

The Maritain Notebook

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION / VOLUME 24, ISSUE 2 / FALL 2016

President's Letter

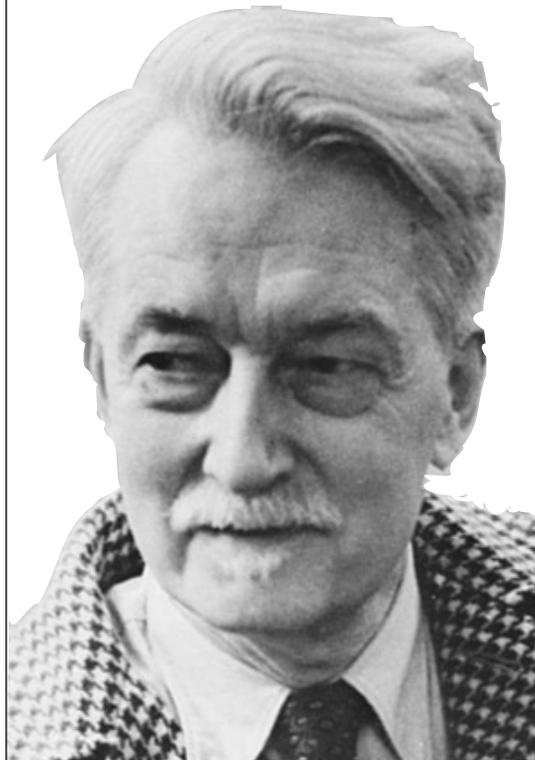
Where to start? With a tip of the hat to Baylor's Elizabeth C. Corey! Writing on a child's developing the *habitus* of playing the piano (*First Things*, Oct. 2016), she highlights the role of a "sensibility for beauty." Playing well might even introduce a child to "transcendence." Then she cites Jacques Maritain. "When one 'touches a transcendental, one touches... a likeness of God, an absolute, that which ennobles and delights our life.'"

Engaging in philosophy can offer its own avenues to its own kind of transcendence. Friends of the Maritains, husband and wife, know how *they* sought to be pilgrims of the Absolute. Our own pilgrim steps are doubtless more faltering. But take them we do, and this year's Conference, *Metaphysics and Politics*, offers us a splendid opportunity. Note well: it's not so very far away. We meet in New Orleans, March 2-4, 2017. Many of our sessions will convene at Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology. The Holiday Inn has given us an excellent price but to guarantee that price *please register early*.

Professor James Jacobs, our Vice

President, has done a yeoman's work in making the many and necessary arrangements. He also welcomes additional conference proposals. (See our Call for Papers on the American Maritain Association website—which our Secretary and Webmaster Joshua Schulz efficiently maintains.) Since metaphysics and politics, as Chesterton would argue, are the most immediate and urgent of topics, we encourage proposals on the authority of conscience in the context of a secular polity.

Brevity, among its many merits, can underscore urgency. Having re-issued our "call to philosophy," I close with two requests. First, in his final



"Presidential Letter" Michael Torre encouraged us to consider new conference themes, naming at least a philosopher's dozen. Please send your ideas, at your earliest convenience or inconvenience if need be. In New Orleans we plan to announce our topic for 2018. We also plan to announce our next conference location. So far there's been modest "buzz" about the great states of Florida, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Second, if you have not yet paid your yearly dues, please do so. Our Treasurer Heather Erb has just sent out a reminder on this crucial matter. Without member dues we cannot hold conferences. Without member dues we cannot publish the first-rate volumes they give rise to, under the steady guidance of our Book Series Editor Giuseppe Butera.

Ya basta. "New Orleans or bust!"

~James Hanink

The Maritain Notebook

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

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Advice for Thomists

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Having navigated the regions of Thomistic thought for three decades, I sometimes find myself not fully appreciating just how gentle, refreshing and hale are its climes. This was brought home to me forcefully last semester in a presentation that I gave to about eighty students in a campus ministry sponsored event at a local pub (Salesian Spirits, a variation of Theology on Tap). In what was, for all intents and purposes, a “witness talk”, I recounted the history of God’s graces in my life, but particularly the extent to which the school of Thomism had been a healing and vivifying force in my life. While I was most grateful that I was able to relate these matters well and appropriately to my audience, I was rather overwhelmed by the emotional response that the talk engendered, ranging from silent awe to tears of joy. To this day some six months later students still approach me and offer their thanks for what I shared. As far as I can tell, what touched them most deeply was something to which I have become acclimatized, namely the profound hope that is at the heart of St. Thomas’ thought.

Given the nature of the audience, one would be mistaken to think that my listeners were bereft of hope; indeed, both their youth and dedication to the Christian faith are most refreshing. The hope to which I refer is a very practical one, one that speaks directly to the confusion and despair that the young experience today concerning their intellectual and volitional abilities, the control that they wish to exert over their affectivity, and lastly the possibility of the maturation of their characters. Naturally, these are perennial concerns. But what seemed to me at first to be an inappropriate response to my witness, drew me eventually to recall the gladness that I myself had experienced as a young man in my 20s encountering the teachings of St. Thomas for the first time. Among the many things that occurred that day, two thoughts will forever remain with me, namely “There’s actually a language to describe and investigate the things that I have intuited for so long!” and “It might be possible for me not only to understand this language, but to allow what it signifies to form and guide me in the entirety of my person and the trajectory of my life!” The thrill that went through me was palpable and has remained so ever since.

In the three Thomists under whom I was trained as an undergraduate student I saw examples not only of the Christian life but of something a bit more proximate to my life at that time, namely, embodiments of intelligence, justice, temperance, and courage. They were informed by a metaphysics of hope, one that was so foreign to the

scientific materialism in which I had been raised and which had offered me nothing more than the so-called noble despair of the secular atheist. These three men were fine thinkers but never uncharitable in the wielding of their intelligence. They bore up beautifully in the face of personal tragedy and the inevitable injustices perpetrated upon the righteous man of Wisdom 2, never giving in to despair, intemperance or cowardice when most would have succumbed. They were disciplined in and well informed by their Thomism and exuded the confidence of the self-possessed, never letting themselves be led or cowed by the fashions and fears of the day. They were examples of lives that were not only dynamic and integral, but also appropriately self-effacing, ever decreasing in their self-importance, like the Baptist, as they increased in the understanding and incarnation of what they taught.

So few are the examples of such people today that what is realizable in itself with work and God’s grace has come to be judged the stuff of myth, fiction and even fantasy, a judgment that then plants the seeds of doubt in the young concerning the leading of the virtuous life; if such seeds are not dug out, they will take root in our youth and eventually yield a harvest of deformity and despair. As I have reflected upon the example of these three Thomists, I have come to understand that the affirmation, defense, and realization of all aspects of Thomistic thought in one’s mind and person reveal a most powerful pastoral aspect of the Angelic doctor and his work, a work of love and mercy that can be extended to those whose lives and confidence have been deformed and perhaps even shattered by the culture of the day. As professors of St. Thomas’ thought, we do more than simply recount, defend, and expand upon his teachings: we undertake an imitation of him as a doctor within the church, specifically charged with the task of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual healing that is so needed with regard to the young of our day. And often this is accomplished simply in showing up, standing against the tide, and teaching others to do the same, and all of this within the larger experience of the Catholic faith. Thus, I might offer the following timely advice, namely that we endeavor to remember just how powerfully hopeful is the life we live in being midwives and handmaidens to the truth, a truth that goes well beyond what we teach (as hale as this is) and demands that we incarnate this truth in the entirety of our persons and in our comportment before others, most especially before the students with whom we have been gifted.

~Stephen Loughlin, DeSales University

In Memoriam

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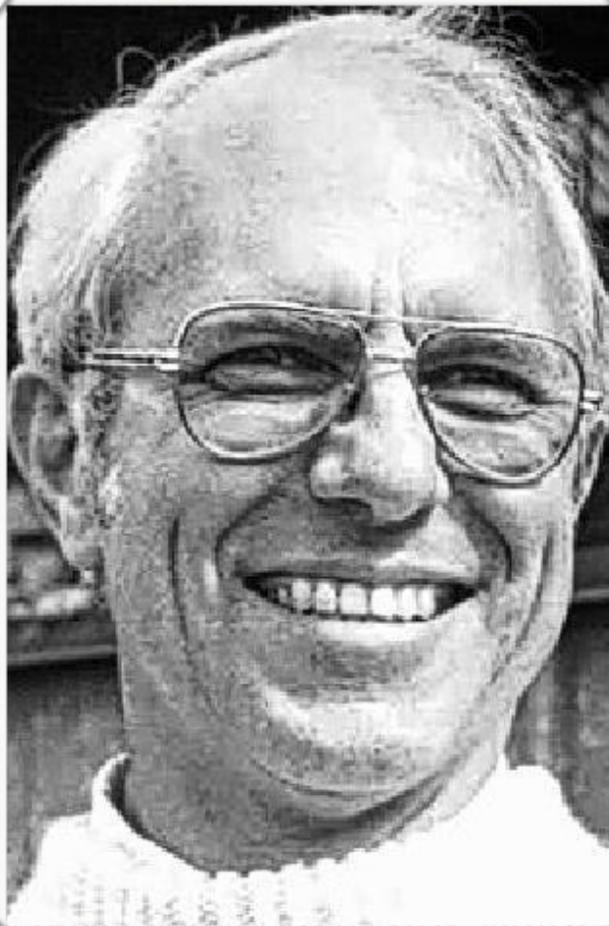
I'll never forget that evening in South Bend in June of 1975 when I met Bernard Doering for the first time. Our mutual mentor Wallace Fowle had given me his contact information when he learned I was going to spend a few days at the Maritain Center. We had a beer together somewhere and immediately found so many common interests and passions: Maritain, Julien Green, and all the other French Catholic writers. We got to know each other better at the Maritain and Simone Weil conferences, and he and Jane had me in their home on Auten Road, where he proudly showed me some of the fruits of his considerable wood-crafting and gardening talents. His love of all the good things in life (faith, family, literature and philosophy, food, wine, sports, music, and art) struck a sympathetic cord with me. We had a brotherly affection that he shared with many another Maritain enthusiast.

Bernie's great love of Jacques Maritain's philosophy led him to write a dissertation on the great 20th-century Thomist, a dissertation that ultimately evolved into a landmark book for Maritain scholars ever since it appeared in 1982: *Jacques Maritain and the French Catholic Intellectuals* (University of Notre Dame Press). His other scholarly works include editing the correspondence of Maritain and Saul Alinsky and a number of translations of important books, mostly by or about Maritain, including Jean-Luc Barré's *Jacques and Raïssa Maritain: Beggars for Heaven* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), which won awards from both the Catholic Press Association and the American Association of University Presses. The American Maritain Association selected him in 2001 as the recipient of the Jacques Maritain Scholarship Award in recognition of a lifetime of scholarly achievement.

This great friend not only had an outstanding career in French language, literature, philosophy, and culture, but he also has lived out much of the great traditional culture of France. At the University of Notre Dame, he was for many years the director of the program for French studies in Angers. He and his family exulted in their years being immersed in *la douceur angevine*. They became intimately acquainted with the cuisine, the wine, the art and architecture, and the history of the French people of the region, and their enthusiasm for all this was contagious for the scores of American students whose lives were forever changed by their experience in France with the Doerings.

Bernie's *attente de Dieu* is now over. He is finally at home with his Lord. He has indeed run the good race. I'll miss his enthusiasm, his strength of conviction, his devotion to social justice, and his gentle sensitivity. He was that rare kind of friend you want to keep forever. I know Wallace Fowle was happy to greet him, along with Jacques, Raïssa, Thomas, and the rest of that great cloud of witnesses who've been waiting for his arrival. Dear Bernie, *requiescas in pace*. And, dear Jane, may grace surround you till you meet him again.

~John Dunaway



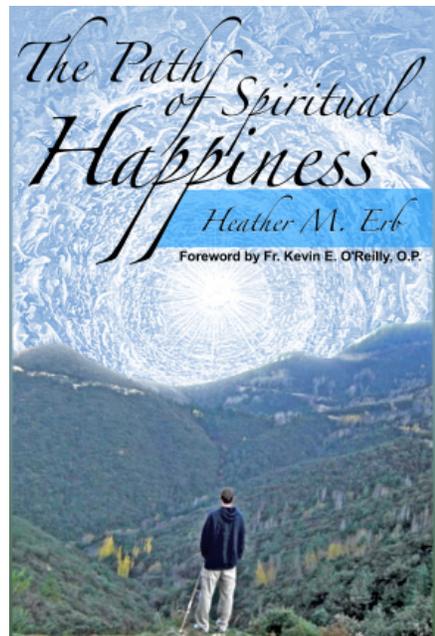
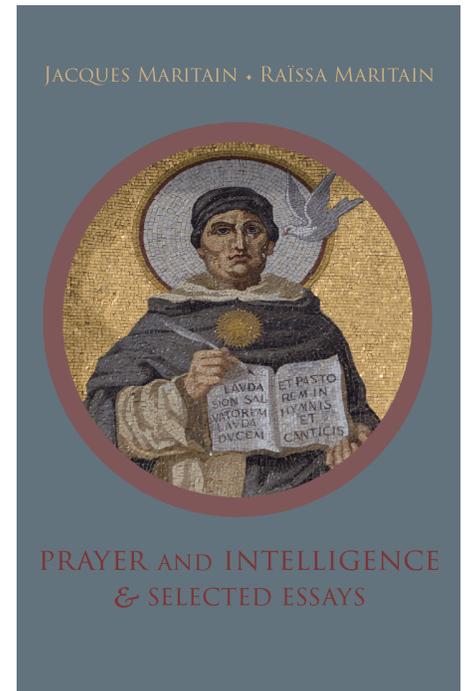
Bernard E. Doering (1924-2016)

Announcements

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Jointly authored by Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, *Prayer and Intelligence* is a practical book about mental prayer and how to pray. It is also a book about the intellectual life.

Accompanying *Prayer and Intelligence* are two essays, *Liturgy and Contemplation*, also written by Jacques and Raïssa together, and *Notes on the Lord's Prayer*, written by Raïssa. All three of the works contained in this volume are written by friends, for friends, seeking to know and love God.

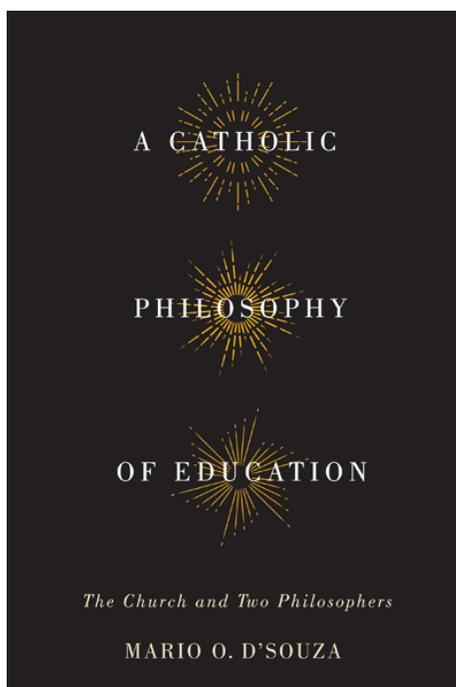


Heather Erb blurb: "Heather M. Erb's forthcoming book, *The Path of Spiritual Happiness*" (En Route Books and Media, September 2016), is a short treatise on the Christian philosophy of happiness, from its roots in Aristotle, through Aquinas and Josef Pieper. According to Fr. Kevin E. O'Reilly, O.P. (Angelicum, Rome), this book is a "highly accessible resource for professors and their students in today's age of anti-contemplative and atheistic philosophies" (from his Foreword). For more information: www.erb-enroute.com."

Drawing on the Church's educational documents, and informed by Maritain and Lonergan, D'Souza explains how the unifying anthropology of Catholic education enables Catholic schools to serve amidst diversity by avoiding the extremes of religious exclusivism and fundamentalism, on the one hand, and relativism and individualism, on the other.

We would love to see these books reviewed in the *Maritain Notebook*. Send an e-mail to the editor to express your interest: joshua.schulz@desales.edu

Please send your AMA dues to the Treasurer, Heather Erb, at American Maritain Association, P.O. Box 1036, State College, PA 68041036



2017 CFP #2

DETAILS AT MARITAINASSOCIATION.COM

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

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.

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) • Eleonore Stump, Professor at St. Louis University • Michael F. McLean, President of Thomas Aquinas College (California)

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