

# The Maritain Notebook

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION / VOLUME 25, ISSUE 2 / WINTER 2017

## President's Letter

When next we gather, we will be in Philadelphia (March 1 – 3, 2018). We will convene and celebrate our 41<sup>st</sup> annual meeting. St. Charles Borromeo Seminary will be our host. We can honor then, as well, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a remarkable event. In 1948, the United Nations issued its Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Rome's *Institut International Jacques Maritain* will mark this anniversary with a volume on the UDHR and Maritain's contribution to the cause of human rights. Challenges abound. In his recent visit to Myanmar, Pope Francis appealed to human rights in the hope of healing a wounded nation. Our nation, of course, has its own wounds; our "least little ones," our unborn children, have long been denied their human rights.

How might a democratic people come to heal its wounds? In part, it can do so through its political processes. Maritain thought deeply about the whole range of philosophy. Considering our own troubled political processes, we might recall some of his thoughts on political parties. In *The Rights of Man and Natural Law* (1943) he notes that reproaches against political parties are justified given their corruption and paralysis. Yet their vices are not essential. Indeed, parties should reflect "the natural diversity of practical conceptions and perspectives existing among the members of the political community." A new democracy, he continues, would not abolish political parties but it "would be freed from party domination." A daunting prospect—yes, whether in

France or the United States. And yet, he says, "[t]his problem is not like that of squaring the circle." It is, rather, the ongoing work of civic friendship.

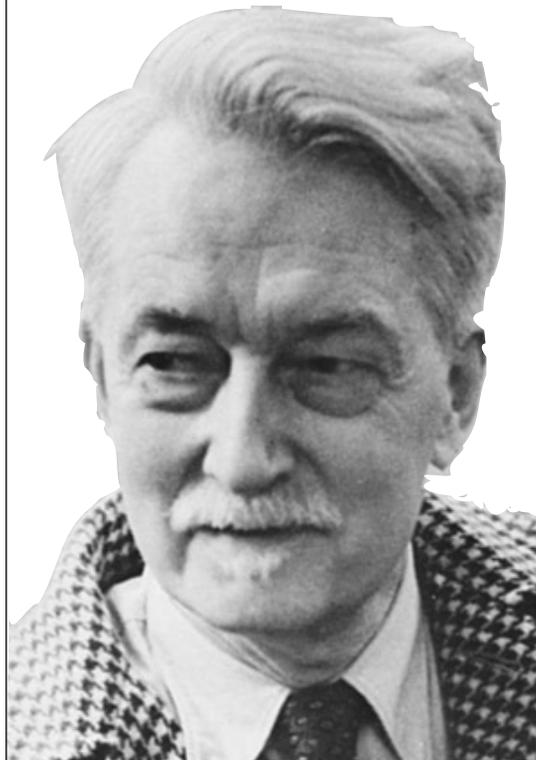
The work of civic friendship takes another and familiar form in doing one's jury duty, as Aristotle observes in his *Politics*. Randy Reno (*First Things*, Nov. 2016), to my delight, puts his own experience in a Maritainian context. Serving on a grand jury, Reno notes that the witnesses coming before it showed "a deep wellspring of solid realism." Now comes the nod to Maritain and his striking claim: "The intuition of being...like the reality of the world and of things...is the absolutely primary *principle* of philosophy." For most of us, Reno thinks, this intuition comes "when reality presses upon us and overwhelms our complacent reliance on clichés and easy truisms." Let it be said: civic

friendship and philosophical realism are natural allies, however demanding the tasks they require of us.

To be sure, the philosophical friendship of the American Maritain Association as we meet in Philadelphia will bring us joy and renewal as well as testing and challenge. Our plenary speakers will include Prudence Allen, RSM, Nicanor Austriaco, OP, John Cahalan, Robert Spitzer, SJ, and Michael Tkacz. Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap. will be the recipient of our Humanitarian Award.

Along with our Executive Board—Giuseppe Butera, Heather Erb, James Jacobs, and Joshua Schulz—along with Eric Manchester, our friend and colleague at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, I look forward to seeing you in Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly and Sisterly Love. As Benjamin Franklin *might* have said, "A 'hoagie' a day keeps sophistry away!" As G. K. Chesterton *did* say, "The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid."

~James Hanink



## *The Maritain Notebook*

Published Fallish and Springish.  
Please contact the editor regarding  
books for review, guest columns,  
news and announcements.

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# In Memoriam

THE MARITAIN NOTEBOOK / WINTER 2017

It is privilege to honor a man I like to think of as Professor Dr. Kenneth Schmitz. I will first say something about his career and then something about the man. I know whereof I speak. I have known him for 55 years, all of my professional career, and all but six years of his. I first encountered Professor Schmitz the year we were both appointed to the faculty of Marquette University. I met him outside his office. I can't say what my first impression of him might have been, but I was impressed by the young lady who was tutoring him in German so that he could master the texts of Hegel. Alas—I was studying John Dewey at the time.

Sometime later I got a call from Thomas Langan who was then chairman of the philosophy department at Indiana University. Langan wanted to know what I thought of Schmitz and how he was regarded at Marquette University. The result of Langan's multiple inquiries led to the appointment of Schmitz at Indiana, in part no doubt because of a greater salary and a lesser teaching load. In the meantime, I had moved to Louisville, Kentucky, the ancestral home of the German side of my family. At Bellarmine College in Louisville I was able to invite both Langan and Schmitz to address two organizations that I had brought into being, the Bellarmine Faculty Forum and the Kentucky Philosophical Association. Thus began a tripartite relationship that bore fruit in later years.

Indiana University in the years Schmitz and Langan were members of its faculty could boast the strongest faculty in Continental European philosophy in the United States. Schmitz, Langan, and Stalneck, complemented by Henry Veatch and others, covered a lot of territory, including Aristotle and Aquinas. But good things often come to an end. A graduate dean decided that philosophy

at Indiana ought to resemble that at Princeton, Harvard, and Cornell and brought in someone from Cornell to change things; thus began the diaspora. Langan went to Toronto, Veatch to Northwestern. In the meantime I had become dean of the School of Philosophy at The Catholic University of America, and, with the support of the faculty, was able to bring Schmitz to Catholic University. But that, too, was not to last. That dastardly Langan found it easy to persuade Ken to accept an appointment to the faculty of Trinity College, University of Toronto. As a Canadian, he was home again and a

## Kenneth Schmitz

Sept. 16, 1922 ~ Aug. 25, 2017

member of the university faculty where he had studied. But as you know, the story does not end there. With the founding of the John Paul II Institute, Professor Schmitz was a natural recruit. He had over the years become a personal friend of Karol Wojtyla and then a student and expositor of his philosophy. Schmitz was again teaching on Michigan Avenue. Under an informal arrangement he taught some courses open to graduate students of philosophy on the CUA campus in an exchange agreement that enabled JP II students to take CUA's philosophy listings without formal enrollment or payment.

And now the man. Kenneth Schmitz at some point in his career may have made a personal enemy, but I doubt it. Certainly, I know of none. Always a gentleman, he was habitually kind and understanding. He could take an adversarial point of view and develop it further than the proponent himself. I have never known anyone more kindly

disposed or willing to put the best face on things, persons, or opinions. Etienne Gilson, with whom Schmitz once studied, is remembered for a remark he made, "The trouble with us Catholics is that we are not proud enough of the Faith." Schmitz will tell you that he once thought of himself as an atheist. But that was early in his life. In later years he placed his intellect in the service of Christ the King as he, Langan, and I jointly prepared a number of texts in response to calls from the Magisterium. Together we produced a text on Catholic higher education and another that, unknown to us at the time, was a precursor to *Fides et Ratio*. That is not to say that we had any influence on the papal encyclical that finally emerged.

On a personal note, Ken and I were no strangers in each other's homes. Ken's wife, Lil, was the perfect hostess and a good cook and always had a bed ready if I needed one when in Toronto. In my home, Ken served as a model for my sons. He could not blow smoke rings like Ralph McInerney or imitate train whistles like Thomas Langan, but at the keyboard he could play Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, all movements, through to the very end. Here was a big manly guy, and a philosopher to boot, who had accomplished something that none of my sons was able to do in spite of a \$500 dollar reward that is still in the bank.

Kenneth Schmitz recently honored me by dedicating one of his latest books to me. Ken, I cannot at this time reciprocate in kind, but I can offer you a copy of one of my own fairly recent books, *Religion - Gesellschaft - Demokratie: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*. It is in German; it had to be translated from the English because I never mastered enough German to write in the language of Hegel. Whatever happened to that young lady who tutored you?

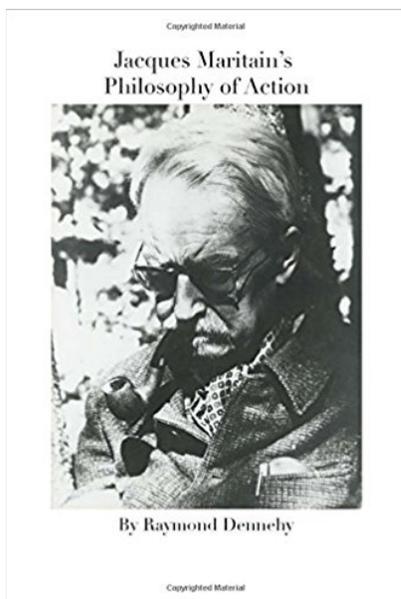
~Jude Dougherty

# New and Noteworthy

THE MARITAIN NOTEBOOK / SUMMER 2016

## **RAYMOND DENNEHY, *JACQUES MARITAIN'S PHILOSOPHY OF ACTION***

DENNEHY'S aim is to show the connection between Maritain's philosophical commitment and his commitment to social activism. Maritain gave pride of place to the study of speculative philosophy and to contemplation, insisting that the search for truth and goodness in themselves transcends utility and, in so doing, reminds society of the supreme importance of what are not means to ends but ends in themselves, things worth aspiring to just for themselves. Even so, Maritain was just as insistent that the call to eternal verities must not blind the philosopher to the reality that he is a member of society with social duties that his calling imposes on him. He has no claim to life in an ivory tower. Chapter 1 portrays Maritain's early life and his struggle to find an account of human knowledge that initially led him to become a disciple of Henri Bergson, only to renounce that discipleship in favor of the theory of knowledge of Thomas Aquinas; Chapter 2 examines Maritain's development of his theory of knowledge, leading him to the conclusion that our knowledge not only tells us what things are but also grasps their existence, uniqueness, and dynamism; Chapter 3 unfolds Maritain's doctrine of subsistence, which leads him to the conclusion that only subjects exist, sources of existence, and for persons, this means a subjective life, for whom "the freedom of personal expansion" is the core of freedom and happiness; Chapter 4 presents the levels of freedom and what freedom means for the human subject; Chapter 5 defines how the common good and human rights constitute the just society for the human subject.



## **REBUS INSTITUTE: FIRST MARITAIN ESSAY COMPETITION FOR YOUNG WRITERS**

Maritain famously argued that we can agree about the practical reasons for establishing human rights even when we cannot secure theoretical agreement about their metaphysical foundations. The Rebus Institute is asking young scholars, ages 16-22, to evaluate Maritain's thesis: "Is there any hope for promoting "human rights" in this divided world? Should we continue to work at practical outcomes and abandon any hope of establishing a theoretical framework for human rights, such as the right to free speech and religious liberty? How should we go about bridging the unbridgeable gulfs between "left and right" ideologies?"

See [www.rebusinstitute.com](http://www.rebusinstitute.com) for contest rules and more

# 2018 Conference

**VISIT [MARITAINASSOCIATION.COM](http://MARITAINASSOCIATION.COM)**

## **THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION**

41ST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MEETING,  
THURSDAY— SATURDAY, MARCH 1–3, 2018, IN WYNNEWOOD, PENNSYLVANIA

**Hosted by St. Charles Borromeo Seminary**

**∞ THOMISM AND SCIENCE ∞**

### **Hotel Information**

Marriott Courtyard  
4100 Presidential Avenue, Philadelphia  
215-477-0200

**Conference Rate: \$160/night if reserved under “American Maritain Association” by January 30, 2018.**

### **Airport Travel Information**

Take city trains (SEPTA) from the airport to the 30th Street Station and get a cab to the hotel, or take a cab directly from the airport. The hotel does not provide an airport shuttle, and Uber cannot pick up customers from the airport.

### **Conference Registration**

You will soon be able to register for the conference online using our usual Notre Dame web portal. Registration will open in January 2018. Check our website for updates, instructions and details!