

# The Maritain Notebook

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION / VOLUME 26, ISSUE 1 / SUMMER 2018

## President's Letter

The Thomism that Jacques and Raïssa Maritain championed is integrally joined with the Catholic theological enterprise. So it is that the American Maritain Association has chosen “Thomism and Theology” as the theme of its 42<sup>nd</sup> International Meeting. De Sales University, in Center Valley, Pennsylvania is our gracious—and generous—sponsor.

2019 marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jacques Maritain's *The Angelic Doctor* and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his *Twilight of Civilization*. The juxtaposition of titles suggests pointed questions. What does the Common Doctor offer to those who fear a dark night of civilization? And, if we are to enjoy a reprieve, what can philosophers and theologians say about the signs of our troubled times? Our answers will lead to a further question: how might the often-interrupted collaboration between Thomism and theology contribute to both the shifting present and the uncertain future?

We bring a happy momentum with us as we look forward to convening at DeSales. Our last meeting, with the theme “Thomism and Science,” hosted by St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, was a decided success. Participants presented some 70 papers, and Archbishop Charles Chaput's words of strong encouragement gave us fresh energy.

Fresh initiative comes as well from Megan Furman (University of Dallas), who captured our Graduate Student “Best Paper” Award. She is inaugurating a new post for the AMA: Director of Development. Top priority? Winning new members the old-fashioned way, by personal

contact. Megan is tech-savvy, as her role in organizing two major conferences for the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology has shown us.

There's momentum, as well, at the international level. Rome's *Istituto Internazionale Jacques Maritain* has convened several conferences in the last year. One of the most significant, held with the *Commissione Nazionale Italiana per l'UNESCO*, explored Jacques Maritain's contribution to the UN Declaration on Human Rights and the ongoing promise of that historical document. Two of our members, William Sweet and Michael Torre, spoke at this event. The *Istituto Internazionale* also publishes a valuable quarterly, *Notes et documents* (the current issue includes an essay by our member Francesca Zaccaron).

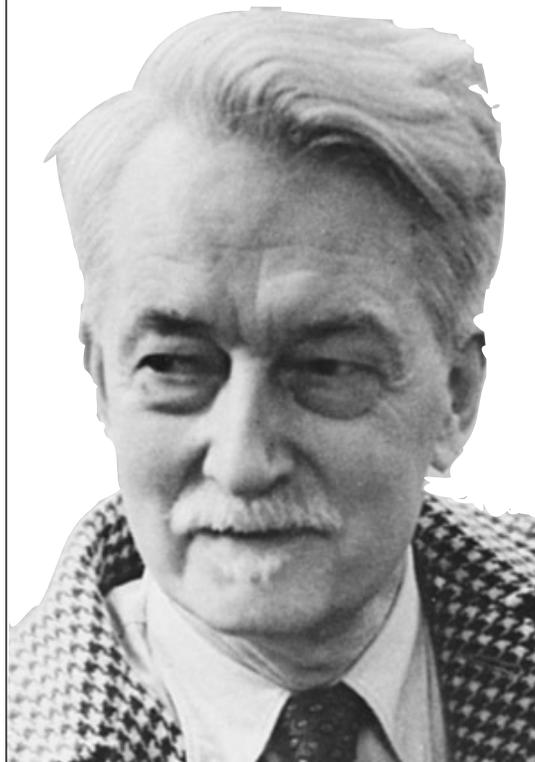
Might I continue with our sources of momentum? Organizations that look to the future, and do so creatively, renew their own leadership. We have

an election coming! The Executive Committee, as our By-Laws require, is now canvassing our membership for people willing to step forward as candidates. Where possible, we would like to prepare a slate showing two candidates for each position. We can conduct the election either by mail or at our annual business meeting. More to follow on this election in our next *Maritain Notebook*. Please consider throwing your hat into the ring!

With an election in the offing, it's time for incumbents to boast—but we can't. Insofar as we exercise our stewardship well, it is because of the tradition on which we build and the scholars which it attracts. Indeed, one noted scholar and editor has recently commented on our Association in a way that honors that tradition and those who would carry it forward. “I've spoken a couple times at the AMA and consider it to be one of the best things going in the Church today. We need Maritain more than ever!”

As always, the Executive Committee seeks your thoughts on our Association. Hesitant? In cases in which we deem it advisable, we've decided to provide a complimentary packet of Powder Milk Biscuits. After all, they give shy people the strength to do what needs to be done!

~James Hanink



## *The Maritain Notebook*

Published Fallish and Springish. 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](mailto:joshua.schulz@desales.edu)

# Book Review

THE MARITAIN NOTEBOOK / SUMMER 2018

In *Beyond Radical Secularism*, Pierre Manent argues that France and Europe face an existential crisis: enlightenment thinking having defined Western culture out of existence by elevating the self above any constraints, Muslim immigration cannot be assimilated; there is nothing to assimilate to. Manent recommends publicly acknowledging the Catholic nature of France, and rebuilding a genuine notion of the common good. There is, however, a flaw (or, perhaps, a time delay) in Manent's solution that is no fault of Manent's: the Catholic Church must rebuild its own house before it can resurrect the West.

Manent's analysis is directed primarily at France, but also Europe. He starts with the defining event for contemporary France, the defeat of 1940. "The defeat was the extrinsic accident that revealed the sickness of the nation's soul, which deGaulle always characterized as the renunciation." (4) In turn, deGaulle saw the need to oppose this negativity of the French with something positive, that is, "to gather itself for the political and spiritual independence of France." (4)

Political independence having been reclaimed, however, the anti-authoritarian wave of 1968 swept away the spiritual, and replaced it with the sovereign individual. Together with "the great withdrawal of loyalty from the community," "relaxation" has become "the law of the land. It makes every constant appear to be useless and arbitrary." (5) Government exists only to recognize ever-expanding claims of rights, and no genuine notion of the common good remains.

Indeed, numerous French and Europeans loath their own culture: "Europeans now consider that their great deeds of the past brought about too many evils and crimes for it to be

legitimate to want to *continue* European history" (40); "dominant opinion in Europe tends to consider Europe as a 'nothing,' a space empty of anything common." (69) As he continues:

*In an abstract social space where the sole principle of legitimacy now resides in human rights, understood as the unlimited rights of individual particularity, no really significant associations or communities remain; fundamentally, none truly exists. These human associations, that is, these nations and churches, are left with nothing but pretensions to existence. They are no longer social realities; they are, according to ruling opinion, pretended unrealities that are invoked only to block "newcomers" and "bear the stigma of rupturing human unity." (67)*

## David F. Dieteman

Sam and Irene Black School of  
Business, Penn State Erie  
[dfd12@psu.edu](mailto:dfd12@psu.edu)

Europeans now serve a false god, "the global marketplace," out of necessity, because there is "nothing else to do." (71) Unsurprisingly, Europe is at the same time perplexed over religion. (9) Faith has come to be seen as, at best, "purely private and emotional," while the "dominant progressivism sees religion as archaic." (10)

France today is thus analogous to the defeat of 1940. Manent describes the Islamist terror attacks in France in 2015 as "acts of war" (8), but the European ruling elites are confused by political Islam. They are unable to reconcile the "nihilism of Western ways" (102) with the unlimited power of Sharia in the Islamic world. (15)

The problem with both approaches, Manent observes, is that they ignore "the production of the common good by the community of citizens." (16)

In an Aristotelian Thomistic vein, Manent outlines how France may accept the Muslim way of life "without it being the law." (17) He argues for a neutral state, with a morally Christian society, and a sacred nation. (20) The French must reaffirm two "constituent elements of...common life:" (1) the complete freedom of thought and expression; and (2) "the desire and hope of the Covenant, *i.e.*, God's promise to His people." (50; 72)

The first of these relates to Manent's concerns over specific features of Muslim practice, *i.e.*, the subordinate condition of women, including the burqa and polygamy. (48-9) Manent characterizes the burqa as an "ongoing aggression against human coexistence" because the "visibility of the face" is an "elementary condition of sociability." (49) In Western tradition, only executioners hid their faces.

The second of these relates to an Aristotelian Thomistic understanding of the nature of politics. Genuine, communal, human action is only possible with an objective metaphysics and ethics, *i.e.*, an account of what it means to be a human being, along with what it is genuinely worthwhile or deplorable to do. "[A]s great as man is in his pride as a free agent, his action is inscribed in an order of the good that he does not produce and an order of grace upon which he ultimately depends." (114)

Two coequal principles of order and energy, which reciprocated and moderated each other, "gave European creativity the long arc and the richness of nuance that are unequalled in history:" namely: (1) its own strength, pagan ardor and pride (the Roman

# Book Review

THE MARITAIN NOTEBOOK / SUMMER 2018

virtues); and (2) the inexhaustible and imponderable benevolence of God offered to each and every person (Christianity's personal God). This European arc was broken in World War I (113), which otherwise, in France, partly healed the social wounds of the Dreyfus affair (Mahoney intro., p. xiii). The Great War also caused tremendous loss of life in France, and the defeat of 1940 was a mere twenty-two years later. The French had not really recovered. Even after the peace of 1945, it was again roughly twenty-two years until the global revolutions of 1968, the legacy of which is with us today.

So what is to be done? Manent argues that Christians must "renew the meaning and credibility of the covenant" (114), which is the notion of the good life for man *qua* individual and *qua* member of a concrete political society. (59-63) This requires "renewing the meaning and credibility of the human association that bore the Covenant until the European arc was broken, that is, the nation." (115) We "need a form of common life. The future of the nation of a Christian mark is a cause that brings us all together." (115)

Manent argues for a Christian mark because of the historically Catholic culture of France, and Christianity's place among the competing spiritual groups which he argues will determine the future of the West: (1) Judaism, (2) Islam, (3) Evangelical Protestantism (mainly American), (4) the Catholic Church, and (5) the ideology of human rights. (103) While four of these "promote themselves and their claims," only Catholicism "maintains itself, and raises questions while questioning itself." (105) The Catholic "Church as a spiritual domain is at the center of the Western configuration," and the self-critical nature of Catholicism has made it "the least intolerant and the most open" (105) of these groups, so it is uniquely positioned to mediate between these competing groups.

"Muslims will inevitably form a visible and tangible community within the French nation, a *distinct* community in a nation in which they are citizens *like others*. This situation will only be livable and lasting if Muslims form such a community within a surrounding community *that is not Muslim*, and that everyone knows is not Muslim." (109) Manent therefore

concludes that France and Europe must abandon nihilism. Muslim immigrants can only find a workable way of life in France if the French rediscover what it means to be Christian and French, and put those social realities into practice.

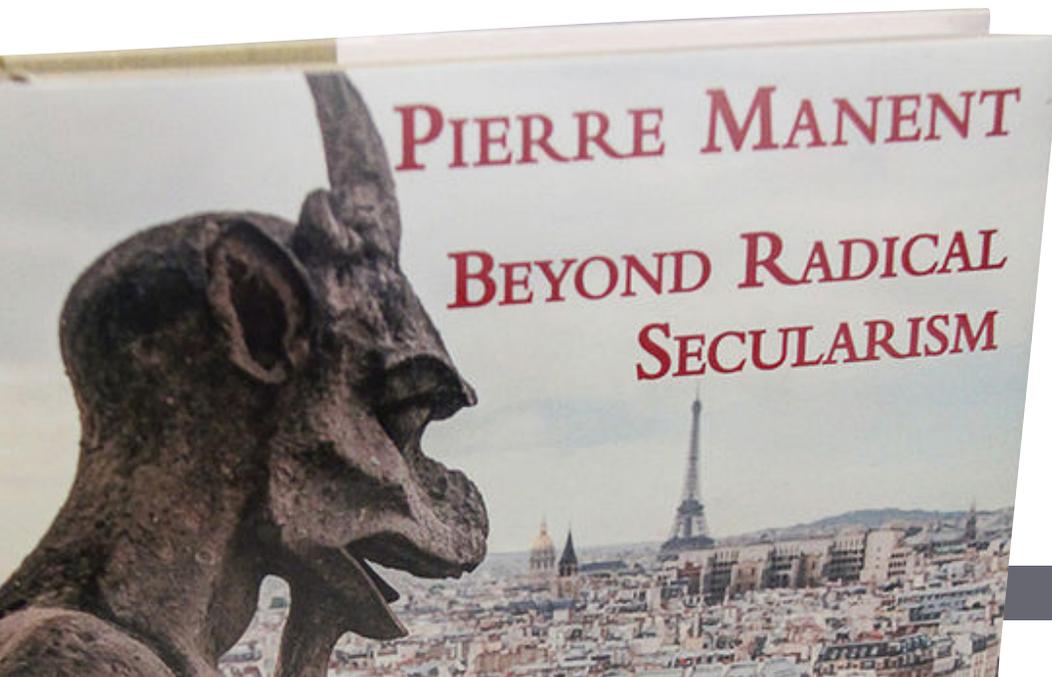
The visible decline of the Catholic Church is thus of central concern issue. In December 1968, Pope Paul VI wrote that "The Church is now confronted with uncertainty, self-criticism, one might almost say self-destruction. As if the Church were doing violence to Herself." Today, matters are worse. [Fr. James Schall](#) puts it this way:

*It is difficult to see why anyone should convert or even be preached to. To many, the Church seems to present itself as a kind of modern humanism in culture and socialism in political preference. ...*

*Few seem certain about where the Church stands on many core issues that once were thought to be settled.*

No wonder, then, in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from 2000 through 2016, the Mass attendance decline was nearly three times the population loss: 43%, compared to 16%. Marriages fell 48%, infant baptisms 48%, and K-8 Catholic school enrollment 54%. Catholicism in Pittsburgh is dwindling, because the institutional church has committed ritual suicide.

Modernism, says [Pope St. Pius X](#), stems from moral and intellectual flaws. The moral flaws, pride and curiosity, are reinforced by the intellectual flaw, ignorance. (para. 41-2) Ignorance of Scholasticism "has left [modernists] without the means of being able to recognize confusion of thought, and to refute sophistry." (para. 41) In a Church characterized since 1968 by self-esteem psychology (pride), and a lack of catechesis (ignorance), it is



# Book Review

THE MARITAIN NOTEBOOK / SUMMER 2018

unsurprising that modernism is rife among nominal Catholics. A 2015 Pew survey found most Catholics saying the church should allow birth control (76%), allow communion for divorced, remarried, and cohabitators (62%), and ordain women (59%). Nearly half want the church to recognize homosexual marriages (46%).

Catechesis, homiletics and pastoral work are moribund. This is what happens when the only message preached from the pulpit is “love one another,” devoid of any practical conclusions about what that actually

means. Left to figure it out for themselves (at best), Catholics follow the broader culture.

This is the hidden flaw in Manent’s analysis. On its face, Manent’s proposals are good and correct. He proceeds from an Aristotelian Thomistic understanding of the nature of man and society, and thorough, historical perspective. However, one must dig into the crisis in the Church: apostasy is widespread. For Manent’s solution to succeed, it seems that the Lord must rescue the church from modernism.

**We’re always looking for articles and book reviews! Send queries to the editor at: [joshua.schulz@desales.edu](mailto:joshua.schulz@desales.edu)**

## Scholasticism and Politics

By Jacques Maritain

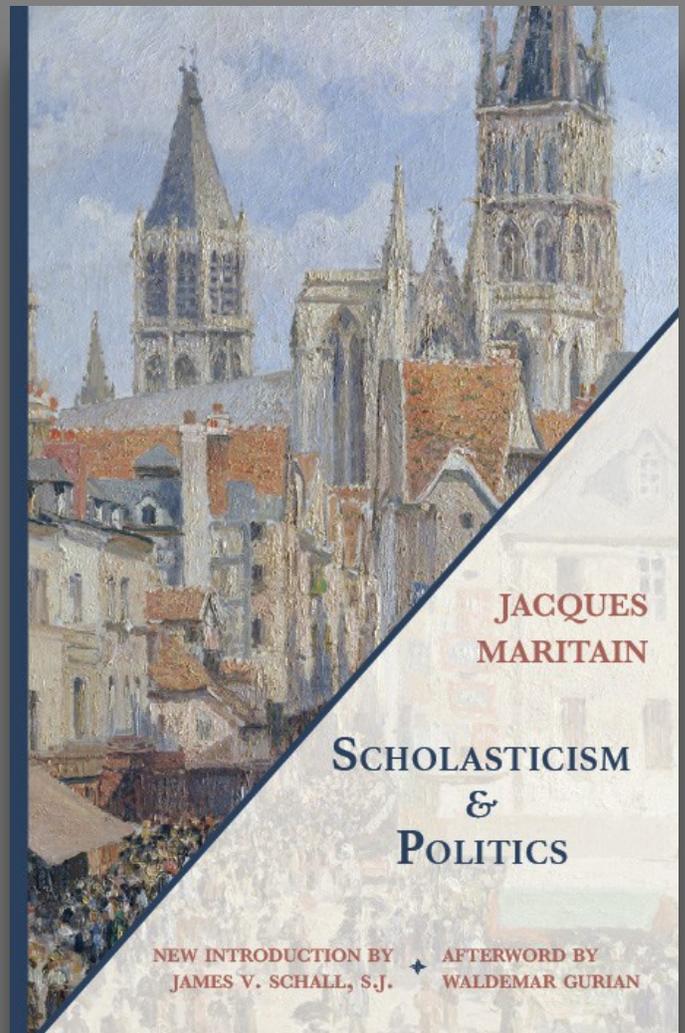
*A new edition from Chry Media*

Introduction by James V. Schall

Afterward by Waldemar Gurian

**Scholasticism and Politics**, originally a series of lectures given at the beginning of World War II, is renowned philosopher Jacques Maritain’s description of the relation of Christian revelation to human political life. Maritain asserts that social order should be distinguished by a *convivium* among the citizens, resting on a degree of consensus regarding the nature and purpose of society but allowing variance in the means of embracing the former and accomplishing the latter. As Fr. James V. Schall, S.J., notes in the Introduction: “To reread these lectures some eighty years after their subsequent publication is to measure how much the world has changed since then. At the same time, the basic intellectual tools to understand man’s ultimate destiny and the place of politics in that destiny remain pretty much the same, however seldom we hear them spelled out as we do here.”

—From the Publisher’s Website



# Events

THE MARITAIN NOTEBOOK / SUMMER 2018

## Fifth Annual Aquinas Leadership International World Congress

"Artificial Intelligence and the Futures of Philosophy,  
Global Leadership, and World Peace"  
20 to 22 July 2018

Immaculate Conception Seminary  
Huntington, Long Island, NY, USA

For more information, go to the [Aquinas School of Leadership](#)

## Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

"The Future of Science, Technology, and the Human  
Person"

28 to 30 September 2018  
Benedictine College  
Atchison, Kansas

For more information, go to  
[catholicscholars.org](http://catholicscholars.org)

# 2018 Conference

**VISIT MARITAINASSOCIATION.COM**

## **THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION**

**42nd ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MEETING**

**THURSDAY— SATURDAY, MARCH 28–30, 2019**

**AT DeSALES UNIVERSITY, CENTER VALLEY, PENNSYLVANIA**

## **THOMISM AND THEOLOGY**

Program Committee: James G. Hanink (President), James M. Jacobs (Vice-President and Program Chair), Joshua W. Schulz (Secretary and Web Editor), Heather M. Erb (Treasurer), Giuseppe Butera (General Editor)

2019 marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jacques Maritain's *The Angelic Doctor* and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his *Twilight of Civilization*. The juxtaposition of titles suggests some pointed questions. What does the Common Doctor offer to those who fear a dark night of civilization? Or if this be its twilight, though given a reprieve, what can philosophers and theologians say about what our civilization means? How we answer such questions leads to a more general question: how might the sometimes-troubled conversation between Thomism and theology contribute to both the shifting present and the uncertain future?

From his early and extraordinary synthesis, *Distinguish to Unite or the Degrees of Knowledge* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1959) to his final and controversial publication *Untrammelled Approaches* (1973), Jacques Maritain proved to be a philosopher engaged with theology as well as a close friend of both philosophers and theologians. He would not shrink from the questions that challenge us, and he would address them in the company of friends.

We invite proposals on topics in philosophical theology and the epistemology of religion, as well as in philosophical and theological anthropology and ethics. We welcome proposals on such figures as Nicholas Berdyaev, Martin Buber, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, Étienne Gilson, Charles Journet, Louis Massignon, and Emmanuel Mounier. We also encourage proposals on Eastern philosophies and religions.

As always, we look forward to proposals that further the understanding of the work of St. Thomas Aquinas, of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, and of other thinkers, writers, and artists who help to clarify our chiaroscuro times.

Proposals, of no more than 500 words, should be sent to Dr. James M. Jacobs at [jjacobs@nds.edu](mailto:jjacobs@nds.edu). Submissions are due December 15, 2018. **There is a \$250 prize AND guaranteed publication for the best graduate student paper**; this paper is to be submitted by January 15, 2019. For more information, visit <https://maritainassociation.com/>

# 2018 Conference

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

## **Hotel Information**

**Homewood Suites by Hilton Allentown Bethlehem Center Valley**

3350 Center Valley Parkway, Center Valley, Pennsylvania, 18034

610-351-6400

**Conference Rate: \$129/night if reserved under “DeSales Conference” by  
March 5th, 2019.**

## **Airport Travel Information**

The closest airport to DeSales is Lehigh Valley International Airport (ABE).

The Hotel and DeSales are 20 minutes from the airport by car or cab.

## **Conference Registration**

You will soon be able to register for the conference online using a NEW online portal hosted by DeSales University. Stay tuned to [maritainassociation.com](http://maritainassociation.com) for more information!