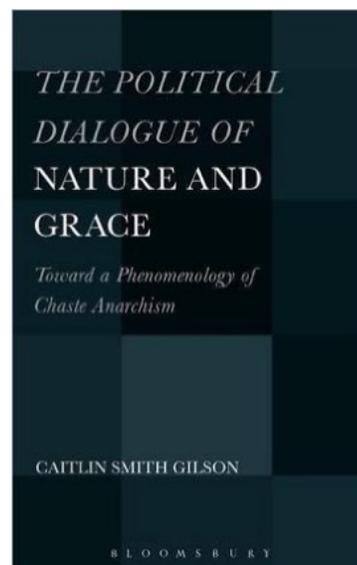


NICOLE ROLAND, JACQUES MARITAIN: LA SANCTIFICATION DU MONDE PROFANE (2016)

Persuadé d'assister à la liquidation d'une époque, il évaluera les modes de désagrégation et d'affermissement de la cité des hommes, en réactualisant le concept paulinien de *katékon* (2 Th 2, 3-7), en tant qu'obstacle à la désintégration universelle de toutes choses. Il appellera les chrétiens, mais également tout homme juste, à participer à l'édification de cette digue contre l'iniquité et la déshumanisation des sociétés contemporaines. C'est un appel à la responsabilité et à l'espérance que Jacques Maritain lance à chaque personne humaine, lui rappelant qu'elle peut se sauver ou se perdre pour toujours, et que ses actions, dans sa relation à Dieu ou à autrui, contribuent à façonner les destins du monde.

CAITLIN SMITH-GILSON, THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE OF NATURE AND GRACE

Any discussion of "postsecular society" has its origins in this political dialogue between nature and grace, the resolution of which might determine not only a future post-secular society but one in which awe is re-united to affection, solidarity and fraternity. Smith Gilson questions whether the idea of pure nature antecedently disregards the fact that grace enters existence and that this accomplishes a conversion in the metaphysical/existential region of man's action and being. This conversion alters how man acts as an affective, moral, intellectual, social, political and spiritual being. State of nature theories, transformed yet retained in the broader metaphysical and existential implications of the Hegelian *Weltgeist*, are shown to be indebted to the ideological restrictedness of pure nature (*natura pura*) as providing the foremost adversary to any meaningful type of divine presence within the polis, as well as inhibiting the phenomenological facticity of man as an open nature.



2017 Call for Papers

DETAILS AT MARITAINASSOCIATION.COM

2017 marks the 70th anniversary of Jacques Maritain's enduring works *Existence and the Existent* and *The Person and the Common Good*. In *Existence and the Existent*, Maritain sets out the key themes and arguments of an existential Thomism. In doing so he critically engages the currents of thought that Jean-Paul Sartre had set in motion. In *The Person and the Common Good* Maritain trenchantly analyzes Nazi and Marxist ideologies. In doing so he exposes their relation to liberal and bourgeois individualism. The alternative that Maritain proposes is a personalist communitarian vision that seeks the common good and draws on Christian inspiration.

Jacques Maritain's paired concerns of metaphysics and politics, and their sometimes surprising interconnections, is illuminating. To be sure, it is not without precedent. We need only think of Plato and Aristotle for classical antecedents, of Suarez and Locke and Kant for early modern antecedents, of Hegel and Marx in the nineteenth century, or of Buber and Arendt in the twentieth century. This list is no more than a sampler.

The conference invites proposals on metaphysics or politics and especially those that explore the interplay of metaphysics and politics, whether for better or for worse. It welcomes proposals that call attention to the metaphysical commitments of political thought or that highlight the political implications of metaphysical perspectives. We strongly encourage proposals on the sources of conscience in the context of a secular liberal polity that seems unable to recognize them. In the tradition of our Association, we look forward to proposals that further the understanding of the work of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain and of other Thomists who help to clarify our "interesting times."

Proposals of not more than two single-spaced typed pages are due December 15, 2016. Send the proposal to the AMA Vice President, James Jacobs, at jjacobs@nds.edu. You can expect a response to your proposal no later than January 20, 2017.

The AMA, as always, encourages graduate student papers. There is a \$500 prize for the best paper. The award is announced at the Conference. Send *complete* papers to James Jacobs at jjacobs@nds.edu. Submissions are due on Dec. 15, 2016.

PLENARY SESSION SPEAKERS • Father Stephen Brock, Professor at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Rome) • John Hittinger, Professor at the University of St. Thomas (Houston), • Daniel Philpott, Professor at the University of Notre Dame (Notre Dame, Indiana), Alice Ramos, Professor at St. John's University (New York), • Eleanore Stump, Professor at St. Louis University

**40TH ANNUAL INT'L MEETING
MARCH 2nd – 4th, 2017, NEW ORLEANS**

**Metaphysics &
Politics**