Who *Wasn't* the Sacred Monster of Thomism?: Overcoming Certain Narratives about Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrage, OP, in the Hope of Mutual Honesty Among Faithful Catholics

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Introduction

It seems almost self-indulgent to write a series of chapters like this, as though I deserve to be reminiscent at the age of 38. I hope, in the end, that my remarks in these brief chapters will not come across as the mere navel gazing of a junior scholar. This is not my goal. I intend, rather, to explain what has inspired my work devoted to the recovery of various texts by "the sacred monster of Thomism," Fr. Reginald Garrigou Lagrange. Once upon a time, really not all that long ago, his name was a point of significant division, in the Roman Catholic Church at least. Fr. Garrigou Lagrange, who taught from 1909 to 1959 at the pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas (the "Angelicum") became a kind of condensed symbol during the post conciliar period. Everything that was supposedly stuffy, ahistorical, backward looking, doctrinaire, close minded, and all too scholastic was laid at his feet, at least in the form of a kind of epithet. A lot of rhetorical space could be bought over the years merely by saying something

like, "The Roman Thomism represented by someone like the Dominican Reginald Garrigou Lagrange."

No doubt, this situation was aggravated by one of his last interventions, which involved his strenuous opposition to the work of a Jesuit priest, Henri Bouillard, as well as several other mid-century works and articles by thinkers like Teilhard de Chardin, Jean Daniélou, Gaston Fessard, Jean-Marie Le Blond, Bruno de Solages, and Henri de Lubac. I have included the whole list of names here precisely because this entire affair, styled as being concerned with the "new theology," exists in the liminal space of myths throughout various Catholic circles. This affair, which broke out in the late 1940s, has come to represent a kind of first salvo in the battles that would arise during the Second Vatican Council. To this day, the entire opposition voiced by father Garrigou Lagrange seems to speak to either side: traditionalists in the Roman Catholic Church see it as a kind of prophecy of a coming reviviscence of modernism; progressives see it as an example of the laughable ahistorical thought that destines scholasticism for the dustbin of history; a certain kind of conservative Roman Catholic sees it as the last gasp of a kind of neo scholasticism which needed to come to an end for the sake of a more capacious understanding of theology and philosophy, especially in the form that can be found among thinkers gathered around the journal *Communio*.

Well, as I hope I've managed to show, with Dr. Jon Kirwan in our recent text *The Thomistic Response to the Nouvelle Theologie: Concerning the Truth of Dogma and the Nature of Theology*, the whole received history of this affair needs significant reworking in the Catholic consciousness. Garrigou did not write against all practitioners of non-Thomistic Philosophy. He was joined by fellow, younger Dominican's invoice and concerns about certain tendencies in the writings of Jesuit theologians at that time. Both he and his younger confrères in Toulouse were

most concerned with a sophomoric presentation of the development of dogma in Henri Bouillard's, *Conversion et grâce chez s. Thomas d'Aquin*. And the younger men in particular were quite clear in *not* looking to shut down all new historical studies, nor engagement with the contemporary world. And we might even say that it would be textually a stretch to say that this was remotely what Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange wanted to do. But, more on that in a later chapter (and in the entire book by Dr. Kirwan and myself).

So why this aggravation against Garrigou? And why such staying power in the narrative arrayed against him? Well, I suppose it's good to be direct and honest. In no small part it is because of the way that many connect his writings (especially from the "nouvelle théologie controversy") to the Roman Catholic movement which has come to be known in certain circles as "traditionalism" (an ambiguous term in the history of theology, let it be noted). And thus, he is seen by nearly all parties as being somehow connected to those who reject some or all of the Second Vatican Council. This is not the place to negotiate what conceptual or sociological factors might lead to this conclusion. But it is the place for me, after all these years of work, to attempt to say my last word concerning the man in whose service I have spent many hours translating.

Allow me to tell the story of how I came to Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. Maybe someday I will take up the pan again and write a lengthy study about him and his reception. But allow a personal tale.

Like so many Catholics who grew up in the second half of the 20th century, I was significantly bereft of good catechetical formation. And then, even after an undergraduate education in theology I was still rather bereft of theological insight. We have all lived through a

time of immense forgetfulness in the Church. Things improve in some circles, but the dreadful effects of a puerile rejection of the past remain to this day.

When I was a seminarian for a brief time, as a Benedictine monk, I was not given much in the way over Thomistic education in my pre-Theology studies. And my first year of theology was the same. There was still was in the air, even among men whom I respected greatly, a kind of bias against Thomism: why would you want to go and be concerned with that? It's all so out of touch with the contemporary world.

Now, this was in 2009 and 2010, when many things had already begun to significantly improve in the Catholic world. Although I cherish my years as a Benedictine, most especially my novitiate, I had the misfortune of being a member of a community that suffered the trauma of the 1960s quite significantly under the Archabbacy of the later-disgraced Archbishop Rembert Weakland, whose greatest disgrace would be his lack of care for the deposit of faith, though his other faults and sins are known to the world too. It's not surprising therefore that my education was, shall we say, not going to be inclined in the way of Thomism.

Nonetheless, my dear old novice master, Fr. Sebastian Samay OSB taught an independent study for me and one of my confrères when we had to take epistemology, the philosophy of knowledge. Father Sebastian had been trained in phenomenology (especially that of Karl Jaspers) at the Catholic University of Louvain in the 1960s. He was an open-minded man, however, and he assigned to me a secondary reading in that class: Jacques Maritain's *The Degrees of Knowledge*.

For anybody who is familiar with the text it is a massive and meandering treatise that discusses all kinds of things about human knowledge: the problem of science and philosophy, the problem of realism and idealism, the question of analogy and our knowledge of God, the nature

of theological knowledge, and the nature of mystical experience. Needless to say, I was blown away. All at once I realized that everything I had been told about Thomism was a lie. Here, written in the 1930s was a text that was deeply and profoundly engaged in the questions of the 20th century. This encounter led me to read deeply the various works of Maritain, as well as others who have been influenced by him, or who were also involved in the great period of intellectual efflorescence following in the wake of Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris*.

When I was in graduate school, my love of Maritain was something of a joke to my fellow students, especially those who have been trained as undergraduates at Thomas Aquinas College. There's a kind of partisanship against Maritain by those who hold Charles DeKoninck and "Laval Thomism" in esteem. I feel no hard feelings toward his thought, although I do believe that the partisanship of his epigones is somewhat unfair. But, in any case, I was referred to as "that Maritain guy" by people who could not otherwise remember my name.

As I came to read his works more deeply while doing my other coursework, I began to realize how important for him the earlier Thomistic tradition of Dominican commentators was. Looking back, I could almost laugh at myself. This is so obvious when you read Maritain's works, from early on in his career until his last days. But at the time I had to work backwards, like so many of us have had to do in the wake of the half-truths into which we have been born. In the opinion of some of my professors and of others for whom I had and still have respect, it seemed that this was just an awful way to read St. Thomas, or even let's just say a horrid way to philosophize. I suppose as well, had I been in different circles, we could add as well: awful, too, to theologize in such a manner.

I still remember when one of my professors said to me, regarding a paper that I was writing: "Just remember, Jacques Maritain uses John of St. Thomas." The implication was

baffling to me, at least at the time. I have since realized that men like the person in question are more concerned with the historical thought of Thomas than with philosophizing Thomistically. It is a useful endeavor, but not one that I'm interested in except as a kind of tool for understanding a text here or there.

Well, never tell somebody in their 20s not to do something. They'll do it. So I began digging around, buying this or that manual, reading John of Saint Thomas and Thomas de Vio Cajetan on this or that philosophical topic. But, I still did not have the courage to open the books of Fr. Garrigou Lagrange.

Now, It's not as though I had been completely ignorant of him. A very devout layperson teaching at the seminary I attended when I was a Benedictine assigned to us the little Garrigou-Lagrange volume which is known in English as *The Three Conversions in the Spiritual Life*. At the time I found it fine enough, but I just didn't quite know what to make of it in the broader scheme of thought in the Catholic world. (Not surprising, I admit.) But beyond this, all that I knew about him was: supporter of the collaborationist government of Vichy; persecutor of devout thinkers who wanted to read the Fathers; "manualist" puking up tedious scholastic sentences in the form of "syllogistic analysis." So, I just didn't spend time looking at his works. I had quite a bit to get from people like Maritain, Simon, Pieper, Gilson, and the commentators whom I was just starting to learn of at the time.

Then, on a fateful day in Oxford England, I was at the house of Father John Saward. He didn't know who I was. I was there for the baptism of the child of friends in England. But we were talking in one of his parlor rooms, and he discussed his change of heart from being much more a "Ressourcement" thinker (in the vein of Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs Von Balthasar) to someone who takes the scholastic tradition very seriously, especially the Thomistic tradition.

(Although I might recommend a number of his books, allow me to commend to you in particular his *Sweet and Blessed Country: The Christian Hope for Heaven*.)

He made a very gentle remark in passing about how he had begun to use Garrigou-Lagrange's commentaries on Saint Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*. I was somewhat surprised because I thought that nobody held those texts in esteem nowadays, but I continued listening. He remarked on how Garrigou was really just in the line of men like Billuart, setting forth the tradition of Dominican Thomism in our era, responding to new errors and new questions in the 19th and 20th century.

Well, I perked up in two different ways. First of all, I had no idea who in the world "Billuart" was. I later came to learn about this 18th century Dominican, Charles-René Billuart, whose *Summa Sancti Thomae* would function has a very important textbook for training Dominicans during the period leading up to and following upon the French Revolution. But second, and more importantly, Fr. Saward's comment about Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's engagement with the issues of the 19th and early 20th century rang in my ears. It reminded me of that experience which I had when I first read the works of Maritain: wait, he interacts this much with his contemporary world? And so I thought: I need to start at least looking through Garrigou's texts, for maybe I will find their yet another case where the tales that I have been told have been, at best, material lies.

Well, I was into my third year of graduate studies and was trying to get my dissertation topic approved. So, here in there I read this and that by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. But, I was also trying to prepare for all of my exams so that I could leave Washington DC and move back up toward Pennsylvania where my now-wife was living at the time. Thus, my engagement remained somewhat limited.

After I moved to Pennsylvania and began writing my dissertation in Pennsylvania, I read a bit by the old Dominican, in his commentaries on the *Summa* in particular. Halfway through this time, I began reading his work *Le sens du mystère* in the original French. This is what blew me away. I saw all throughout the work connections to Maritain, Simon, and even John Deely (whose work has a very important place in my own thought). And what is far more important, I there saw that all of the stories about the supposed "Sacred Monster of Thomism," could not be verified in a book that was nothing other than a profound meditation on all the various ways that are philosophical and theological knowledge are bounded by mystery.

Looking back, this began a kind of extension of my vocation as an intellectual or a professor (or whatever in the world I am). I immediately wanted to make this volume available to the world. And so, in either late-2015 or in 2016 (which is the date I tend to choose to recall…), I began translating the work. I had no idea what I was getting into, but I set to the task. Looking back, it was foolhardy, but blessedly Scott Hahn and his press Emmaus Academic gave me a chance. They gave me excellent support reviewing the translation, and although I have picked up very many new tools and abilities since I did that first work, I had a great experience bringing this lovely text to press. I will forever feel a kind of personal debt to Scott and the others at Emmaus for taking this risk on me.

So, there I am waiting for my dissertation to be reviewed, and I'm looking for something else to do. Thus, I reached out to the folks at Emmaus Academic and said: "You know there were some other works by Garrigou Lagrange that have not been translated. Would you be interested in doing *Le réalisme du principe de finalité*, *Le sens commun*, and *De revelatione*?" Talk about biting off a lot of work! The joke was once said to me that to be a Slav is to believe that laziness

might be the worst of all sins. Well, in this regard I was reflecting the broad shoulders of my great grandfather Joseph Juriga—or at least I hope I was!

To my surprise Emmaus Academic was very excited to do this. We had some delays along the way, but it was all for the better. It gave me a chance to hone my craft. And all along the way I could not believe how Garrigou Lagrange was so clearly a bedrock foundation for men like Jacques Maritain. And what is more, I did not find in him the stylistic crampedness of a "manualist," someone ticking off the boxes of theology and merely gathering an orthodox stamp collection. No, he was an honest thinker, a man who had the "habit" of philosophy and theology on the move. Obviously, his style was somewhat cramped and scholastic at times. He's not always the most striking stylist. But, concerning this latter point, I have learned to share the insight expressed by Maritain to a vexed young Yves Simon:

> I am not pleased by the qualifier that you applied to Fr. Garrigou's book in a preceding letter—no! Fortunately, there was a mitigating post-script—*secundum quid*. Do not be inhumane. Give some small thought to the conditions in which Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange must work—without a secretary, crushed by courses to teach, in the *Collegio Angelico* in isolation from everyone, facing exhausting work all alone. Were you to recall this, you would reproach him less for repetitions and short-comings in composition. If we have understood some- thing regarding Thomism, it is thanks to him—you know this to be true. We must not forget this fact, as well as the work of *mittentes in lacrymis semina sua* [those who are sowing their seeds in tears]. Ungrateful youth! (See Garrigou-Lagrange, *Order of Things*, 2).

Not even in his *De revelatione*—which clearly bears the marks of earlier Thomistic textbooks like the *Propaedeutica ad Sacram Theologiam* by the great 19th century Dominican Cardinal Tommaso Maria Zigliara (1833–93)—does Garrigou slip into a "merely scholastic" tone or style. You always have a sense that here is a man who wants to express the soul of the doctrine he is discussing, the animating spirit of a synthesis, no mere material collection of propositions. To him, this is to really hear the symphony and not merely the sounds. Never, in

the midst of all of my translating of him—over 1 million words at this point—have I ever found him to be the partisan of mere scholastic form over the true grasp *of reality*. It is not concepts or propositions that he holds to be most important, but instead the reality grasped through them.

And yes, while working with Dr. Jon Kirwan on the aforementioned book concerning the "Nouvelle théologie," I realized that the old man Garrigou was indeed repeating some of his normal, admittedly dated but valid, arguments offered during the modernist crisis during the papacy of Pope St. Pius X. He did not wrongly see a kind of reviviscence of modernism in the very unimpressive theory of dogmatic development found in Bouillard's aforementioned book. And, in point of fact, anybody who reads with a fair eye these 1940s texts by Garrigou will not there find a kind of super-traditionalist firebrand, ready to condemn every new thought, and enforce a kind of Thomistic orthodoxy on the world. No, you find an old man who is surprised by an epistemology that seems to completely deny the very first metaphysical principal, the principle of non-contradiction. As he states in a kind of frustrated flourish in a footnote: "We have been accused of wishing to impose Thomism upon all. Here, we are only asking whether one admits the real value of the principle of contradiction. Nothing less could be asked for" (Garrigou-Lagrange, "Truth and the Immutability of Dogma," trans. Minerd and Kirwan, 308n17).

In the chapters that follow, I would like to present the man I have spent these past seven years bringing into the English world. There are many misrepresentations of his thought that I feel should be combated somewhat. He said to be a "manualist," a kind of "logic chopper," a "Wolffian" rationalist, the purveyor of a "two-tier" Thomism of nature and grace, a political Fascist, a persecutor of the "Nouvelle théologie," and an old Roman Thomist with nothing to say to us today. I could probably come up with other epithets as well, but this seems to be a fitting

dossier for me to present some rebuttal to. I don't plan to provide a fully documented defense in this little self-directed reflection. In the words of Father Garrigou-Lagrange's own master, Fr. Ambroise Gardeil: *Alius vero superaedificet!* May someone else build upon this foundation!

I merely want to give some kind of testimony to a man who has formed me in ways for which I will ever be grateful, and to attempt to prevent his legacy from being misappropriated or misjudged. I entrust to the Mother of God this labor of love for a man who is no monster to me but instead a true master in knowledge of Divine Realities.

Garrigou: Not a Manualist

If ever they were a term that was used as a kind of epithet about Latin Theology during the pre-conciliar period it could be stated in one word, "Manualism." No doubt, you my reader may have heard some version of this spoken of. The implication is always rather clear: simplistic, a historical, and rationalistic. Often as well right alongside that is the implication that such theology was not interested in Scripture or the Fathers of the Church, but only in scholastic syllogistic analysis. Well, we will come back to the latter point in a future chapter. Let's here deal with the general question of "manualism" and Garrigou.

First of all, I'd like to begin by leveling the playing field a bit. I think that some "sauciness" is justified here: if you ever read someone who talks about "the manuals" or "philosophical / theological manualism" as though it were one reality or one genre, that person really doesn't deserve to be listened to regarding the history of Latin theology in the late 19th or early 20th century. They are either completely ignorant of the body of literature from that era, or perhaps, even worse, they are using the term as a cudgel in their own ideological battle.

So, let's start with the term itself, just to make sure that we are on the same page. The word "manual" comes from the Latin for "hand." If the main Roman catholic seminaries were in Bavaria instead of being in Rome, we would use the more Germanic word "handbook" in place of "manual." But, the immediate implication is that it fits in one's hand. It is a descriptor that gathers multiple genres into a *per accidens* unity, based upon shared quantitative dimensions.

Now, historically, the term came to be applied to the educational books used in the Roman catholic world (though elsewhere too) in philosophical and theological studies. Very often, for the training of seminarians you would have texts that summarized the state of

theological questions and would propose certain "theses" to be held concerning all sorts of topics in dogma and morals. They were, in the end, textbooks for a basic formation in these disciplines.

Seminarians are not all called to be philosophers or theologians. The vocation to be a priest is not by its essence academic. It requires a solid and sure formation in the realities of faith, but a seminary's concern is not to form future seminary professors, let alone academic theologians. Therefore, this first, general genre of manuals, textbooks for seminary formation, varied in quality. Some are mere summaries, whereas others provide much more detailed "states of the question" for the topics covered therein.

Another point should be observed regarding this first genre of manuals, and it reveals something about the world of pre-conciliar philosophy and theology more broadly. The methodology and particular approach is by far not universally the same. If you peruse a list of such manuals, even merely in philosophy, you will not find the same structure across all the texts. We will discuss in a later chapter how modern philosophy did indeed affect the curriculum used in Catholic philosophical studies. What is more, although many people treat the period of neo-scholasticism as though it were a kind of unified neo-Thomism, we can find a great deal of variation among the contents of these "manuals." The main opposed school during this era remained the Suarezians among the Jesuits. But, also in moral theology there was, by the beginning of the 20th century an internal conflict beginning with in the western Church regarding how much one should follow the structure of St. Alphonsus Liguori's *Theologia moralis*. Not all continued to follow in his layout of morals (which was problematically derived directly from Hermann Busenbaum's *Medulla theologiae moralis, facili ac perspicua methodo resolvens casus conscientiae*). And I think it is fair to add that not all "Thomism" in the "Thomistic" manuals was the same either.

Well, we have spent a lot of time on this first genre of manual, which I have wanted to insist is not the whole story! Nonetheless, it is the primary reference of the term, "manual," sociologically in the Catholic world. And even if we think about our normal English use of the word "handbook," it signifies something like a simplification or summary text. Those who speak of the manuals as being this genre are not completely wrong. But almost always when they speak of this kind of text, they play upon the ignorance of their listeners and hope that the slight implication comes along as well: a brief summary, with no real academic basis, and not at all engaged with the modern world.

But, it is here that we begin to expand on the genre of "handbook" or "manual." And I've chosen to include the Germanic term because it calls to mind the great work of Mattias Joseph Scheeben: his seven-volume *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*, which, through the labors of the great ecclesiastical translator of our era, Michael J. Miller, and the patronage of Scott Hahn's Emmaus Academic Press is coming to publication in English. Anybody who has looked at the German or English of this text will immediately realize how a "handbook" is something much more than a simple listing of rules or theses. In Scheeben's work, we are presented with a veritable smorgasbord of scriptural, patristic, and theological reflection upon the great themes of dogmatic theology. All of the sudden, we begin to think: wow, manuals are a little bit more than mere summaries! And you should ask yourself, quite justly: do you think that the person who screams "manualist" has as much knowledge of Theology as someone like Scheeben? If not, perhaps they should remain silent instead of throwing around epithets.

Here, we begin to see that the term "manual" can be used to describe a second sort of text: the presentation of the state of the science in its most rigorous form in a given era. Already many of the first, aforementioned genre of manuals tend toward this level of technicality.

Merely to choose from the line that is dearest to me, if you were to pick up the Theology or Philosophy manuals of Fr. Joseph Gredt OSB, Canon François-Xavier Maquart, Fr. Eduoard Hugon OP, or Fr. Benoît-Henri Merkelbach, you would already be confronted with a rather detailed account of philosophy and theology. But, when we come to men like Scheeben or the unfinished dogmatics manuals of Emmanuel Doronzo, we immediately find ourselves confronted with an incredible level of technicality that cannot be dismissed as something merely passé. In fact, in the contemporary Church, there are no textbooks that can match their level of erudition. Not by a long shot. We still await the day when graduate students in philosophy and theology will benefit from writers of such insight and breadth.

In the interest of moving along, I will set aside many other excellent texts that existed from this era. But I think the point stands almost on its own: even these "manuals" are not the simplistic, rationalistic garbage that so many of a certain generation still wish to make them out to be. If you actually bother to open them up and read them, I think it's fair to say: *res ipsa loquitur*.

But, this already gets us into the second genre. Especially if we consider someone like Fr. Emmanuel Doronzo we have a good starting point for understanding that there is another kind of book that many people call a "manual": texts which, in fact, are treatises of theology. The confusion is somewhat understandable. In particular after the time of the Council of Trent, you had a kind of hardening of the theological form taken by many works in the West, especially in Dominican theology and the various Jesuit lines of theological erudition. The various treatises that make up St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* came to be the outline for theological works. For this reason, there was born I kind of theology the traced the various lines of his own, structured thought. This would give rise to a commentary tradition based now upon the *Summa*

theologiae, about which I will speak in a minute. But before that we should also consider how this treatise-structure affected the general approach to writing detailed works of theology.

Someone who is not familiar with the world of pre-conciliar Western Catholic theology would tend to think that all treatises, for example, "De sacramentis" are created equal. Thus, one would open up a seminary text-book of dogmatics and see "Tractatus de sacramentis" and perhaps think that this is the same as, for example, the *Tractatus de sacramentis in genere* by Emmanuel Doronzo. But upon further inspection, all of the sudden you will realize the immense difference that separates the two. The latter, which is really just one volume in the midst of an entire series of texts ultimately numbering over 11,000 pages concerning the sacraments, is really a presentation of the detailed state of the art concerning a given topic. In other words, we could think of it as a theological monograph by an expert. It is devoted to a particular "treatise" of theology, but with a profound level of erudition.

Already, this genre of "treatises"—sometimes even new ones—was beginning to develop in a text like Melchior Cano's (c. 1509–1560) posthumous *De locis theologicis*, dedicated to what we would now call theological methodology, especially regarding the nature of "positive theology." The later work of his fellow Dominican, Joachim Berthier, dedicated to the same topic, would be of the same genre. And here we could number texts by other scholastics from among the Jesuits: Sebastian Tromp, Louis Billot, Christian Pesch, Tilman Pesch, Giovanni Perrone, and many others. Although the format of such texts was marked by their particular eras and the general scholastic way of laying out questions, I believe it is fair to say that such works don't deserve to be brushed away as though they were cheap repetitions of Aquinas, lessened by a kind of modern hardening of thought.

Notice, hear, my reader, that we have not yet even hit father Garrigou-Lagrange! It is only now that we can begin to place his works amid such texts. He never wrote a manual in the first sense discussed above. In fact, he on more than one occasion would critique such manuals for becoming something like the intellectual stamp collecting that I mentioned before. I do not wish to overburden this book with citations, as though it were a completely researched volume. However, in this first body chapter, I think I am faced with a very difficult task, shouting against the wind of so many commentators who blithely and ignorantly act as though Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was a "mere manualist", thereby implying that the past as a whole need not be listened to (at least from around 1400 to 1950).

Therefore, consider what he says in a sometime-cited passage from the beginning of his *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*:

> We have not given this study the form of a manual because we are not seeking to accumulate knowledge, as is too often done in academic overloading, but to form the mind, to give it the firmness of principles and the suppleness required for the variety of their applications, in order that it may thus be capable of judging the problems which may arise. The humanities were formerly conceived in this fashion, whereas often today minds are transformed into manuals, into repertories, or even into collections of opinions and of formulas, whose reasons and profound consequences they do not seek to know.
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> Moreover, questions of spirituality, because they are most vital and at times most hidden, do not easily fall into the framework of a manual; or to put the matter more clearly, great risk is run of being superficial in materially classifying things and in substituting an artificial mechanism for the profound dynamism of the life of grace, of the infused virtues, and of the gifts. This explains why the great spiritual writers have not set forth their thought under this schematic form, which risks giving us a skeleton where we seek for life (Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, v–vi)

Or, in a more-philosophical work, translated into English as *The Order of Things*:

> The order to follow in [philosophical] psychology, at least in a work of Peripatetic philosophy, is obviously that of the *De anima* and not that of the theological treatise *De homine*. Granted, it is easy to write a manual of philosophy by transcribing the parts of the *Summa theologiae* that are related to being, truth, the sensible world, the soul, God,

> and moral thought. However, a philosophical treatise should be something more than such a juxtaposition of texts (Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Order of Things*, 234).

And again:

> To present this doctrine concerning potency and act in another, a priori manner, as happens in many manuals, is to suggest that it has merely fallen from the sky or that it is only a simple, pseudo-philosophical translation of common language… There is no longer any profundity in analyzing matters. One is content with some quasi-nominal definitions of potency and act, and it is no longer clear how and why potency differs from the simply possible being, from privation, as well as from imperfect act or from the Leibnizian force / virtuality, which is only an impeded form of act. Likewise, one can limit oneself merely to enunciating the relations of potency and act in the axioms proposed as commonly received in the School [i.e., the Thomist school, Suarezian school, etc.] without seeing their true value on which, nevertheless, everything depends. *We must admit this fact: this fundamental chapter of metaphysics, i.e., regarding act and potency, remains in a state of great intellectual poverty in many manuals when we compare them to the first two books of Aristotle's Physics and to the commentary that St. Thomas left us concerning it. The method of discovery has been too neglected in philosophy, a method which is founded on the very nature of our intellect, the very least among created intellects* (Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Order of Things*, 239–240, emphasis added).

And again, more so concerning the state of moral theology:

> As some have noted, the ever-present importance of this treatise on prudence would be quite clear to modern thinkers if only two words were added to its title: "Concerning prudence and the connected moral virtues, in relation to the formation of conscience." Prudence, which directs all the moral virtues, is so fundamental that no human act is good without also being prudent. *And despite this fact, numerous modern manuals of moral theology, which do devote a large place to the treatise on conscience, quickly and silently pass over this virtue, the principal cardinal virtue. They sometimes dedicate only eight or ten pages to it and seem to forget that right and certain conscience is an act of prudence, whose formal object must be determined, as well as its proper nature and connection with the other virtues* (Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Order of Things*, 276n6).

Although other texts could be gathered, allow one final text on the state of Moral Theology

manuals:

> Some modern manuals of moral theology contain almost nothing other than casuistic theology, and in them moral theology appears like a science of grave and minor sins to be avoided rather than a science concerning virtues to be perfected. Likewise, many modern treatises of ascetic theology and mystical theology do not proceed fully enough from the rightful foundation of moral theology concerning the nature and progress of the infused virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thus, they come to be constructed in too empirical a fashion and are lacking in doctrinal value. Ultimately, these defects lead to

> the diminution of the notion of the eminent unity of sacred theology (*On Divine Revelation*, 136n76).

This last quote by itself opens up an entire abyss of possible further remarks. Many people speak of "manuals" in moral theology as though they were all devoted to the legalistic examination of cases of conscience ("casuistry"). Already at the time of Garrigou-Lagrange there were excellent attempts by moral theologians—merely to name two good Dominicans, Benoît-Henri Merkelbach and Dominic Prümmer (see the three-volume of the latter in particular, not his 1-volume summary, which is somewhat lacking in fullness)—to turn away from such an approach to morals, which was all too indebted to the great debates over "probablism" which rocked the modern Church.

But, this is not the place to get into such lengthy commentary, except to note something that is a bit of a pet peeve of mine as a Garrigou-Lagrange scholar. Nowadays, it is fairly regular to lionize the work of Fr. Servais Pinckaers, OP. Many have benefited from his essays and, especially, his volume *The Sources of Christian Ethics*. This is all good and fine. But I look forward to a day when it is finally admitted in polite circles that in the end Fr. Pinckaers was not at all unique in his critique of late-modern Latin moral theology. And, in fact, his strength was not in profound analysis as much as it was in the ability to write a kind of narrative. For far too long, conservative Catholics have acted as though he is the gold standard of Thomistic moral theology. He is not. A broader incorporation of great spiritual theologians (e.g., Fr. Juan Arintero, Fr. Jordan Aumann, and of course, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, merely to name a few among many) is needed, as is an appreciation for the profound re-echoing of the great tradition of Thomistic moral-theological thought which we find not only in men like Prümmer and Merkelbach, but also in the lecture notes of Fr. Marie-Michel Labourdette being republished by *Parole et Silence*. All of the sudden, you will find out quite strikingly that Fr. Pinckaers is, at the

very least, not as unique as people make him out to be, and perhaps indeed is yet another example of that terrible fault of the 1960s: the rejection of the very tradition that made one's own thought possible.

But, this represents one of my own particular vexations as a practitioner in moral matters and as a translator of Thomistic texts of the past. What is important for us here is to note that it is only now that we find a text composed by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange: *De Revelatione per ecclesiam catholicam proposita*, *On Divine Revelation*. This work, which has antecedents in the Dominican tradition of course, is no mere "manual" in the first sense discussed above. Internal evidence within the text itself already bears witness to the fact that the author did not think that it was such either. It was, instead, I kind of middle point between a treatise and a teaching text. It clearly was derived from his multiple years of teaching the theological course on revelation at the Angelicum. The structure of the text is marked by the kind of clarity necessary for defining terms in the midst of lecturing. But nonetheless, throughout the work, you have a mind unfolding regarding the various topics that must be treated in order to appreciate merely one tiny (though important) particular aspect of theology: the rational credibility of the supernatural mysteries of faith.

Just recently, someone commented to me that this kind of "propositional" approach to revelation was cast aside by the Second Vatican Council. I think the claim is wrong historically, though we can at least concede that the Council enunciated some salutary expansions about the nature of revelation and its place in relationship to the Incarnation and the life of the Church. However, more to the point here, it seems to my eyes that when people make claims of this sort they are just buying, on the cheap, an excuse not to read the text and question. Every work will be marked by its particular age and the limitations faced by its author. Here, in *On Divine*

Revelation, we have a professor at a Roman college, at times without any secretary, writing approximately 700,000 words on a theological topic. I think it is mental laziness, or just laziness in general, that leads people to dismiss this sort of text without any kind of substantive engagement. There are many thinkers with whom I profoundly disagree but whose long labors I believe should be given sufficient attention before critique is registered. If only the same were given to a text like this! It seems, very often, that charity is extended only in one direction…

So, what we have here is a kind of monograph, not just a mere summary. The style of the work may indeed be wanting in this or that way, but anyone who looks at the text will realize immediately that it cannot be dismissed by saying "this is a mere manual." In line with the state of knowledge at the time, he engages with classical, modern, and contemporary problems all in the service of coming to some small understanding of the truths of faith. And never do you get the sense that he is throwing around concepts, playing around with tokens. All of a sudden, the pages burst open from their scholastic form and speak with the warmth and holiness that many have attested were his character.

It is closest to this genre that we find him writing many of his other works. The other work that equals this level of technical prowess is his early-career volume, *Dieu: Son existence et sa nature*, *God: His Existence and His Nature*. It is a lengthy (two-volume in English translation) treatment of "natural theology," that is, the specifically philosophical and metaphysical speculation that we can undertake concerning God on the basis of reason alone. In the volume, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange interacts with many currents of thought that were contemporary to him, drawing not merely upon the thought of Saint Thomas, but also that of the great tradition of Dominican masters in the line of Thomism, men who are somewhat

simplistically referred to as "the Commentators" (though they are more than mere regurgitators and outliners).

Obviously, the work bears the stamp of the age when it was written. But this is yet another example of criticism that makes no sense to me. On the one hand, one will often critique Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange for being "outmoded" and not of use today. But on the other hand, he will be critiqued for a kind of lack of interaction with modernity. Although we have more of a taste for irenic dialogue nowadays, we should not forget that debate is also a kind of dialogue, at least for the strong of heart. In any event, the very fact that work such as *Dieu* is marked by its time actually testifies to the *living* character of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's thought.

Many of his other works could be placed in this same genre of theological monographs. Obviously, there is his great synthesis of spiritual Theology, known by man, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, a work that was slowly written over the course of years in the pages of the journal *Vie spirituelle*, as the fruit of his lectures on spiritual theology, which would fill the great Hall of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas in Rome. But also, there is his very cohesive and perhaps underappreciated work *The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus*, as well as his shorter but important study, *Christian Perfection and Contemplation*. There is a good deal of overlap among these volumes, but they certainly are not the work of a supposedly closed-minded "manualist." And, as many know, in these works he was the defender not only of the now-named "universal call to holiness" but beyond that strenuously defends what we could call "the universal call to mysticism."

In addition to his shorter works of spiritual theology, there is also his excellent little volume on the implications of Mariology for spiritual theology, *The Mother of the Savior and Our Interior Life*. It represents a good example of how he could draw from manuals of the first

kind in order to write a text of Latin Catholic Marian spiritual Theology which was not based merely upon pious thoughts but upon solid dogmatic grounds. In fact, these dogmatic foundations give the work a solidity that enables it to communicate beyond the Catholic West, even if the work is marked by its particular 20th-century Latin context. A similar sort of text is found in his work *Our Savior and His Love for Us*, which represents a kind of extension from Christology into spiritual theology. Something somewhat similar can also be found in his work of priestly spirituality, *The Priest in Union with Christ*. Once again, we do not find here a kind of "manualist" stamp collecting, but rather, Latin Scholastic theology deploying its resources in the service of a fuller understanding of the unity of the revealed mysteries.

In this category too, we could also add his work, *L'éternelle vie et la profondeur de l'âme*, known in English as *Life Everlasting*. So too, there is his volume on priestly spirituality (echoing much that is said in the volume above), sometimes published in English as *On the Sanctification of Priests According to the Needs of Our Times*. Even if "our times" are now different, nonetheless we find in him a model for how to consider the pivotally important role of ordained priests in the midst of a continually secularizing world. And likewise, there are his dogmatic treatments of *Providence* and *Predestination*, in which he attempts to bring further improvement to the traditional Thomistic position concerning these controverted topics *De auxiliis divinae gratiae*. And finally, there is his well-known, *La Synthèse thomiste*, published in English as *Reality: A Thomistic Synthesis*, a kind of late-career summary of so many themes of his thought and work.

Thus, we have gone at this point from the more restricted sense of "manual" to a broader sense that applies to a whole host of theological monographs. This brings us now however to a final genre which we have already begun to bump up against: commentaries. As a kind of

introduction to this final classification, it is useful to note how the genre of commentary was profoundly connected to the genre of manual for centuries in Latin Catholic theology.

The history of western academic Theology cannot be conceptualized without the very important work of the 12th century bishop of Paris, Peter Lombard, whose "*Sentences*" (or "Texts" / "Positions") *of the Fathers* became the standard work of Theology in the west until the time of Martin Luther. (So important are the *Sentences* that the reader should consider reading one of the volumes on the topic by Philipp Rosemann.) For centuries, theologians would comment on this text, laying out its meaning and engaging in the questions that it raised, at once looking backward to the 12th century foundation upon which they were building and also looking forward regarding the questions of their day. In the 13th century, the commentaries on this text were immense and profound. And even though later centuries would become more and more bogged down by the opening sections of Peter Lombard's text, you will find there too a rich dialogue with the past looking toward contemporary questions.

Ultimately, St. Thomas looked to update the curriculum for his Dominican students. In other words, he himself wished to write a kind of manual, albeit a very full one indeed! It would take several centuries before the fruit of this labor, the *Summa theologiae*, would be incorporated into official theological formation in the Order of Preachers. But, from the start, great Thomists used St. Thomas's texts as the beginning point for a tradition that at once looked back (to him and to his context) and toward contemporary questions. Therefore, you have the famous work of John Capreolus (1380–1444), the *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae.* It traces the format of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, but throughout, all of the various issues considered are reflected on in light of the host of people who critiqued St. Thomas's thought and writings. Even if the method used by Capreolus is not as sensitive to the various changes within St. Thomas's thought

over the latter's lifetime, nonetheless, we have in this approach and honest and very human approach to thought: an acceptance of the received context in which one lives, while also refusing to merely be a historian but rather to respond to contemporary questions by means of further distinctions and argumentation. Although I do agree with those who think that commentaries sometimes can turn into a closed circle, in which new questions are ultimately overlooked, nonetheless, I think that there is a great deal of wisdom in the rootedness of such an approach, and it represents an important and essential charism in the life of the Church. Thus, with my aforementioned caveat, I can subscribe to the remark made by Fr. Serge-Thomas Bonino: "The literary genre of commentary corresponds perfectly to the intrinsically traditional modalities of the development of the *intellectus fidei* in the life of the Church" (Bonino, *De deo uno*, 114).

This "Thomist" tradition would continue among Dominicans. Famously the *Summa contra gentiles* was commented on by Francesco Silvestri (often known as Sylvester of Ferrara [1474–1528]) and the *Summa theologiae* by Dominicans like Conrad Köllin (1476–1535) and Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1469–1534). Indeed, I would be remiss here if I did not add as well the master of Bologna, Sylvester Mazzolini "Prierias" (1456/7–1527), who has been so boldly and ably defended by Fr. Michael Tavuzzi, as well as great Spanish commentators like Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) and Domingo Bañez (1528–1604). Many more could be cited—how indeed one should recall that tireless 15th century scholastic, Denis the Carthusian (1402–1471)! However, we merely need to note that, in these theological (and philosophical) works we find the same dynamic at play: an eye to the past and an eye to present questions.

The great height of confidence, however, in this tradition was at the time of the great disputations of Iberia. Thus, we have the 20 volume *Cursus theologicus* of the Salamanca

Carmelites (the *Salmanticenses*) writing in the 17th century. So too the great Jesuit edition of Aristotle with commentaries, by the Fathers of Coimbra, the *Conimbricenses*. Although many have a kind of hatred nowadays for Francisco Suarez (1548–1617) as a kind of corrupter of scholasticism, I think that such critics pale in comparison to his boldness as he penned not only his many theological commentaries, but his *Disputationes metaphysicae*, in which he had the boldness to think for himself and lay out a full *cursus* of metaphysics, based however upon the antecedent tradition.

But for the Dominicans, there was, in particular, that great and profound light, John Poinsot, John of St. Thomas (1589–1644). The future centuries of Dominican thought would pass through him and the *Salmanticenses*. Here again, contemporary thinkers dismiss a man, without deeply engaging with his thought, yet again vitally in contact with the past and yet willing to push onward in the midst of contemporary questions and debates. His *Cursus philosophicus* and *Cursus theologicus* represent a kind of gold standard, in my opinion and that of many, for how Thomism should be done, no matter what its updated modalities are today. How unfortunate that contemporary journal articles and monographs (both of which, of course, have their use) are judged to be more important than the light to be drawn from these truly great philosopher-theologians.

With the passage of time, and the great discontinuities of the modern period, the quality of scholastic thought would, yes, diminish. But there would be continued teachers in the tradition, answering, if not as profoundly at times, the questions of the ages. Among the Dominicans, the best of these would be found in men like Jean-Baptiste Gonet (c. 1616–1681) and Antoine Goudin (c. 1639–1695). But, as the most important preamble to Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, there is Charles-René Billuart (1685–1757), whose *Summa sancti thomae* would be

the text that enabled the Dominican scholastics to return to their tradition following upon the cataclysm of the French Revolution.

It is in such a line that the other texts of Fr. Garrigou Lagrange should be understood. Thus, we have his commentaries on the *Summa theologiae*. These volumes, arising from his teaching of the underlying text of St. Thomas, provide a continuation of this commentary tradition. Not all of the volumes have a full treatment of all the questions at hand. It is clear, upon reading the text, what topics were of interest to him and which were of less interest. But throughout, what we have is a teacher who wishes to illuminate the central principles that guide the understanding of the great theological themes that arise in Saint Thomas's *Summa theologiae*. (An excellent and sympathetic explanation of the style of these commentaries can be found in Fr. Marie-Joseph Nicolas' 1946 review article in *Revue Thomiste*.)

Here we have a sequence of commentaries on the so-called treaties *De deo uno* and *De deo trino*. (I say "so-called" because I agree with Fr. Jean-Hervé Nicolas' proposed unified reading of St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae* concerning these two "treatises.") Next is the commentary on the moral treatises on beatitude through that dedicated to habits. In English, this text needs a re-translation, as it is a mere paraphrase; also, of all the commentaries this is the one that bears witness to the fact that it was not taught as frequently or as deeply as the others. Then, there is the massive and important commentary *De gratia*, in which all of his profound thought concerning spiritual theology, as well as the problems of Predestination and Providence all come to bear. Then, there is a commentary on the theological virtues, primarily devoted to faith, although there are too shorter commentaries on hope and charity in the original Latin. Important themes and topics of Christology are treated in his commentary on *De christo salvatore*. And,

still in Latin, there is a treatise on the Eucharist, with brief discussions of the sacraments in general and the sacrament of confession.

As Fr. M.-J. Nicolas notes in the aforementioned article, these are not manuals. But I would also hasten to add that they are not quite commentaries in the great tradition found, for example, in someone like Santiago (Iacobus) Ramirez (1891–1967). They are commentaries that are the fruit of teaching and for use in teaching. Although differing not only doctrinally at times, but also in style of engagement, they are more like the *Summa sanctae thomae* of Billuart: initiations into a tradition. Indeed, as we find ourselves today in an age of great forgetfulness, I think that any honest person would be able to say that he or she stands in need of a teacher like this to learn how to truly enter into the thought of Saint Thomas in a theological and scientific manner.

There are other works as well: a few little texts, and a number of articles, both theological and philosophical. I have gathered together some of the latter in the *Philosophizing in Faith*, printed by Cluny Press. Again, is his thought the answer to all things in all places to all temperaments? No. But then again, what human author is? And, in all fairness, would he himself present his thought as the last word of theology or philosophy? I think not. And I assure you, dear reader, I base this estimation upon many hours with his writings, more than his critics at least.

Therefore, when someone comes to pedal to you the life that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was a "manualist," you should now be able to respond not only by showing that he is much more than that, but you also will be able to at least begin to tell such a person about how the entire period of theology that they are mischaracterizing was much more than their cheap ideological epithet. In general, it is my preference to retain a serene tone regarding these kinds of matters. Theology

and philosophy are wisdom, not the squabbling's of public agitators. Nonetheless, when the self understanding of an entire generation is in danger, I cannot help but register my complaints when I see a superficial moniker attached to a reality that is historically far more complex. How I wish that the insecurities of a certain generation would give way to collaboration between younger scholastics and older thinkers who embrace the best of Ressourcement. But, for that to happen, it is not merely a one-way street in which scholastics must forever beat their breast about their own weaknesses, which are real (for they too are finite humans). It will also require, for example, the admission that it is a cheap slander to merely throw away an entire set of multiple generations by means of a word that does more to obscure than to illuminate: "manualism".

Not a Syllogism-Obsessed Logic-Chopper

By disposition, and given the mess of ecclesiastical in-fighting now-a-days, I generally desire to avoid naming names in my vexation about the world. I don't prefer to stir up internecine fighting among faithful Catholic thinkers. However, when it comes to the claim that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was a rationalist who viewed theology as a kind of syllogistic analysis, I feel a particular need to cite an example of this kind of interpretation.

The person I have in mind is Dr. Tracey Rowland, of the University of Notre Dame in Australia. By all accounts of people for whom I have *immense* respect, Dr. Rowland is a very faithful and enjoyable Catholic academic. Indeed, I have been told by a number of people that she is vigorously opposed to the liberalization of the Catholic faith, and this is obvious from the tone and focus of her works. She has long labored in the service of the thought of Ratzinger and those broadly in his intellectual milieu, and her labors let her to win the prestigious Ratzinger Prize in theology in 2020, alongside the Catholic philosophical giant Dr. Jean-Luc Marion.

Nonetheless, without *at all* calling into question her orthodoxy at the level of supernatural faith, nor her deep devotion to the Church and to theological erudition, I have strong opinions about things that she has said concerning scholastics, whom I feel—despite her rhetorical attempts to the contrary—she treats with a kind of distain. Let's take a recent example. During a question and answer session at the University of Steubenville in 2022, she effectively contrasted her preferred sort of theology (stylized as a kind of, "intuitive", "right-brain dominant" "humanistic" theology exercised by those who are "poets", "more interested in "*intellectus* [insight]" and "open to playing more instruments") to scholastic theology, which she stylized as being "legalistic," "left-brain dominant," "all about *ratio* [discursive reasoning]", (and implicitly stated) open to playing *merely one instrument*. Whatever her qualifying remarks, this kind of

language is belittling to say the least. None of her descriptions used for "Communio" theologians are stated with a negative connotation, which is, by contrast, obvious in the latter series of epithets aimed at scholastics—especially "neo-"Scholastics, a term that is so squishy as to provide immense rhetorical cover for those who use it. (To see her comments in context, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dCcdFVw7O4&t=5360s)

The reason that such comments—coming reflexively to her tongue—bother me is that they echoes something from years earlier that she stated in her well-known volume *Catholic Theology*, an overview history of 20th century theological figures. When she presents Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, she introduces him with the negative titles "the sacred monster of Thomism" and "Reginald the Rigid." Although she notes his engaging lecture abilities, one feels that these "exceptions" don't do much to mollify the disdain that seems to be "the rule" for her. Note, for example, her words concerning most of his repertoire, *The Three Ages of the Spiritual Life* excepted:

> The commonly made observation by scholars outside the milieu of Strict Observers [i.e., of Thomism] is that Garrigou-Lagrange's works on spirituality, published in two volumes in 1938, should not be tarred *with the same badly smelling brush as his attitude to theological methodology* (Rowland, *Catholic Theology*, 58, emphasis added).

How does that methodology come across in the pages that follow this comment? Basing her analysis on Fr. Richard Peddicord's brief study of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's thought (*The Sacred Monster Of Thomism: The Life and Legacy of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange*), though drawing negative consequences where Fr. Peddicord offers a sympathetic analysis, she contrasts Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange whole cloth not only to Fr. Marie-Dominique Chenu's particular modality of historical theology but even to "the entire Patristic approach to theology, which was not *centered around* syllogisms" (Rowland, *Catholic Theology*, 58–59, emphasis added).

She then continues, in a paragraph that drips with a kind of barely concealed invective:

> Central to the scholastic methodology, however, is the arrangement of a repertoire of concepts and *a rather large amount of syllogistic analysis*. Problems immediately arise whenever anyone comes along who wants to work outside the repertoire or to offer new insights from scholars other than Aquinas and his commentators and / or who have reservations about whether truths about God neatly captured and packaged into tight little maxims arranged in syllogistic patterns have much pastoral value (Rowland, *Catholic Theology*, 59).

And, she uncritically cites the remarks of Alexander Dru (whom some likely know for his translation of Pieper's excellent *Leisure the Basis of Culture*):

> What Peddicord [sympathetically] calls "scholastic disputation," Alexander Dru has disparaged as "syllogistic brillo." Brillo is a trade name for a scouring pad, used for cleaning dishes, and made from steel wool impregnated with soap. Dru's points is not that logic is an important but that theology should not be *reduced to logic-chopping exercises with all the hallmarks of a high school debate that hinges on fights about conceptual definitions. This kind of argumentation is of limited pastoral value and in fact many find it priggish and repulsive*.

If ever a strawman could be constructed, here it is, quite flammable too. I expect this from a petulant progressive scholar in the 1960s, not the eventual winner of the Ratzinger Prize in 2020. Imagine the reams of refutation that could merely come from the fact that on many points of philosophy, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange remained in agreement with Jacques Maritain, who is perhaps too much of a Scholastic for Dr. Rowland but who, also, was deeply engaged with contemporary topics and thinkers. But there are many other scholastics from that era, all cut from the same cloth as Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, who would bear witness to the mendacity of her description. Merely read the preaching of someone like Marie-Albert Janvier, OP and come back to speak with me. Upon skimming the footnotes to the sermons on moral theology that he gave in Lent at the Cathedral of Notre Dame over the course of more than twenty years, you will see how fruitful even dry old John of St. Thomas and Charles-René Billuart can be for forming a truly stirring rhetoric which is not "of limited pastoral value." I dare to venture to say it: such

preaching is far better than the disjointed state of affairs that we live in today in the Catholic world.

In any case, I think an entire analysis could and should be written concerning the style and audience of various scholastic works. Rowland's simplistic points of comparison are of little value, for there are many genres other than immediate pastoral application. Of course, too, there is the further question of whether Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's thought (directly in her crosshairs here) could even be reduced to the sophomoric argumentative style that she describes. I think I can venture safely to say that I have translated, and probably have read as well, more scholastic syllogistic analysis than Dr. Rowland. And when I say this, I mean something very specific. I'm referring to the late scholastic methodology of concluding chapters of exposition by presenting a series of tight syllogistic short-hand. Anybody who has read a Latin theology or philosophy text from the first half of the 20th-century is likely familiar with this style, with its distinctions, denials of major premises, contradistinctions of minor premises, concessions, etc. It was all written in a kind of shorthand, which can indeed be maddening. But, the style is useful, too, for its own particular ends. I think there's room for discussing the relevance, strengths, and weaknesses of this kind of method, at least for the sake of a kind of "housecleaning" about potential objections to someone's position. However, here, I'm not really concerned with such a global methodological consideration. I will leave that for another day.

As regards everything else Dr. Rowland says, allow me to say, "Transeat," let it pass. For a fine critical response to her volume, I commend to you the review article "Cardinal Cajetan and His Critics," penned by Fr. Romanus Cessario for the English-language edition of *Nova et Vetera* (https://stpaulcenter.com/06-nv-3-1-cessario/).

Our focus here is this: *just how wrong* are such claims regarding Garrigou-Lagrange? I have used her strawman because it is a nice and tight formulation of an outlook that is relatively widespread, at least among those who hold "the sacred monster of Thomism" in disdain.

First of all, such purely syllogistic analysis exists in full force in only a few texts written by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. For example, it is found often at the end of each chapter of *On Divine Revelation*. But it does not even there play the primary role of guiding the structure of the text as a whole. The same can be said concerning the use of this method in his commentaries on the *Summa theologiae*. On some other occasions, he will charmingly slip into the style, even in the midst of a normal article. This is a rare occurrence, but it almost has a kind of amusing character, not a kind of dominating rationalistic flair, the animating spirit of Spinozist mania. He clearly wishes to dispatch some kind of objection, and it's much easier in his mind merely to quickly layout his distinctions, concessions, and oppositions in this format.

And of course, here in there throughout his various works he will explicitly consider the structure of an argument that he is responding to by this or that contemporary author. But merely because someone happens to use the expression "major premise" or "middle term" as a tool of trade does not amount to the use of "a rather large amount of syllogistic analysis" and a ubiquitous capturing and packaging of truths about God "into tight little maxims arranged in syllogistic patterns." The recognition of the structure of human thought is merely sound methodology… Unless one wishes to completely cast aside the very notion of formal logical structure, which of course can be applied variously with nuances to dialectic, poetic, moral, or scientific matters. The words of (the yes-troubling and troublesome, yet also illuminating) Fr. Raymond-Léopold Bruckberger come to mind:

> Indeed, it is exasperating to continually hear the repeated remark that the Church did not canonize Aristotelianism when she canonized Saint Thomas. Neither did she canonize the

> syllogism. However, when someone chooses to cast the syllogism into the sawmill, he is nothing more than a witless fool, for the syllogism is the natural form of reasoning in its exercise of understanding (Bruckberger, "A Theological Dialogue," ed. and trans. Jon Kirwan and Matthew K. Minerd, 129).

I highly doubt that Dr. Rowland would hold that all of her arguments against secularism (many of whose conclusions I share) and against baroque Roman Catholicism (some of which I share) don't themselves have logical force. Indeed, I think that she would howl if I claimed that they were mere poetic intuitions, not strict (or at least semi-strict) arguments. To be clear, I'm not claiming that they aren't arguments. What I am gesturing toward, however, is that her own overstated case against a more-logically inflected methodology bespeaks a kind of hauteur that asserts: *arguments for me, but not for thee*. If scholastics were indeed heavy handed about the limits of orthodox methodology (a historical point that I will gladly concede), Dr. Rowland should be more sensitive to the fact that her narrative (itself not even based on the reality of the texts themselves) is just as imperialistic as the foe she fights. Here again, I state the same point with which I ended my reflections on "manualism": there can be no unity and peace unless truth is admitted by *all* sides, not merely the scholastics, who alone seem to be required to bow and scrape in apology for their finitude and foibles.

In any event, if I were to undertake a tedious quantitative analysis, it would reveal that it is *by far* not the case that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's works contain, "a rather large amount of syllogistic analysis"—not even in *On Divine Revelation*, where this style is most fully deployed.

Implied as well in such judgments against Garrigou-Lagrange is the claim that a kind of conceptualism rules the roost for my dear (but not sole) Thomist master, in fact, seemingly of the kind that I referred to earlier (in the "manualist" article) as a kind of intellectual stamp collecting. On this point such insults are not as clearly opposed to reality, for notions, concepts, and articulated propositions play an important role for him. However, let us compare what has been

referred to as "the arrangement of a repertoire of concepts" and what Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange has to say: 1˚ about the relationship between concepts, terms, and propositions and reality; 2˚ the way that conceptual formulation and definition is an exercise of insight (i.e., understanding / *intellectus* / νους, in distinction from *ratio* / reason); and 3˚ about his supposed obsession with discursive reason (and "scientific conclusions").

1˚ *Regarding concepts, terms, and propositions and reality.* Regularly in his works, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange cites a maxim from St. Thomas's remarks in the treatise on the theological virtue of faith in the *Summa theologiae*: "The act of the believer does not find its ultimate terminus in *the statement* but, rather, *in reality*, in the revealed mystery itself" (ST II-II, q. 1, q. a. 2, ad 2, slightly altered in Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's rhetorical context). In excellent use of this maxim—tucked away in the response to an objection raised by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange in the midst of *On Divine Revelation* (i.e., in the midst of the dreaded and desiccated "syllogistic analysis!")—we read, opening with the same, aforementioned text of St. Thomas:

> "We form enunciations [i.e., statements] only so that through them we may have knowledge about things, both in science and in faith." Indeed, we say, with all scholastics against subjectivists: the idea is not what is known but only that by which we know. Hence, *we do not believe in dogmatic formulas but, rather, in the very mysteries hidden in God, and faith becomes all the more profound to the degree that it penetrates more deeply into "the depths of God" and does not come to a halt at the formulas* [*non sistit in formulis*] (Garrigou-Lagrange, *On Divine Revelation*, vol. 1, 779).

And, using a metaphorical flourish to which he repeatedly has recourse:

> Indeed, this intelligibility of the mysteries is supernatural and hence can be attained formally only under the infused light of faith, by which our intellect is elevated and the dogmatic proposition's notions, as well as the verb is [connecting subject and predicate], are illuminated. Otherwise a proportion between knowledge and the object to be believed would be lacking, and it would not be most firmly believed; instead, the dogmatic formulas would be known only materially, solely as regards their letter. It would be akin to the student who is not yet skilled lacking the *habitus* of metaphysics, whenever he does not understand a given metaphysical principle in itself (according to its necessity and absolute universality) but understands it only materially in the examples given so as to lead him onward, as it were, hand in hand (ibid., 323)

Likewise, in a lengthy footnote on the next page:

> *What does it mean to materially attain some object?* It is to attain it as regards what is material in it and not what is formal in it; for example: to hear an intelligible locution only with regard to what is sensible in it, or to hear a supernatural locution as regards what is natural in it. This arises from an imperfection of the knowing faculty that is not proportioned to its object and from the inequality of intelligences either of different orders or in the same human species.
>
> For example, the dog hears intelligible speech in a merely sensible manner; this is to hear materially. Likewise, in a superior order, to hear a symphony from the perspective of juxtaposed sounds, not from the perspective of its harmony. In a more superior order: to understand as something mechanical something that is vital (as mechanists do when they write on biology) or to understand as something empirical something that is intellectual (as empiricists do in discussing our intellect in a [merely] psychological way).
>
> Likewise, to understand a given doctrine according to a mechanical juxtaposition and not the organic subordination of theses. Thus, many understand Thomism *materially* and indeed admit all the parts of Thomism, are neither Scotists, nor Suarezians, nor Molinists, but do not formally perceive the subordination of its theses. For example, when they treat of our natural intellectual knowledge, they insist more upon the material resolution to sensible things than the formal resolution to the intellectual evidence of the first principles. They do not deny this formal resolution, but they do not perceive its importance. On the contrary, *St. Thomas always speaks formally* and hence is the prince of theologians; and not even outstanding Thomists such as Cajetan understand the doctrine of the master as formally and profoundly as the master did; it would have been necessary to have an intellect of the same power and to see this doctrine *not in the letters but in the spirit of the doctor*. His words formally express his conception, but frequently they arouse only vague notions in the minds of disciples, who understand the doctrine from the perspective [Trans.: reading *quoad* for *quod*] of the material letter and not from the perspective of its spirit. Many confuse this material letter with the literal sense. Cajetan often says of Durandus of Saint-Pourçain and Scotus that *they only understood materially* the articles of St. Thomas (ibid., 324–5n65, slightly altered from published edition).

That lengthy quote suffices for our purposes, though perhaps a tighter series of citations might be gathered, though without the full context, which I have provided here lest someone like Dr. Rowland would claim that I am distorting Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's words. By way of summary, however, allow one final citation, from a 1935 article in the *Revue Thomiste*:

> Too often, the study of theology remains lifeless, either in its positive part or in its abstract and speculative part. It does not truly make felt the superior inspiration existing

> in it, the breath of the theological virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of understanding and wisdom. Thus, we do not sufficiently find in it this *sapida scientia* spoken of by St. Thomas in the first question of the *Summa theologiae*.
>
> Like a child who studies the piano and cannot yet fathom what gives the works of the masters their value, one comes to a halt too readily at the *formulas* of faith without seeking to pass through them to the Divine Reality they signify, in order to thereby penetrate and taste the revealed mysteries. Here we should recall that saints like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Benedict-Joseph Labre, and so many others, who never undertook the conceptual analysis of the dogmas of the Redemptive Incarnation and of the Eucharist and who never studied the theological conclusions that one deduces from them, all profoundly lived upon these mysteries precisely by passing through the formula so as to press onward to the Divine and Living Reality that they signify.
>
> And without calling to mind these great saints who received special graces of contemplation, how many simple but profound Christian souls live upon these mysteries more, perhaps, than many theologians! With a sound and saintly realism, they enter into these heights of God because they are humble, having pure hearts and lively faith, both of which inspire all their conduct from morning to night. As St. Thomas says: "The act of the believer does not find its ultimate terminus in *the statement* but, rather, *in reality*, in the revealed mystery itself" (Garrigou-Lagrange, "Theology and the Life of Faith," ed. and trans. Jon Kirwan and Matthew K. Minerd, 280–1).

2˚ *Concerning the way that conceptual formulation and definition is an exercise of insight / intellectus*. Throughout Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's various works, there is a background theme to which he returns concerning the role of definition in philosophy, theology, and the proposition of faith by the Church. Interestingly part of his inspiration for this is precisely what is found in the second half of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, the logical work that deals with the structure of properly scientific discourse. Because of certain passing remarks that Aristotle makes in the *Prior Analytics*, some or tempted to think that he on the whole had little appreciation for the Platonic methodology of dialectics, especially by way of "collection" and "division" (something one can find deployed variously in Platonic dialogues, for example, at the start of the *Sophist*). However, as one can find in good scholastic treatments of logic, generic division is actually an important tool used by the intellect while forming definitions, the activity

of our first kind of "intellectual operation" (in contrast to statement formation and syllogism formation). And a significant portion of the second book of the posterior analytics is devoted precisely to the question of how to fashion and appropriate definition for the middle terms that are used in scientific discourse.

In fact, basing himself not only on the words of Aristotle but also on the Aristotelian research contemporary in his own day (aided in this by his confrere and logician, Jósef Maria Bochenski), Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange noted how necessary careful reflection on definitions and upon *intellectus* is, lest one merely become concerned with a kind of empty formalism, concerned solely with discursive logical form (*ratio*) and not with insight:

> These observations make clear the importance of nominal definitions in *a posteriori* demonstration, as well as the importance of real definitions in *a priori* demonstrations. Without a good definition, the syllogism is akin to an excellent gristmill that lacks good grain. Without grain that is itself good, we cannot mill out good flour, no matter how excellent our gristmill. If we do not carefully take note of this fact, we risk falling into formalism. Therefore, definitions are of great importance—and, indeed, both nominal and real definitions (Garrigou-Lagrange, "On the Search for Definitions According to Aristotle and St. Thomas," in *Philosophizing in Faith*, ed. and trans. Matthew K. Minerd, 22).

(Regarding what he means regarding *a priori* and *a posteriori* demonstrations, please see Garrigou-Lagrange, *Sense of Mystery*, 7n7 before making comments about supposed Kantian rationalism.)

By itself, admittedly, the remark could seem to be nothing more than an affirmation of the claim that terms must be clear before arguing—perhaps a kind of conceptualism, but nothing profound. However, in important places, his remarks concerning how this whole affair is tied to *nous* (*intellectus*) put the lie to the claim that his methodology is dominated by an obsession over discursive *ratio*:

> At the end of this *venatio definitionis realis*, of this hunt for the definition (as Aristotle says in providing the rules for such a chase), *the vague concept*, which was THE

> GUIDING PRINCIPLE of the ascending and descending search, is itself recognized in the *distinct concept*, as a man who is half asleep recognizes himself when, fully awake, he looks at himself in a mirror. **Thus, the search for the definition is the work of understanding [*intelligence*]—more a work of νους than it is a work of discursive reason** (Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Sense of Mystery*, trans. Matthew K. Minerd, 23, bold emphasis added)

Then, immediately in a footnote attached to the end of this remark:

> There is much that could be said about this subject, as much in theology as in philosophy. We cannot here pay heed to this capitally important subject. We can only note what seems to us to be the principal point.
>
> **It is understanding, νους, that progressively passes from the first *vague* [*confuse*] intellectual apprehension (before any judgment or reasoning) to *distinct* intellectual apprehension**. To accomplish this, it uses as its *instruments* (in a sense inferior to it) ascending comparative induction and descending division. However, these are only instruments for it, and the real definition attained by this process exceeds these instruments.
>
> Various works published in recent years concerning the Aristotelian method of research for *definitions* (i.e., treating *Posterior analytics* II) do not reflect on what is most important in this research, that is, *its guiding principle*—**which is superior to discursive reason and which is nothing other than νους** and its *vague* [*confuse*] intellectual apprehension of the thing to be defined. This apprehension is expressed in the *quid nominis*, which contains in a vague manner [*confusément*] the *quid rei*.
>
> The intellect would not search for the real definition if it had not in some sense already have found it (ibid., 23n31, bold emphasis added, minor alterations made to published edition).

At the very least, the words in bold serve to show how incorrect are unqualified words such as those recently publicly voiced by Rowland concerning "neo-Scholastics" (among whom, in the end, she surely would number Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange): "all about *ratio* [discursive reasoning]." Related passages could be drawn from various works, but in the interest of drawing to a close, let us move to the final set of textual "counter-points."

3˚ *The supposed obsession with discursive reason (and "scientific conclusions")*.

Already on the basis of what has been cited heretofore, we have a good basis for showing that purely scientific, discursive reasoning is not, in the end, according to Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, the

most profound sort of reflection that we can have on reality. In fact, as he briefly discusses at the start of the second volume of his *Three Ages*, the language of the mystics is superior to that of discursive "theological science" (see Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, vol. 2, trans. M. Timothea Doyle, 3–20). But even within so-called "theological *science*," according to him the most important task is not that of *drawing scientific conclusions*, but rather, the clarification—within faith and in a way that actually paves the way for *De fide* declarations by the Church—of the very mysteries themselves, the revealed "principles" of all theology:

> Theology enables us to arrive at a certain, very fruitful understanding of the revealed mysteries. **And this is even its most precious fruit**. This is why, in St. Thomas, the first questions of the great dogmatic treatises on the Trinity, the Redemptive Incarnation, the Sacraments in general, and the Eucharist, all first contain *conceptual analysis of these revealed truths* **before he is concerned with deducing from them *other truths* of less importance, truths that are theological conclusions, properly so-called, the fruit of objectively *illative* reasoning** [i.e., properly discursive and objectively inferential reasoning]. All these first questions of the great treatises usually contain only *explicative* reasoning, which explain or deepen the subject and the predicate of the revealed truth, concerning the great mystery in question. In this way, as a result of these explications, the *consubstantiality of the Word* is not, as is sometimes said, a theological conclusion deduced from a revealed truth, but instead, is *the revealed truth* in its exact and profound sense: "*And the Word* (consubstantial to the Father) *was made flesh* (namely, man)." It is the revealed mystery itself in the light of this other expression from the Prologue of St. John: "And the Word was God." **The consubstantiality of the Word [to the Father] is incomparably superior to theological conclusions.**
>
> **Even were theology not to deduce *any* theological conclusions, properly so called, but were only to explain, through a profound metaphysical analysis, the subject and predicate *of revealed truths*, and even were it only to show *their subordination* in order to make us be better aware of the depth, riches, and elevation of the very teaching of the Savior, even in such a case, it would have considerable importance**. And this is how theology prepares for the elaboration of increasingly explicit dogmatic formulations of one and the same dogma, that is, of one and the same assertion or revealed truth, before it is a question of deducing from it *other truths* through *objectively illative* reasoning. This deepening of the meaning of a fundamental truth sometimes takes centuries, as with the deepening of this expression: "And the Word was made flesh" (Garrigou-Lagrange, "Theology and the Life of Faith," 276–277).

And before someone immediately screams, "But, But…. But he is a rationalistic 'propositionalist' in his theory of revelation. Can't you tell by how he talks about concepts,

subjects, and predicates?" I would recommend perhaps extending to him the charity that many seem ready to extend to every other current of thought. My goal is not to present Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange as the end-all-and-be-all of philosophy and theology. Even if others wish to weaponize him to that end, this is not my interest. But, I would think it cowardice if I were to sit back while even in 2022 the same tired old accusations can be lobbed at him by defenders of the *Communio* approach to theology—whom I yet again say have an important role as a kind of charism in the Church (taking this notion from Dr. Daniel Drain), even though they seem to limit, at least in their rhetoric, the value charisms of other thinkers in the mystical body of Christ. (And I would have the reader note that my ire has *not* been aimed at anything held by a *Communio* thinker but, rather, with a particular person's way of falsely presenting a school which I know better than she—though, her comments are indicative of a kind of "mood" that exists even among those *Communio* folks for whom I have great affection.)

Now, there is room for some objection perhaps to be raised whenever he speaks of "theological conclusions, properly so called," as though theological science would pick up where faith ends. This is a rather often repeated caricature of scholastic theology that one finds in the 1940s through the 1960s or so (having deep roots into later scholasticism), speaking of a kind of "*scientia conclusionum*," a scientific knowledge of "conclusions" or even of a kind of "conclusion theology." I have written at length about this important topic elsewhere in the pages of *Nova et Vetera* ("Wisdom be Attentive: The Noetic Structure of Sapiential Knowledge") and together with Jon Kirwan in the introduction to our *The Thomistic Response to the Nouvelle Theologie*. However, for the sake of addressing this possible objection, allow a citation from Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's confrere, Fr. Reginald Schultes, who taught alongside him at the

Angelicum in the first quarter of the 20th century and, to all appearances, who substantively agreed with Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange (and vice-versa) on these matters:

> Indeed, certainly, the position held by scholastics must not be understood as though theology were solely or principally concerned with theological conclusions *quoad se* (i.e., conclusions that are only virtually revealed), **for the primary and principal object of theology is made up of the revealed truths themselves and dogmas properly so called**. This is manifestly obvious upon reading the books or the very teachings set forth by such theologians. However, theological science does not consider such revealed truths or dogmas as though they were to be believed on account of the authority of God who reveals—for, from the latter perspective they are the object of the theological virtue of faith—but rather, theological science takes up revealed truths or dogmas as matters to be proven or deduced, that is, so that they might be proven either on the basis of authority (through the texts of Sacred Scripture, through the teaching of the Fathers and theologians, etc.) [i.e., in positive and historical theology], or through [faith-illuminated theological] reasoning, that is, through deduction from other revealed truths, dogmas, or whatsoever theological teachings (theological conclusions *quoad nos*). **Thus, the primary and principal object of theology is made up of theological conclusions *quoad nos* (i.e., revealed truths themselves or dogmas)** such that, from our perspective, they are deduced or proven from other revealed truths. Then, secondarily and as a consequence, theology also deduces from revealed truths those things that are only virtually contained in revelation (conclusions *quoad se*).
>
> Thus, theological conclusions are indeed the *proper* object of theology, inasmuch as it proves or deduces its teaching; however, **theological conclusions *quoad nos tantum* [i.e., truths directly in the *depositum fidei*] are the primary and principal object of theology**. **Thus, theological teaching and the doctrine of faith are homogeneous, i.e., identical *quoad se*** (Reginald Schultes, *Introduction in historiam dogmatum*, a. 9, trans. Matthew K. Minerd).

One is reminded, for example, of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's remarks concerning his student, Fr. Emmanuel Doronzo: "He is not guilty of the short-coming that we can see in those who are more concerned with conclusions to be drawn rather than with principles" (Doronzo, *The Science of Sacred Theology*, intro. Matthew K. Minerd, xiii). And, even more importantly, consider his remarks concerning his own master, Fr. Ambroise Gardeil, which I have liked to cite on occasion:

> Fr. Gardeil was one of those people who believe that the living explanation of St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae* consists above all in emphasizing the great principles that illuminate everything and in drawing attention to the loftiest summits in this mountain

> range, that is, to roughly fifty articles that provide the key to the entire work. *He passed upward from conclusions to principles more than he descended from principles to conclusions*. Listening to some of his courses, one indeed understood why it is commonly said that St. Thomas learned more in prayer than in study—not, perhaps, that he would have grasped new conclusions, but because it is in prayer that the soul is lifted up to contemplation of the superior principles that have been often cited but whose elevation and radiation had not been yet seen well enough. **One then perceives in an instant that they virtually contain entire treatises, and in this way, the unification of knowledge is brought about, something that is far more precious than the material multiplicity of conclusions** (Garrigou-Lagrange, "In memoriam: Le Père A. Gardeil," *Revue Thomiste* (1931): 800).

It is clear to me that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange himself tried to make this his own approach.

To close out this section, allow me to cite a remark made by Fr. Labourdette, something that I could show *at length* is *completely* harmonious with (and almost certainly dependent upon) Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's own thought and his own critical remarks about theology throughout his career:

> In scientific demonstration, the middle term has its value as a middle only if it is first perceived in its immediate identification with the other terms, that is, if it is first perceived as playing its role as a *principle*. Grasping this is indispensable for scientific reasoning. This is why, even though scientific knowledge (*ratio*) is distinct from immediately self-evident knowledge of principles (*intellectus*), the former not only presupposes knowledge of the latter but, indeed, *it is suspended to this fundamental intuition, not only in the sense that this intuition is part of scientific knowledge, but moreover, because such knowledge remains forever actualized by its illumination. It is entirely penetrated and vivified by it. It depends on it in its own proper certitude and its own proper clarity. Sufficient emphasis is not always placed on the fact that at the heart of every science, even one that is quite developed, a permanent place remains for this necessary intuition of its principles*. *It alone provides science with the means for escaping the menacing possibility of formalism coming from an overburdening logical apparatus which will overtake it if it loses contact with its living source*. Even if they are attained and manifested through complex logical processes, such objects of intuition (*intellectus*)—the common principles which express the fundamental laws of being and, likewise, the definitions that are a given science's own proper principles—are never, properly speaking, dependent on such discursive reasoning (*ratio*). They are never "demonstrated." They are grasped (Labourdette, "Theology: Faith Seeking Understanding," ed. and trans. Jon Kirwan and Matthew K. Minerd, 92–3, emphasis and parentheses added).

Concluding Remarks. I must admit that I'm a bit sick and tired, now in the year 2023, to listen to people publicly speak about scholasticism with the same tired epithets that could be found at the turn of the 20th century. I suspect that I myself have been more bored with Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange than Dr. Rowland ever has been. I have heard his repetitions! I have translated his repetitions! In fact, I have translated them in Latin and realized they were nothing more than brisk translations on his part from his own French! There are many topics in theology that he does not treat, and there are many further paths in philosophy, both metaphysical and phenomenological, that I most definitely would like him to take. But, then again, it is ridiculous to ask one thinker to be all things for all men. He too is historically situated—and he too answers the historical problems of his age, with the particular foci of his age.

So, we end this article somewhere in the same spirit as how I ended my previous one. It is all fine and good to ask scholastic thinkers to reconsider their methodological presuppositions. In fact, as is blindingly obvious in the book Jon Kirwan and I have worked on, this was in fact exactly where men like Fr. Michel Labourdette were quite willing to go—even if they too had their limitations. But what I cannot abide is for someone who is publicly lauded with semi-ecclesiastical praise (the Ratzinger Prize) to present theological history in a way that ultimately distorts the past and also is a negative influence on the present generation. More good would be done by *honest collaboration* rather than *smears* that sound all too much like this: *you* are a bunch of left-brained people on the autism spectrum; *we* are the flexible poets who can answer humanity's problems today.

What is more, I am again worn out by the repetitive requirement that scholastics justify their own existence, whereas if they raise even the slightest concern regarding other thinkers on this or that point, then they are accused of being imperialists. I will be always ready to recognize

scholastic shortcomings (perhaps not doing so to the degree that others wish, but in a true and open-minded way) and I pray that the best Thomists of today will do so as well. However, it takes two to tango. And the house is burning down culturally. Vigorous unity, not flaccid appeasement with one strand of theological methodology is the only way to honestly work together.

No Wolffian Rationalism

In this article I'd like to consider yet another epithet thrown against Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, namely that he supposedly is a kind a "Wolffian Rationalist." Allow a few of remarks on the meaning of the expression, just in case the reader is not familiar with exactly what is being inferred by making this attribution.

Very often, in a kind of simplistic narrative of modern philosophy, the entire period of time from, for example, René Descartes (1596–1650) onward is treated as a complete rejection of Aristotelianism. Now, granted, for anybody who has read the great works of the canon of modern philosophy, it is rather clear that the rejection of scholasticism represents a very important aspect of the very, we might say, psychology of modern philosophy. Or to use another image, one of the important founding myths of the modern period and the subsequent "enlightenment" is the claim that the earlier tradition of philosophizing represented a kind of shackle on human reasoning, I kind of ignorance handed on without, however, a foundation in truth. And, in its dumbest form, the one most lacking a foundation in reality, the period of time from the late classical period of the Roman empire all the way through the modern period would supposedly be nothing more than unremitting ignorance and darkness. It's enough to drive one to drink to read people still parrot versions of this latter narrative. But it does represent a very important aspect of the way that the entirety of modernity considers its relationship to the "middle" ages—an expression which itself was used as a kind of insult: a time period between two eras that were "actually" important (classical Greece and Rome on the one hand and the Renaissance on the other). And although it is less popular nowadays to refer to the entire period as the "dark ages", this name also still has some staying power in the popular imagination, and it

definitely played a role as a contrast to the supposedly enlightened time of modernity and, especially, the later 18th century.

Now, it's hard to believe that at the time that the French Thomist and historian of philosophy, Étienne Gilson was writing his dissertation, it was a bold move to notice and set forth the profound connections, for example, between the philosophical works of Descartes and the earlier scholastics, who would have formed him during his time at the Jesuit school at La Flèche. But, this was indeed the ignorant state of things in the first part of the 20th century, and we owe a debt to men like is Gilson for pointing out the fact is now obvious to the reader, at least the unbiased reader. If ever you are interested in seeing clearly just how many scholastic references are to be found in Descartes' vocabulary, flip through Gilson's *Index scolastico-cartésien*. Also see the works of Roger Ariew, *Descartes among the Scholastics*, *Descartes and the Last Scholastics*, and *Descartes and the First Cartesians*.

However, whatever might be said concerning the various echoes of scholasticism that can be found throughout all of the various writers of the modern canon, there are some who are quite scholastic in their philosophical engagement. One such figure was the 17th–18th century mathematician and philosopher Wilhelm Gottfried Leibniz. When reading his philosophical works, one can have a kind of admiration for his willingness to openly interact with the scholasticism of his era and even of the high Middle Ages. The overall fabric of the philosophy is a bit of a pastiche, stitch together, but in any event it does represent a kind of injection of scholasticism openly into a modern form of philosophical reflection.

It would be, however, a kind of disciple of his, the mathematician and philosopher Christian Wolff who would give Leibnizian philosophy a form that would have staying power in the broader academic culture of Europe. Writing in the 18th century, Wolff penned a series of

texts that combined the latest quasi-schlastic treatments of philosophical disciplines with the generally rationalistic methodology of attempting to deduce the contents of a particular science from a central set of axioms or, ideally, a single guiding principle or axiom. Some readers might be familiar with the awe inspiring, although quite mad, *Ethics* of Baruch Spinoza. The great desire of mini figures in the modern period was to find a way to place things in a scientific form that was as close as possible to the deductive structure of geometry and other such mathematical disciplines. For those interested, a study on this topic can be found in the 2008 dissertation by Zvi Biener, "The Unity of Science in Early-Modern Philosophy: Subalternation, Metaphysics and the Geometrical Manner in Scholasticism, Galileo and Descartes."

The philosophical treatises penned by Wolff took the form of a kind of re-ordered metaphysics, placing metaphysics at the head of philosophy, quite unlike the way that Aristotle begins his natural philosophy at least with, well…, Natural philosophy, the *Physics*. Therefore, in the Wolffian schema you had, at the head of philosophy, a first philosophy that was not only first in importance but even in time of study: general metaphysics, or sometimes referred to as general ontology. Then, somewhat mimicking the scholastic manner of breaking disciplines into their general and specific treatises (something that we also find in the structure of, for example, Aristotle's works of natural philosophy), the latter so-called "special" disciplines of ontology were made up of cosmology, rational psychology, and natural / rational theology (or sometimes, in a more Leibnizian form, called "theodicy"). They roughly—quite roughly at times—corresponded to the Aristotelian disciplines of natural philosophy, the philosophy of the soul, and the portion of metaphysics that deals with the First Cause, God. He wrote other works, but this account suffices for our purposes.

This curriculum, as well as a general milieu of a kind of German scholasticism would come to be of influence on studies in the 18th century. By giving a quasi-scholastic philosophy a deductive structure, philosophy seemed to be placed on the highroad to being recognized as truly scientific. Of course, from the time of Aristotle himself philosophy in the West had this ambition, sometimes more or sometimes less present but always actively present because of his own methodology in various works, and especially his explanation of his scientific methodology in the logical work the Posterior Analytics. As you likely noticed above, the dissertation that I cited written by Biener connects the "geometrical manner" (or reasoning *more geometrico*) to scholasticism, and not wrongly. Although Aristotle was very careful to apply an appropriate methodology in each discipline or division of human knowledge, nonetheless the general form of science that he lays out in the *Posterior Analytics* is marked by the earlier Greek "field work" of the Euclideans and Pythagorians.

But, in the modern period, this method went from being a multi form method for investigating various scientific subjects to being a univocal application of mathematics to whatever field of knowledge whatsoever. And we still live in a world in which this mathematical-rationalistic desire plays an immense role as a kind of touchstone for our notion of what really counts as what is scientific. But this is not the place to discuss such matters, which are amply treated in various philosophers of science and in a very able way (though with different opinions) by Jacques Maritain, Yves Simon, Charles De Koninck, Fr. William Wallace, and others.

Therefore, the curriculum of rationalistic Philosophy would form a kind of backbone for German philosophical speculation. All of this is a very interesting history, and it has many connections to baroque scholasticism in Spain and Portugal. But for our purposes we will just

note two things. First of all, this is the obvious background to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant who is one of the few real philosophers of the modern canon, for he really does have the breadth and scope that one expects of a fully formed Philosophy. For many years he taught a kind of form of this wolffian Philosophy (and texts by others in the same vein), famously coming to reject this "dogmatic" philosophy when he wrote his critiques of reason and judgement. But it's clear when you read the texts that he is dependent upon a whole host of concepts that he got from this earlier tradition, and I feel that it is still the case that we are awaiting a scholar who will lay out in detail the dependencies, though perhaps there is something in the German literature that I'm not familiar with. (But I can tell you that reading him through, for example, the lenses of contemporary analytic Anglo phonic philosophy is an awful hermeneutic that will just waste your time.)

But the Wolffian "curriculum" retained a kind of stay in power in ecclesiastical circles for some time. In point of fact, many seminaries took on the very structure of his treatises in philosophy (and even the norms and regulations promulgated by Rome would come to organize philosophy along these lines). And there was a kind of deductive obsession, with theses and corollaries (and so forth) that also aped at the *more geometrico* ambitions of the modern mind. In the mid-20th century, it became of standard fare to deride this rationalistic bias on the part of Church faculties and regulations. Now I also don't think it was the best of affairs, but I think that at least we can sympathetically understand how this would occur. From the time of René Descartes onward you had many churchmen, including many Jesuits (who are always ready in their great apostolic zeal to attempt to find a way to evangelize the culture quite directly, often on its own terms), draw up philosophies that were a bit bold in their incorporation of modern

methods and thought. So we had various attempts to wed traditional Latin-Catholic scholasticism with, for example, Cartesianism and rationalism.

But here in Wolff we have a curriculum that really does include not only logic, which I didn't mention above, but also the great divisions of theoretical philosophy that one finds in scholasticism. Thus, how useful did this seem to a Catholic world that was all to keenly aware of how "behind the times" it felt. It could now have a philosophy that was at once supposedly classical and yet modern.

But, such a philosophy does not track well with the subtlety of how the human mind slowly but surely comes to know truth and to relate principles and conclusions to each other. Deductive reasoning is very important in showing the connections of causes and effects, essences and properties, and so forth. But, a top down postulation of theses with a series of deductions is, yes, fitting for mathematics, but not for every discipline.

Therefore, at the turn of the century and into the mid-century it became increasingly clear to various Roman Catholic philosophers and theologians that this method of philosophizing needed to be cleansed out of the seminary formation faculties to the degree that this was possible. But it also became popular—and I know people to this day who parrot the same kind of thing—to accuse earlier-20th-century authors with being "Wolffian." And this was an accusation that was lobbed at Fr. Garrigou Lagrange by, for example, his student Fr. Marie-Dominique Chenu, and which continues to be lobbed at him not only (from what I hear) by some Italian followers of Fr. Cornelio Fabro but even by some Dominicans today. (For a kind of first foray into your reading about why this is an unfair attribution in general, consider reading the appropriate sections of Ralph McInerny's *Praeambula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers*.)

The reasons for claiming that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange is a Wolffian vary. Sometimes the charge is based on the fact that he speaks so much about finding the central principles of a discipline. Related to this is in particular his desire to show how the principle of non-contradiction is the very first principle of metaphysics. As we will see below in a rather lengthy quote, he makes clear just how this claim is based on classical scholastic texts. And on many occasions from early on in his writing career in *Thomistic Common Sense* (see p.137–160) and also in *On Divine Revelation* (see vol. 1, p. 476–498) he responds to those who claimed that he is saying that all metaphysical principles can be *deduced* from the principle of non-contradiction. He is very clear that this is not the case, and his exposition of reasoning through an extrinsic middle term is an excellent exposition of the power of how reasoning by way of *reductio ad absurdum* is one important way of dialectically "revealing" direct insight into first principles.

Here, I ask for some indulgence to cite a very long post script that Fr. Garrigou Lagrange included in his essay, "Relativism and the Immutability of Dogma," penned in the midst of the 1940s debates regarding the "Nouvelle théologie". This text is taken from p. 367n24 in the edition by Dr. Jon Kirwan and me:

> Concerning the first notions and first principles, we are surprised to read the following lines regarding Christian Wolff in the recent text by Étienne Gilson, *L'Être et l'essence* (Paris: Vrin, 1948), 176: "Wolff's influence over modern scholasticism sometimes goes much further, and we can see it acting even on the philosophical exegesis of Thomism itself. See, for example, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Dieu, son existence et sa nature*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1920), 170–79, where the 'principle of *raison d'être*,' according to which 'every being has a sufficient reason,' is there connected to the principle of identity through a *reductio ad absurdum* and, in this sense, made analytic. In this text (p. 175), we are assured that those who hold a different position on these matters in some other way separate themselves 'from traditional philosophy.' Yes, from what it has become from the time of Leibnitz and Wolff, though it represents the very negation of that of St. Thomas Aquinas."
>
> I have never read the works of Wolff, but I am well-enough aware of the use he made of the principle of sufficient reason, particularly in relation to both divine and human freedom, to be able to say that a great distance separates my thought from his concerning

this matter, as can be seen by reading the same book, *Dieu*, 590–672. [Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature, A Thomistic Solution of Certain Agnostic Antinomies*, vol. 2, trans. Bede Rose (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1949), 269–354.] What I have called *the principle of raison d'être* is formulated: "*Every being must have its raison d'être either in itself*, if it exists through itself, *or in another*, if it does not exist through itself." This *raison d'être* must be understood analogically in various senses: 1˚ of the formal cause, in relation to the properties that derive from it, 2˚ of the efficient cause in relation to what it produces, and 3˚ of the final cause in relation to the means for which it is the *raison d'être*, as well as to everything that is ordered to it.

Conceived in this way, the principle of *raison d'être* is a general principle commonly received in traditional philosophy. *The principles of efficient causality* and that of *finality* are derived from it, for the efficient cause and the final cause are the extrinsic *raisons d'être of every contingent being and of its acts. For its own part, the formal cause of a being is the reason for its properties, and matter is the reason for the corruptibility of bodily beings. In this sense, as St. Thomas says, following Aristotle, the four causes each correspond to a question propter quid. See St. Thomas, In II Phys., lect. 10. Also see Garrigou-Lagrange, Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought,* trans. Patrick Cummins (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1950), 31–36.

As regards the subordination of these principles to the principle of identity or of contradiction ("that which is is; that which is not, is not"), I did not find it in Wolff but for years have read it in St. Thomas's Commentaries on Aristotle and in the *Summa Theologiae*, which I even cited at considerable length in the pages cited by Gilson.

Indeed, we read in *In* VI *Meta*., ch. 4, lect. 6, that the three conditions for every first principle of reason belong to the principle of contradiction and that the other principles are subordinate to it. The same assertion is made frequently enough in St. Thomas's writings. For example, see *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2: "*That which first falls into* [*our intellect's*] *apprehension is being*, the understanding of which is included in everything that someone grasps. And *therefore, the first indemonstrable principle is* that *we cannot simultaneously affirm and deny* [the same thing of the same subject in the same respect], which is founded on the notion of being and non-being, *and all the other principles are founded on this principle*, as the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* 4.4."
Likewise, in *ST* II-II, q. 1, a. 7: "The articles of faith are related to the doctrine of faith as *first self-evident principles* are related to the doctrine that can be had through natural reason. A kind of *order* can be found in these principles, so that certain ones are implicitly [lit. *simpliciter*; Leonine: *implicite*] contained in the others. Thus, *all the principles are reduced to one principle as to the first principle*: *It is impossible to simultaneously affirm and deny* [the same thing of the same subject in the same respect], as is clear from what the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics* 4.4."

John of St. Thomas, who wrote before Wolff, said in his *Cursus philosophicus*, *Logica*, q. 25, a. 2: "It is not contradictory to say that self-evident propositions could be proven through an extrinsic middle term, or *a deduction ad impossibile*, for this is not opposed to there being an immediate and intrinsic connection of subject and predicate. For this

> reason, *Metaphysics explains and defends all the other principles, indeed not doing so ostensively* (through a demonstrative middle term) *but, rather, by deducing ad impossibile*, indeed, to that supreme principle: 'Everything either is or is not.'"
>
> The Thomist Antoine Goudin speaks in the same manner in his *Philosophia juxta inconcussa tutissimaque D. Thomae dogmata*, vol. 4, pt. 4, disp. 1, q. 1, a. 1 (*On the principles of knowledge* [lit. *cognitianis*; in Goudin: *cognitionis*]): "The first complex principle of knowledge [i.e., in the second operation of the intellect] is this: 'It is impossible that the same thing simultaneously be and not be.' We see this stated by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* 4.4 and by St. Thomas in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2." The first edition of this work by Goudin was published in 1671 in Lyon. Suarez also taught this doctrine in *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disp. 3, sect. 3, no. 9.
>
> Therefore, in the form that we propose it, this principle is something quite earlier than Leibniz and Wolff and certainly does not represent the negation of St. Thomas's doctrine.
>
> Matters would be completely different if we spoke of a principle of sufficient reason, taken in a univocal manner and leading to the psychological determinism of moral necessity, as much for the divine freedom as for human freedom, an outlook that we have forever combatted.

If nothing else, this long remark bears witness to no small amount of self-awareness concerning these matters and the fact that a lack of care regarding claims of "Wolffian rationalism" would risk tarring even St. Thomas himself if one indiscriminately were to make the charge. Alas, Gilson was likely affected here by Fr. Chenu's anger at his former master, who had been involved in the controversies surrounding Chenu's time as rector of Le Saulchoir Dominican house of formation. For a full history of these events, told from a perspective that is very historically fair, and even favorable to Chenu, see Étienne Fouilloux's "L'affaire Chenu (1937–1943)" in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 2014/2 (98): 261–352. (Available in full text online here: https://www.cairn.info/revue-des-sciences-philosophiques-et-theologiques-2014-2-page-261.htm?contenu=article)

Moreover, although Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange at times uses the terminology of the seminary curriculum of his days to refer to the various branches of philosophy, he actually was quite aware of the problematic nature of the influence of the works of Christian Wolff on scholastic

formation. Therefore, in his *The Order of Things* (*Le réalisme du principe de finalité*), he includes a chapter that was originally an article devoted to the appropriate order of philosophical disciplines, precisely following Aristotle's methodology because of the way that our knowledge does not build up from me or abstract principles but rather from "the first degree of abstraction" in the philosophy of nature.

In this fourth chapter of the second half of the work, he very clearly rejects the Wolffian schema of the sciences and its rationalistic implications:

> As is well known, up to the 18th century (more precisely, up to Christian Wolff)1 all scholastics distinguished natural philosophy and metaphysics as being two sciences, natural philosophy having *ens mobile* as its object (according to the first degree of abstraction) and metaphysics having *ens in quantum ens* as its object (according to the third degree of abstraction). And all the disciples of Aristotle, like their master, right after logic, exposited general natural philosophy (i.e., the Aristotelian *Physics*), then the specific branches of natural philosophy that are found in the treatises *On the Heavens and Earth, On Generation and Corruption,* and *On the Soul*, the last of which is devoted to a study of the soul united to a body. At the end of the studies undertaken in psychology (i.e., *On the Soul*), the study of νοῦς (i.e., of the intellect), having being as its object, served for providing a transition to the *Metaphysics*, the supreme science (or, indeed, wisdom)…
>
> It is only in the 18th century (and above all under the influence of Wolff, as was shown some years ago by Paul Gény) that a new order began to prevail. One must not forget that Christian Wolff, the disciple of Leibniz, was a mathematician like him. Thus, he was inclined in the same manner to prefer the *a priori* method [that is used in mathematical reasoning]. In giving a scholastic form to Leibniz's philosophy, the new order that he had proposed had as its end the provision of a better refutation, on the one hand, of English empiricism and, on the other hand, of Spinozism. Likewise, he had the goal of distinguishing philosophy from experimental physics [*sic*] and mathematical physics, which were tending to set themselves up as being distinct sciences.
>
> From the outset, Wolff separated himself from empiricism inasmuch as he placed general metaphysics (or ontology) immediately after logic, conceiving ontology as being *a priori* and wholly connected to the principles of identity and sufficient reason [*raison suffisante*]. By this very fact, he followed Spinoza upon his own terrain and attempted to refute him by means of his own *a priori* method, that is, by proceeding *more geometrico*, in the *a priori* manner used in geometrical proofs. His refutation was to remain weak, on account of the moral necessity of the creative act, which Wolff was led to affirm, like Leibniz, on account of this *a priori* rationalism.—After ontology came psychology,

> cosmology, and rational theology, all conceived as being three specific branches of metaphysics.
>
> This Leibnizian-Wolffian metaphysics dominated the German schools up to the appearance of Kantianism. Kant himself—a disciple of Wolff before being his adversary—preserved this order on the whole in the Transcendental Dialectic in his *Critique of Pure Reason* where he undertakes his critique of the different parts of so-called "traditional" metaphysics.
>
> Gradually, a number of scholastics followed along with the current and began to present Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy according to this *a priori* order. In this cursus of studies, they would begin, after logic, with the consideration of being inasmuch as it is being, at the highest degree of abstraction. It was traditional Peripateticism dressed up, in a way, with the garments of Wolff's new manner of proceeding. Indeed, one could just as much say that it was dressed up after the manner of Spinoza, given that Wolff was imprudently inspired by Spinoza's method, as though it provided a means for better combatting Spinoza's own thought!
>
> Today, it is asked whether this Wolffian fashion of dress—if not, indeed, this Spinozist fashion of dress—without completely being a straightjacket, does not in the end, interfere with the natural movements of Thomistic Peripateticism's arms, so to speak. [And he goes on to say that, yes, they are correct in suspecting that this is the case.]…
>
> In this, the analytico-synthetic method of philosophy differs from the synthetic method of theology, which descends from God, known by revelation, in order to return to Him (according to the very plan of the *Summa theologiae*). This was precisely the error of Spinoza and, to a degree, Wolff, namely that they applied to philosophy the purely synthetic and deductive method of mathematics, a method that helped lead the author of the *Ethics* to deny the existence of the two causes that mathematics does not take into consideration: efficient causality properly so called (i.e., as an extrinsic cause), as well as final causality. At the same time, this led him to deny creation, the Divine Freedom, and Providence (Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Order of Things*, trans. Matthew K. Minerd 226–245)

Now, someone could well say—and many well-meaning people do say, or at least imply—that even if he says that he was not a Wolffian, his formation basically made him into one without him being aware of it. While I don't want to completely eliminate that aspect of his thought, which was at least influenced by the structure of the treatises the were often used in seminaries, I also do think that on the whole—and I say this based upon my long laborers in his service so to speak—his concern with the structure of knowledge is actually justly based on the

belief that philosophy and theology do actually have a scientific structure, not a mathematical one to be sure, but one that is deeply shaped by the basic contours of what Aristotle says in his *Posterior Analytics*. I think that history itself bears witness to the fact that a kind of temptation will lead this methodology toward a sort of mathematization. But that is not strictly necessary on the very terms laid out by Aristotle in his explicit reflection on methodology as well as in his actual use thereof. (Related to this topic, however, see my longer essay, "Wisdom be Attentive: The Noetic Structure of Sapiential Knowledge" in *Nova et Vetera*.)

The contemporary love of historical methodologies leads people to hold that anyone who lays out a scientific discipline in philosophy or theology is a so-called rationalist. And here again we find another aspect of one of my abiding frustrations popping to the surface in these various essays in defense of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. If I were in a colicky mood about those who all-too-readily critique scholastic thinkers for their conception of science apply to Theology and Philosophy, I would perhaps respond that many contemporary trends of Catholic philosophy and theology are marked by a kind of quasi-historicism, not *necessarily* in a relativistic sense, but at least in a way that sources are appreciated only in themselves and not as the root exercise for a kind of rigorous and unified analytic and synthetic reflection. (And eclecticism should not be confused with synthesis…) To put it another way, as a dear friend of mine makes the point: there is a lot of "theologianology" out there, but too often not enough theology properly so called. Something similar also happens in many well-meaning Catholic philosophers. If abstract philosophy becomes the tail that wags the dog for scholastic thought, history plays the same role in a lot of contemporary thinking nowadays in Catholic circles…

It may seem like a kind of rationalistic obsession to try to find the appropriate "subordination" of the truths of faith, as though one were arranging a series of geometrical

propositions and corollaries. But, it is an ancient theme in what we might consider the "surveying" of theology to speak of "theology" and "economy," the former being the Triune God in Himself and the latter being His engagement in creation, divinization, and salvation. But the entire raison d'être of the economy of salvation is precisely to lead us back to "the theology", to the Triune God whose life we participate in through Grace. The ultimate reality is the triune God, and at least on a well-founded theological position, in the hereafter we will know even the Incarnate Word through our knowledge of the Godhead seen face-to-face. As the Triune God knows all things in the Triune God's own self-knowledge, so too the blessed know all realities in this way. And to the degree that Theology can trace out this itinerary, though passing through our knowledge of Christ in whom and threw him we see and know this God, there is a real sense that all of our theological speculation does in the end have the mystery of the Trinity at the center of its reflection on the meaning of what we believe, its search for some understanding of what is known by faith. To take an expression from Fr. Marie-Michel Philipon, OP the Trinity is the keystone of the Christian mysteries ("La Trinité, clé de voûte des mystères chrétiens", in *Revue thomiste* 1958, a beautiful and brief text that I will be posting online in` English very soon).

I will wholly grant the theological model taken from the layout of the *Summa theologiae* does present theology "in facto esse," ready-made and complete. The true development of theology which takes into account what is first knowable "from our perspective, *quoad nos*," should forever pass through the mystery of the Incarnate Word, as communicated in His various mysteries, lived in the liturgical life of the Church. However, it does remain the case that a truly and fully explanatory theology will never be able to limit itself merely to a kind of pure Christocentrism without thereby risking the subordination of "the theology" to "the economy," whereas the opposite is the case. To this end, the salutary warning of Fr. Doronzo, the illustrious

student of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, holds good and provides a brief but strong statement of the perennial value of a theology which is, well…, *theo*centric:

> The aforementioned theologians [who propose some version of the "whole Christ" as being the object of theology] seem to confuse science with action, theology with the practice of preaching and the activities of Christian life. In such practical activities, the center and primary object is without doubt Christ himself, because he in his humanity is for us the means and the way to God. The same apostle St. Paul recognizes this as well: "For I have not judged myself to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2) But from this it does not follow that Christ, as such, is the primary and formal object of theological science, since the community of Christ and the very mystery of the Incarnation find their reason and explanation in the higher mystery of the Trinity and in the intimate nature of the Deity.
>
> The same practical purpose, as well as the man-centered ideas and tendencies of our time, have led other recent authors to place the formal object of theology in man himself. Thus they define theology *as the science of salvation.* This opinion is not really new; it simply receives new inspiration and force from the present times. St. Thomas himself points this error out and refutes it, saying, "Some doctors, focusing their attention on the things that are treated in this science rather than on the formal aspect under which they are considered, assign as its proper object the work of reparation [that is of man's salvation, rather than God him-self]" (ST I, q. 1, a. 7). In these brief words St. Thomas pinpoints the irrelevant character of this opinion.
>
> As a matter of fact, everyone admits that theology is the science of revelation, that is, of the supernatural revealed truths as distinct from philosophy, which is the science of reason and natural truths. Hence theology is principally and formally the science of the primary revealed truth, which is not man, even as to his salvation, nor Christ himself as to his saving mission, but God alone in his intimate mysteries, shared by man through the Savior.
>
> Thus, several modern theologians, in their hasty practical purposes and tendencies, have been slipping, first, from pure theology into nothing but Christology, and then further down from Christology itself into a kind of supernatural anthropology. This in its turn is likely to be changed, through the same logical process of descent, into a sort of supernatural cosmology, dealing with the salvation or supernatural renovation of this world. When this takes place, theologians are bound to waver and wander, gradually losing sight of God, under the deceptive brilliancy of the world (Doronzo, "Introduction to Theology," in *The Science of Sacred Theology*, 14–15).

Perhaps, in the end, the claim that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange is a Wollfian rationalist is because he is a defender of a properly "scientific" (and discursive-sapiential) notion of philosophy and theology, and all too many today deny the validity of this notion of philosophical

and theological speculation. And whatever we may say about defending St. Thomas's own approach to this matter, I agree with the words of Fr. Labourdette, which surely would be accepted by his older Dominican master:

> We do not believe that scientific theology is something closed [and complete]. Instead, we think that it can be revised, indeed frequently, not in order to replace an idea that was fashionable in the thirteenth century with one that is fashionable in the twentieth century but, rather, in order to benefit from the informative labor and reflection undertaken through the centuries, forever striving to attain a greater amount of truth. More than the rights of St. Thomas's teaching, what we uphold are the rights of theology as a science (Labourdete, "Theology and Its Sources [Definitive edition in the volume *Dialogue théologique*]," ed. and trans. Jon Kirwan and Matthew K. Minerd, 158, annotation u).

Two Orders but not Two Tiers

Among the narratives that have staying power in the contemporary Catholic mind is the claim that pre-conciliar scholasticism was built upon a kind of two-tier anthropology, rigidly distinguishing nature and grace. In the minds of many, this critique is connected to Cardinal Henri De Lubac and his various works dedicated to the topic, though it takes on a whole variety of forms throughout the first half of the 20th-century. For example, just as important (and arguably the source of De Lubac's own hermeneutic for interpreting certain texts of St. Thomas) is the thought of the lay philosopher, Maurice Blondel. This is not the place to engage deeply with either of these thinkers. A number of scholastics, as well as Roman Catholic traditionalists (despite what many think, the two circles are not totally overlapping on the Venn diagram), react quite bitterly at the naming of Blondel. And, if we are honest, he was often a figure against whom Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange would write. I actually have a kind of soft spot for Blondel's insistence on the deformations that take place in philosophical thought whenever it closes itself off to the supernatural. I don't agree with his exact way of laying out human knowledge and the relationship between nature and grace. However, if contemporary Catholicism is going to have an honest rapprochement among her various orthodox members, in the end, Blondel remains an important voice to be understood as sympathetically as possible.

But my concern is not to deal with that. Rather, I would merely like to present in this essay a kind of foray into the mendacity involved in simplistically claiming that Fr. Reginald Garrigou Lagrange views the supernatural order as a kind of external, extrinsic imposition upon the order of nature. Although I think all of the main "bones" (and also much of the "flesh") of his position are correct, my purpose is not to fully defend his own tradition's reading of Aquinas and that tradition's actual position. I merely wish to provide some cover for those who suspect,

quite rightly, that the narrative offered by certain latter-day members of the "Radical-Orthodoxy" movement, as well as those who are generally in line with them, is nuanced and unhelpful. To this end, I feel somewhat like Jacques Maritain, who voices his frustration in a footnote at the start of *The Degrees of Knowledge*: "Philosophers who speak of *the supernatural being superimposed*, in connection with the doctrine of 'obediential potency,' have never read the Thomist theologians—or, if they have read them, they have not understood them" (Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Phelan et al., 12n11, slightly edited).

Let us consider this issue on three heads: 1˚ the openness of nature in relation to grace (the theological notion of "obediential potency"); 2˚ the relationship of the "hypostatic order" of predestining decrees to the order of nature; and 3˚ the relationship of the human-political order to the supernatural order.

1˚ *Obediential potency.* So, beginning with the topic of obediential potency, allow me to refer to Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's lengthy discussion of this topic in *On Divine Revelation*, vol. 1, ch. 12. This chapter, as well as the one preceding it and that following it, contain much that is related to this first portion of my remarks.

But we should start with a comment at least concerning the notion of obediential potency. This expression, a term of trade in later scholasticism, plays a very important role in articulating the relationship between nature, considered precisely in its natural capacities, and the supernatural order of grace. There are some who contest that it is something pertinent regarding St. Thomas's thought. I think they are correct in the sense that his vocabulary is not as exact as that of later scholastics' would be. But I think the notion is even found in his own terminology here and there. But there are others who have studied this matter….

Moreover, there are others who seem to scoff when the expression is used. For example, I have sometimes felt that Larry Chapp, for whom I have great respect despite the fact that he and I have had significant differences as well, sometimes rolls his eyes when the term is used. (At other times, he seems relieved when people at least debate about this notion rather than merely getting stuck in the weeds of textual criticism of Aquinas.) I do understand that scholastics are notorious for using expressions like little incantations that they believe will magically get them out of trouble. And if that is all that he is vexed about, I can't blame him. It was one of the things that made me not like scholasticism for a long time, and even today it's one of the reasons I sometimes can't stand talking to some scholastics, who sound as though they only talk by way of a kind of code, concerned only with their language and questions.

People like Larry might, however, also have a substantive reason for their frustration. Very often, the notion of obediential potency is used in a way that treats our openness to grace as though it were exactly the same as the openness that all created realities have in relationship to miraculous interventions by God. In fact, it would seem to be, to summarize, "a kind of indeterminate ontological plasticity, open to whatever is not repugnant to the creature's nature, and yet also somehow open to actualities genuinely extrinsic to that nature" (David Bentley Hart, *You are Gods: On Nature and Supernature*, 10). Thus, could we really say that the supernatural order of grace truly perfects the natural, *precisely as natural*? If it's just kind of "mere openness" or "mere plasticity", well then, it doesn't seem like there is much benefit for nature, qua nature, to be drawn from the supernatural gift of grace.

It is a knife's edge, the notion of obediential potency. If we overstate the way that nature is perfected by grace, we risk slurring together the two orders, which truth be told have been distinguished for quite some time, even by thinkers in the Eastern church. To that end, merely to

show the foolishness of those who refuse to make clear distinctions between nature and grace, it is useful to quote two great saints of Byzantium, St. Maximos the Confessor and St. Gregory Palamas:

> Divine grace cannot actualize the illumination of spiritual knowledge, unless there is a natural faculty capable of receiving the illumination. But that faculty itself cannot actualize the illumination without the grace which God bestows (St. Maximos, Fourth Century on Theology, etc., no. 12, *Philokalia*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. G.E.H. Palmer et al.)
>
> Not even the grace of the Holy Spirit can actualize wisdom in the saints unless there is an intellect capable of receiving it; or spiritual knowledge unless there is a faculty of intelligence that can receive it;… On the other hand, a man cannot acquire a single one of these gifts with his natural faculties unless aided by the divine power that bestows them. All the saints show that God's grace does not suspend man's natural powers; for after receiving revelations of divine realities, they inquired into the spiritual principles contined in what had been revealed to them" (ibid., no. 13)

And, in St. Gregory Palamas's *Triads*:

> Our soul possesses two eyes, as all the Fathers tell us… yet the sight which is proper to each eye is not for the same use: with one eye, we behold the secrets of nature, that is to say, the power of God, His wisdom and providence towards us, things comprehensible by virtue of the greatness of His Governance. With the other eye, we contemplate the glory of His holy nature, since it pleases God to introduce us to the spiritual mysteries. *The one* [eye] is the apprehension of the power, wisdom, and providence of God, and in general, *knowledge of the Creator through creatures*; the *other* is contemplation, not of the divine nature… but of the glory of His nature, which the Savior has bestowed on His disciples, and through them, on all who believe in Him and have manifested their faith through works" (Palamas, *Triads*, 2.3.15, Paulist Press edition, trans. Nicholas Gendle, emphasis added). [The latter point has to deal with the participative mode of knowledge of God, through His "energies" in the Palamite language.]
>
> Therefore, not every man who possesses the knowledge of created things, or who sees through the mediation of such knowledge has God dwelling in him; but he merely possesses knowledge of creatures and from this, by means of analogy he infers the existence of God. As to him who mysteriously possesses and sees this light, he knows and possesses God in himself, no longer by analogy, but by a true contemplation, transcendent to all creatures, for he is never separated from the eternal glory (ibid., 2.3.16)

And, in a text that has a striking parallel to a point made by St. Thomas Aquinas (cf. ST I, q. 60, a. 5, ad 4), St. Gregory notes how the demons retain their nature when they have fallen from grace:

> "They [i.e., intelligences] 'are told to follow this [circular] motion—meaning by this, in my opinion, *that this motion* [i.e., the motion of circular contemplation of God] *is not natural to them*, *even though from the beginning they are co-heirs of grace*, having never experienced pollution....
>
> The race of demons, which has fallen away from them, has been deprived of the light and power of vision, *but not of those faculties natural to it*. This light and vision are thus not natural to the angels. The demonic race has certainly not been deprived of intellection. (*Triads*, 3.2.16).

And, if one final citation might be allowed, consider the following text from chapter 2 of the Hagioritic Tome, the declaration by Athonite monks in defense of St. Gregory Palamas (a text that he helped to compose):

> If anyone declares that perfect union with God is accomplished simply in an imitative and relative fashion, without the deifying grace of the Spirit and merely in the manner of persons who share the same disposition and who love one another, and that the deifying grace of God is a state of our intellectual nature acquired by imitation alone, but is not a supernatural illumination and an ineffable and divine energy beheld invisibly and conceived inconceivably by those privileged to participate in it, then he must know that he has fallen unawares into the delusion of the Messalians. For if deification is accomplished according to a capacity inherent in human nature and if it is encompassed within the bounds of nature, then of necessity the person deified is by nature God…
>
> *For if deification is accomplished according to a capacity inherent in human nature and if it is encompassed within the bounds of nature, then of necessity the person deified is by nature God*. Whoever thinks like this should not attempt, therefore, to foist his own delusion upon those who stand on secure ground and to impose a defiled creed upon those whose faith is undefiled; rather he should lay aside his presumption and learn from persons of experience or from their disciples that the grace of deification is entirely unconditional, and there is no faculty whatever in nature capable of achieving it since, if there were, this grace would no longer be grace but merely the manifestation of the operation of a natural capacity. Nor, if deification were in accord with a natural capacity, would there be anything miraculous in it; for then deification would truly be the work of nature, not the gift of God, and a man would be able to be and to be called a God by nature in the full sense of the words. For the natural capacity of every being is nothing other than the undeviating and natural disposition for active accomplishment. It is, indeed, incomprehensible how deification can raise the person deified outside or beyond

> himself if it is encompassed within the bounds of nature ("Declaration of the Holy Mountain", *Philokalia* vol. 4, ed. and trans Palmer et al.)

The last quote in particular bears witness to how the theological articulation of the distinction and interrelations of nature and grace is not merely some kind of Western scholastic development following upon a kind of rigid separation of the natural from the supernatural. No, it is an integral component of continued maturation in theological speculation. Of course, it is very important not to read into the text above all of the details of the later schools of the West. The problem is raised, but we should not act as though we can dress up Saint Maximos or Saint Gregory Palamas in exact Scotist, Thomist, Suarezian, or Blondellian dress. But we can at least admit that they are witnesses to the fact that this theological topic is quite important to Christian thought and the "data" of faith.

But we could also over-distinguish nature and grace. And this is what is normally accused against scholastics. It is said that their two tiers are like two blocks placed on top of each other. Take away the supernatural, and the natural would supposedly still remain nice and untouched. (Thus, we would be bequeathed the atheistic humanism rightly declaimed by De Lubac.) As we will very soon see, this is most definitely not Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's position. However, we should consider a formulation that can be found in Father Ambroise Gardeil, with whom Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's own thought is in complete agreement. (It is often overlooked how much Garrigou-Lagrange is a man in Gardeil's line, in part because of the successful "PR" done by Fr. Chenu, who somewhat misled later thinkers into thinking that his own thought and that of Fr. Gardeil's were exactly of one mind.) In the introduction to his *The True Christian Life*, Fr. Gardeil's nephew, Fr. Henri-Dominique Gardeil, presents his uncles thought on this topic in a stirring passage that is likely drawn directly from the pen of Fr. Ambroise himself:

> An entire drama plays out in this question concerning obediential potency, an issue that seems so technical! Let our nature not be open to the divine [life]: then, the latter will never be able adapt itself to our nature, except in an external manner; thus, *we* will not be children of God and *we* will not be those who live as children of God. However, let the desire for the divine be included [in our nature] as a positive demand for this divine [life] and, behold: the "gratuity" that is so essential to the gift of God will thus be compromised. No! We must simultaneously hold that our nature has a fundamental capacity for the divine [life] (and even that our nature would remain in some way incomplete without it) and yet, also, that our nature remains an utter beggar in relation to the supernatural order. This is the source of a lesson in humility that Fr. Gardeil loved to draw from the consideration of this fundamental poverty of our natural being, an ontological poverty that places the "gratuity" of grace in such a beautiful light. However, this poverty is nonetheless the poverty of a nature that is not opposed to being begotten to the life of a child of God, and this is why our soul's cry of humility will very quickly transform into a hymn of hope: "I will sing and I will be concerned with the spotless way when you come to me, O My God" (Gardeil, *The True Christian Life*, 7–8).

(Concerning this topic, the reader would also benefit from reading the entire first volume of Fr. Gardeil's *La structure de l'âme et l'expérience mystique*, as well as his more popular article, "Human Life and the Divine Life," the latter of which is available online in translation: https://www.hprweb.com/2020/10/human-life-and-the-divine-life/.)

Turning to Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, let us work our way backwards into this question by considering a text where he discusses an important question in moral theology: what is the state of natural virtues in a subject who is turned away from the life of grace? In other words, can we have acquired moral virtues without charity?

This topic has been the subject of controversy in contemporary academic writing. I think in the end the position held by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange is correct (and also has the benefit of rallying to its side many Thomists of yore, though that is a merely extrinsic indicator of being a worthy position): we can indeed have a virtue in such a state of soul, but it is no longer fully able to be exercised with complete strength and therefore can be said to be a virtue "in the state of disposition" or, only able to bring forth "easily done" acts—*in statu facile mobilis* (see Garrigou-

Lagrange, "The Instability of the Acquired Moral Virtues in the State of Mortal Sin," in *Philosophizing in Faith*, 171ff). In this way, we avoid a kind of "absolute depravity" claim which would have all acts performed in such a state be sins, while also avoiding the establishment of a completely independent and indifferent natural order of virtue, ready to be exercised in serene detachment from our supernatural destiny.

The deepest defense of this particular claim can be found in what he referred to in the Latin of his commentary *De gratia*, as "A principle that, as it were, has fallen into oblivion: aversion from the supernatural and cannot exist without a version from man's natural end" (*De principio quasi in oblivionem delapso: Aversio a fine supernaturali existere nequit sine aversion a fine naturali*, Garrigou-Lagrange, *De gratia*, 409). The text itself can be found in the translation in English, but the appendix title is slightly lacking this punch, and wholly lacking the opening claim that this principle has fallen into oblivion (see *Grace*, trans. Dominican Sisters of Corpus Christi Monastery, 504–506).

The closing of the appendix is a particular interest, and it ties in very nicely to the second and third topics that we will be discussing shortly:

> This conclusion is there for contrary to naturalism and laicism [in politics]: he who withdraws from his supernatural end most assuredly cannot perfectly attain to his natural end. In the present economy of salvation, there is a necessary connection between the two orders. As a matter of fact, every man is either in the state of grace or in the state of sin, and if he is in sin, he is directly turned away from his final supernatural end and indirectly from his final natural end…. Naturalism is, after all, contrary to nature, since it is supposed to God, toward him all nature tends (*Grace*, 506, slightly altered).

And, to flip things around (from the state of sin to the state of grace), we can quite rightly say that the gift of grace is completely befitting to our nature, *qua nature*. It is not some adventitious add-on, but rather perfects our nature precisely in its highest of all capacities, namely, its "elevable capacity," by which it is truly ordered to be an open instrument of a

knowledge and love that are supernatural. I assure the reader that a full reading of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's works will confirm this claim. For our purposes, consider the following beautiful passage from *On Divine Revelation*:

> Supernatural befittingness, notwithstanding its gratuity—nay, by virtue of this gratuity—exceeds natural befittingness and thus is the greatest and most profound form of befittingness. And this is quite marvelous. Here we see how supernatural gifts differ both from natural ones (in which there is no gratuity) and from the delusions of false mysticism (where there is not conformity with our nature). *For God alone can join together in his supernatural gifts these apparently opposed extremes—namely, utter befittingness and utter gratuity*—inasmuch as these gifts *not only satisfy* our natural desire *but also exceed it*.
>
> [And, here is the really beautiful affirmation:]
> Supernatural gifts perfect us more than natural ones, and from this perspective, they are more fitted to us [*nobis magis conveniunt*], with an exceptional and supernatural befittingness [*convenientia*]. **They perfect that which is deepest within our soul—that is, the insertion point for the supernatural life, namely, our obediential potency. *Nothing more intimate* is found within the nature of our soul, for here, within ourselves, we find something corresponding to God's infinite power and beneficence, for our obediential potency is nothing other than the entire essence of our soul inasmuch as it is apt for receiving from God whatever he might will**. This is the ultimate root for our resolution to this issue. Some would like to discover some contradiction in it whereas, on the contrary, it represents the sublime reconciliation of extremes that can only be united by God (Garrigou-Lagrange, *On Divine Revelation*, vol. 1, 624–5).

Whatever further nuances one might wish to make to this language, I think it is safe to say that this is far from a "mere two-tier-ism". Many texts could be drawn from his corpus. One only needs to read them with a generally honest and sympathetic eye.

2˚ *The motive of the Incarnation*. In the history of Christology there developed a marked difference between two approaches to the question of whether Christ would have become incarnate had man not sinned. Broadly speaking, the Thomistic response (based on texts like *ST* III, q. 1, a. 3) has been: *No*. On the basis of the data of revelation, it seems only possible for them to assert that the incarnation is by its very nature redemptive, that is, intrinsically tied up with rescuing man from sin. By contrast to this line, the Scotists and others of sympathetic

outlook, have held that this does not sufficiently articulate the primacy of Christ and the glory of God over all of reality. In fact, it would seem to make the Incarnation itself ultimately too concerned with human salvation and not with the glory of God. To their eyes, on the Thomist supposition, the Incarnation would be ultimately motivated by human salvation, not the very primacy of Christ as the first-born of all creation (Colossians 1:15). Moreover, we could add as well that it seems to make the order of the Hypostatic Union just one more tier in a series of blocks stacked upon one another: nature, grace, Hypostatic Union.

These challenges led, however, to fruitful articulation within the Thomist line. The recent studies by Fr. Dylan Schraeder have helped to recover the way that the Salamanca Carmelite Thomists (the *Salmanticenses*) incorporated the Scotist objections into a robustly Thomistic Christocentrism. Interestingly, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange himself made their line of thought his own, as can be found, for example, in his commentary *Christ the Savior* (trans. Bede Rose, 76–104).

As I just noted, the three orders of nature, grace, and the hypostatic union are sometimes presented as three tiers, one presupposed for the next, but, as it were, stacked upon one another. In fact, we can find language in Cajetan that has this appearance:

> As a matter of fact, there are *three orders* found in the universe, namely, *the order of nature, the order of grace,* and *the order of God and the creature together*. . . . The second presupposes the first, and the third presupposes both of the prior two. And similarly, foreordaining and foresight of the first is presupposed by the foreordaining and foresight of the second, and likewise, the foreordaining and foresight of the third presupposes the foreordaining and foresight of the first two. Thus, God first ordered the universe according to the order of nature, and given that the universe does not attain the full enjoyment of God [*divinam fruitionem*], the order of grace was added to it. And given that the last order does not reach the highest possible mode of union with God, he foreordained the creature to personal union with God (*In* ST III, q. 1, a. 3, no. 6, cited in Garrigou-Lagrange, *On Divine Revelation*, vol. 1, 372–3).

And this same Cajetannian language is articulated by Fr. Jean-Hervé Nicolas, OP who held Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange in high esteem and shared in the substance of his position on many theological and philosophical topics:

> However, while every action *ad extra* is a pure communication of the Divine Good, we can distinguish, following Cajetan, three successive layers of communication, constituting three orders.
>
> *Through creation*, God communicates Himself to His creature in the form of an ontological participation. The creature's being [*l'être*] is not God's being (which would be pantheism). Instead, it is a participation in it, in the form of a distant and partial imitation. By its very being, the creature resembles God, and the ensemble of all creatures reflects the divine perfections. This being constitutes the first goodness of things that strive, by that very fact, to increasingly resemble God and to be united to Him from afar, by means of their own proper goodness, which is a goodness that is created but is, nonetheless, a participation in God's goodness.
>
> *Through grace*, intellectual creatures are elevated, as we recalled earlier, to participate in the very activities of God. God communicates Himself to them, not by the mediation of a created goodness, but such as He is in Himself, as an object of knowledge and love. Obviously, this is still a participation because the created person remains a distinct person and a limited being which obviously has activities which themselves are also limited. Nonetheless, through these activities he takes part in the Divine Good itself, not in a distant imitation thereof. Indeed, he "possesses" the Divine Persons by being possessed by them.
>
> *Finally, through the Incarnation*, God communicates Himself to the creature in a substantial manner. This does not mean that the created being would become the Uncreated Being or would enter into composition with Him. Rather, it means that the Word has become a man by assuming a created human nature and that, consequently, *this man is the Word*. In the person of the Word made flesh the ontological conjunction between the created and the Uncreated is achieved. This is an infinite communication: this man, Jesus, is good with the very goodness of God.
>
> This means that the Incarnation is the supreme realization of the good's self-diffusive character. It is fitting that that which is sovereignly good would sovereignly communicate itself. And the act of self-communicating is the very act of love. We can express this in a different way: it is fitting that He who is infinite love would give Himself infinitely, and this is what is realized through the Incarnation (Nicolas, *Catholic Dogmatic Synthesis*, vol. 2, §415).

But we must be careful when we interpret, yes, Fr. Nicolas, but for our purposes Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. Cajetan's language does have a kind of weakness, insofar as it can sound

like one order is self-enclosed and then ordered to another, higher order. (I would not be so hasty as to draw that interpretation, though…) Where are places where he is not afraid to openly critique Cajetan, even on the question of nature and the supernatural (see, for example, *On Divine Revelation*, vol. 1, 620–630). (This by itself puts the lie to the simplistic narrative that acts as though "neo-Scholastic Thomists" were in the thrall of Cajetan himself.)

Drawing on a remark from Billuart, Garrigou-Lagrange will note that we must not treat these three orders as though they are completely separable cake layers without any intrinsic connection to each other, mere parts thrown together but not understood in terms of the whole of which they are parts. In fact, it is wrong to think of the parts of a given whole as though they were not understood *in light of that whole*. The builder all at once sets the end of building a garage, and in view of that designs the foundation so that it might hold the appropriate wall structure, which itself is designed so as to not only support the roof but to support the various functionalities of the garage, and so forth. Thus, as Billuart remarks in *Summa Sanctae Thomae*, *Tractatus De Deo*, diss. 9, a. 6, §2:

> Others, indeed perhaps suitably, do not hold that there is a priority in the divine decrees among the three orders of *nature, grace, and the hypostatic union*, for they say, just as the artisan does not first intend the roof or the foundation but, rather, first intends a suitable habitation and, for the sake of that intends the whole house made corresponding to that, made up of all of its parts, so too *God* first willed to manifest His glory *ad extra* and for this end *chose to create this world* as an integral whole, with all of its parts and all of its orders, namely, the orders of nature, grace, and the hypostatic union, *as a single work* most suitably adapted to His end. . . . *But the order of nature was disposed so that it may serve the order of grace, and the order of grace so that it may yield to the glory of Christ*" (cited in Garrigou-Lagrange, *On Divine Revelation*, vol. 1, 373).

And, ultimately, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange goes beyond even this, citing in explicit preference for the *Salmanticenses* (but also Capreolus, Pedro de Godoy, and Jean-Baptiste Gonet), in their *Cursus theologicus*, *Tractatus de incarnatione*, tr. 21, disp. 2, no. 29:

> In His first intention, God decreed Christ not only according to substance but even as regards the circumstances of passible flesh and precisely as He who would redeem from Adam's sin. And, at the same time, by the same act, he willed the permission of the aforementioned sin. . . . Thus, between the aforementioned objects, which are not connected of themselves, *he decreed* and established *this mutual dependence in different genera of causality, namely, on the one hand, that Christ would be the end for whose sake* (*finis cuius gratia*) *that passive permission of the aforementioned sin would be allowed*, **as well as the end of the redemption of mankind and of all the divine deeds pertaining both to the order of nature and of grace**, *and on the other hand, that the permitted sin would be the matter with which the redemption was concerned* (*materia circa quam*), and mankind would be the end to which (*finis cui*) this was given. Whence, in the line of final causality *for whose sake,* God first willed and saw Christ, then other things; however, in the line of material causality, as well as the line of final causality *to which*, He first willed and saw the permission of sin, the remedy of this, and those other things that pertained to this, before Christ (cited in Garrigou-Lagrange, *On Divine Revelation*, vol. 2, 331n13; also see *The Order of Things*, 345, bold italics added).

And Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange continues:

> This interpretation is more profound and simpler than what is proposed by Billuart (in his thesis concerning the motive of the Incarnation). Not only does it provide a better resolution for Scotus's objections but, moreover, it most excellently corresponds to the general axiom, "Causes are causes of each other, though in different genera [or lines] of causality," and also is conformed to St. Thomas's teaching concerning the order of predestination. For the Holy Doctor teaches in *ST* I, q. 23, a. 4 and 5 that predestination to glory is intrinsically prior to grace (or merits) according to the line of final causality, though vice versa in the line of meritorious causality, which is reduced to line of causality exercised by the disposition of the matter in question (Garrigou-Lagrange, *On Divine Revelation*, vol. 2, 331n13)

Thus, in the order of final causality, Christ is the teleological end *of all orders of existence*, which although they are indeed distinct (thus retaining the insight expressed by Cajetan, though many others), are ultimately ordered to the full manifestation of of God's glory in Christ. However, the sin of Adam is presupposed in the line of "material causality" broadly speaking (that out of which this glory is drawn).

As Fr. Jean-Hervé Nicolas notes, the Salamancan line does at least raise question related to the problem of the permission of sin (see Nicolas, *Catholic Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 2, §428). However, we are not here to solve every theological problem, or even to claim that father

Garrigou Lagrange did. I merely wished to show that he has all the seeds for expressing a kind of Christological primacy, even in the order of nature, though without losing the dreadfully important distinctions that must be made among the various orders of reality.

3˚ *The relationship of the human-political order to the supernatural order*. Well, this article has gone on longer than I thought it would…. But, that is to be expected, I suppose, given the technicality of the matter. Nonetheless, there are important political implications for how it is that one thinks of the relationship between nature and grace. If the two orders are brought too closely together, there is a real risk of not sufficiently distinguishing between the natural end of political society and, ultimately, the supernatural life and end of the Church, the mystical body of Christ. Not only does this fly in the face of sound theological speculation, but it also arguably is contrary to the mind of the Church concerning these matters. (And like all great errors, this could fall in two very different directions: toward a reduction of the Church's life to mere political activism; or, toward an elimination of every human value that is merely temporal.) But, on the other hand, it is just as dangerous to so separate the two orders that you end up with a kind of completely lay, irreligious state, indifferent to religion. Such extreme liberalism is contrary to the mind of even the Second Vatican Council's declaration on religious liberty, which leaves "untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ" (Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 1).

This is an area in which I would think there could be great overlap between the US *Communio* folks (in the line of the sadly departed, great Dr. David Schindler) and scholastics of Garrigou-Lagrange's bent. I think that the weaponization of the latter by some Roman Catholic traditionalists is to blame in part for this lack of ability to have the two parties speak to each other. Generally, I would suspect that Schindler descendants take for granted that Fr. Garrigou-

Lagrange's thought implicitly states are kind of rejection of the Second Vatican Council. Admittedly, the issue of religious liberty does stretch the old Thomist's line on some of these matters of religion and the public sphere. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's own thought concerning these matters is marked by the 19th-century controversies concerning the nature of the political order, and his own conservatism (itself deeply rooted in him through the experience of anti-clericalism in his youth) does require a contemporary disciple of his to stretch and even go beyond his thought.

But that being said, nonetheless, he arguably at least has the seeds for such development whenever we consider for example what he has to say concerning the indirect authority of the Church in relation to the political order (or "the State"). In order to fairly understand his thought, yes, we must note much of what he says concerning the duty of both individuals and civil authority to accept divine revelation when it is sufficiently proposed. In fact, he ends is very lengthy *De revelatione* with a chapter devoted to this very question, spanning over 25,000 words on fifty tightly packed pages (see Garrigou-Lagrange, *On Divine Revelation*, vol. 2, 551–602). But, he also accepts quite fully the legitimacy of natural political society, with its own finalities and independence, so long as such society remains, ultimately, ordered to the ultimate end of the human person, the supernatural destiny of the human person. Because my next essay will be devoted more fully to this question allow me merely to cite a lengthy passage related to this topic, in which you will see, at once, a careful stewarding of the distinctions of nature and grace, and yet, also a clear affirmation that we cannot consider the order of natural politics in a merely secularist fashion:

> In the person of Peter, the other Apostles, and their successors, the Church has received directly from God, from our Lord Jesus Christ, the mission of leading souls, in light of revealed dogma and Christian morality, to eternal life. Her power corresponds to her

divine mission; it extends to all men who have received the baptismal character, and to all that is necessary or useful for leading them to their final end.

In spiritual matters, this power is direct. It is the order of faith and morals, that of salvation, where the Church exercises her *infallible magisterium* by teaching the supernatural and natural truths of the faith, the precepts and counsels contained in the deposit of divine revelation over which she has guardianship. It falls to her in this capacity to interpret what *revelation* says about the use of material things, about what one must render to Caesar and what is owed to God. Obviously, to this direct power also falls the administration of the sacraments, the sources of grace, *the religious government* not only of clerics but also of laymen considered as members of the faithful, the direction of theological studies, religious instruction in the schools, and everything that is of the sacred order or necessary for divine worship, such as the churches where the Holy Sacrifice is celebrated. Likewise, in this order of direct power, when it is not a question of the infallible magisterium but only of government or of discipline, the faithful are bound to submit themselves under pain, not of heresy, but of disobedience.

By way of consequence, the Church has an *indirect power* over *temporal affairs*, not taken in themselves, but taken, instead, *according to their relation to the salvation of souls*, depending on whether the use that the faithful make of them can impede or facilitate their salvation. And only the teaching Church is the qualified judge concerning the *relation- ship* of these temporal affairs with the supernatural last end to which they ought to lead us.

Under the influence of Protestantism, this point of doctrine, clearly affirmed by Pope Boniface VIII in the bull *Unam sanctam*, was misunderstood by the Gallicans, Jansenists, and liberals in their alleged defense of the rights either of the State or of the faithful.

In his large treatise on the Church [i.e., his *Summa de ecclesia*], the Dominican Cardinal Juan de Torquemada, followed by Bellarmine and Suárez, determined in a very certain manner the nature of this indirect power in temporal affairs, doing so in accord with tradition and on the basis of the Church's own end. It is not a full and complete jurisdiction like that which the Church possesses in the order of spiritual affairs, but, as the great theologian says: "The sovereign Pontiff has, by his primacy, a kind of jurisdiction over the temporal order considered in its relation with the spiritual, to the degree required by the Church's needs or by the duties of the Supreme Pastor charged with correcting abuses and preserving peace in the Christian people" (Juan de Torquemada, *Summa de ecclesia*, bk. 2, ch. 113, concl. 2; also see ibid., ch. 114).

It is not from the Pope, who does not have in this order of temporal things the full jurisdiction that he has in the spiritual order, that the Head of State draws his powers. Therefore, the pope cannot regularly intervene in a direct manner in the questions of propriety that must be ruled according to civil law, and in these matters, one cannot

> regularly appeal to him concerning the rulings proclaimed by secular judges (see ibid., ch. 113, props. 2, 4, and 6).
>
> Therefore, this indirect power is solely concerned with temporal affairs, considered, not in themselves, but in their relation to the last end of all the baptized, of whom the Vicar of Jesus Christ is the Pastor. He is the one who is charged with leading them to eternal pastures, by the way traced out by our Lord Himself.
>
> The Sovereign Pontiff can exercise this indirect power in two ways: either by way of counsel or by way of command. Of itself, a counsel is not obligatory, but it should be received with respect. A command, however, binds in conscience; to exempt oneself from it would not be heresy, so long as the infallible magisterium does not intervene, but rather, would represent an act of disobedience (Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, "The Divine Requirements of the Final End in Political Matters," in *Philosophizing in Faith*, 206–208).

This passage, written in the midst of the condemnation of *L'action Française* (a condemnation that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange accepted even though it was difficult for him) should be read alongside what Maritain wrote at the same time in *The Primacy of the Spiritual: On the Things That Are Not Caesar's*. The two were in substantial agreement during this period of writing.

But, let us draw to a close. In all three of these theological topics—obediential potency, the primacy of Christ, and the nature of the Church's indirect authority in relation to the temporal order—we find in Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange a mind that very carefully parses the orders of reality, while also asserting the primacy of the supernatural order, most especially, the uncreated supernaturality of Christ, who stands at the center of all nature, grace, and indeed all of created reality.

The Politics of a Conservative Cleric

Of all the articles in this series, even more than the following one, this is a topic that makes me quite nervous: the politics of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. For many who knew him in the middle of the twentieth century he was sadly considered a kind of sympathizer with fascism, and this judgment remains to this day rather powerful in the minds of many. His support—shared by a number of other conservatives in his era—for *L'action française*, Francisco Franco, and for the Vichy regime during World War II give pause to many concerning the possibility of "skeletons in the closet." What is more, certain South American conservative and traditionalist critics of liberalism have mixed in with their rhetoric an anti-Semitism that is not only covert but indeed quite overt at times. Therefore, to some people's eyes it seems very advisable to avoid possible contact with a politically poisonous figure.

I am more than willing to address anyone's concerns based on political and intellectual history in the 20th century. Of all the chapters, this is one in which I am more than ready to take up a fair and unbiased, if well sourced, critical reappraisal of my own judgments. And I hasten to be very clear as well: I would have nothing positive to say in defense of anything that was, for example, antisemitic if it actually did exist in Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's works. Moreover, although I am politically conservative, I do not have the same exact continental European conservatism that marks the old Dominican's thought, let alone his monarchism, which is most definitely not something that is an American I think makes any sense concerning our regime. And moreover, I'm not, more generally, a monarchist, as one finds in certain conservative Catholic circles…. So I ask the reader to allow me the space to not be pre-judged as regards my own opinions. A good starting place for trying to understand my own perspective would be the

work and writing Yves R. Simon, somewhat combined with a milder version of someone like Dr. Patrick Deneen.

I'm not sure where to begin. Perhaps a very particular topic is a good place to start: I have never found an ounce of antisemitism in the writings of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. I remember when I was working on the translation of *De Revelatione*. At the end of the work, he engages in a rather superficial comparison of Christianity with Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism. As I approached the chapter on Judaism, having not read it before, I was quite fearful that I was going to find the rhetoric of a very harsh form of supersessionism, perhaps even focusing on Talmudic Judaism with a harsh and critical light. There was a kind, of course, supersessionism, insofar as he only considers Judaism up to the time of Christianity and as contained in the Old Testament. But, more importantly, the entire tone of the chapter is actually positive, showing the way that Judaism prepares for Christianity. I *never* expected to find in him some of the "fever swamp" kind of antisemitism that one sometimes finds in certain conservative Catholic circles. However, it was particularly refreshing to see him take a wholly positive tone regarding our elder brothers in the Covenant.

Then we come to the question however concerning support for Vichy. I think it's important never to look back as though we ourselves would have been clean-handed in the past. It is at least thinkable that a faithful Catholic who grew up in the midst of turn-of-the-century laicism would be disposed to support a conservative anti-republican leader who had been a war hero during the First World War (i.e., Pétain). And, truth be told, in this regard Garrigou Lagrange was not unique. It is not the finest day in conservative French Catholicism to look back on those who all-too-readily supported the government that was installed after France fell to Hitler. And I also concede the fact that it seems that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange himself quite

wrongly spoke of the absolute moral duty of French Catholics to support the Vichy regime. In none of these things do I support him as some perhaps do, but I also realize that his shortcoming was shared by quite many people at that time.

I have less of a formed opinion regarding the affairs surrounding the Spanish Civil War. The leftists should not be exonerated for what they did during the war; but I am also not sufficiently informed about Franco to make a sufficient statement regarding his regime—except that, insofar as I am a crazy Yank from Appalachia, the son of Scots-Irish mountain men and Slavs who fled from poverty and persecution, I am always hesitant to give deference to political authority. However, it has always seemed unfortunate to me that a matter of politics in another nation became the flashpoint for bad blood among men who should have worked together in the service of the Church. I think that the pride of both Garrigou-Lagrange and Maritain got in their way during this period of time. But, again, for all of us who have recently lived through many stupidities politically, I would hope that we would have some mercy on others concerning their political positions in the midst of true and profound controversies.

It is when we come to the case of *L'action francaise* that we have a very telling honesty on the part of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. The condemnation of Charles Maurras's political movement struck many conservative Catholics harshly during the papacy of Pope Pius XI. It was an event that led to the end of the Cardinalate of Louis Billot, the great Jesuit theologian at the turn-of-the-century Gregorianum. And to this day one can find many traditionalists in the Roman Catholic Church who hasten, almost breathlessly, to point out the changed tone expressed by Pius the XII regarding the conservative movement.

But at the time of the condemnation, despite the difficulties that he felt, including personal difficulties because of his own sister's involvement in the movement (from what I

recall), Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange pend an article in support of the pope's condemnation. It doesn't come across with the strong tone of, for example, Maritain's own "political conversion" work, *The Primacy of the Spiritual: On the Things That Are Not Caesar's*. Nonetheless, in the pages of *Vie spirituelle*, he penned an article that, albeit indirectly, supported the Church's authority in this decision, "Les exigences divines de la fin derniere en matiere politique" (included in *Philosophizing in Faith* as "The Divine Requirements of the Final End in Political Matters"). As is clear at the end of the essay, he has a great desire for the movement to purify itself so that it might continue to play a role in anti-liberal French politics. But nonetheless, he shows himself to be a faithful son of the Pope, accepting the condemnation in the spirit of humble submission.

Now as regards his particular political positions, one can find, for example, a clear preference for monarchy, especially in France. For example, when one reads his introduction to a French translation of Aquinas's *De regimine principium*, one will see his remarks:

> Since true virtue, united to true competence, is a rare thing among men, and since most of them are incapable of governing and need to be led, the regime that is best suited to them is that which can supplement their imperfection. On account of the unity, continuity, and efficacy of its direction toward an end that is difficult to realize, monarchy is this *regimen perfectum in ratione regiminis*, above all a tempered monarchy, always attentive to different forms of national activity. Better than democracy or than the feudal regime, it assures the internal and external peace of a great nation, and enables it to endure a long time (Garrigou-Lagrange, "On Royal Government," in *Philosophizing in Faith*, 248).

And although he will very briefly in some of the other essays gathered in the *Philosophizing in Faith* volume comment that one can in some cases legitimately hold democratic views, we will say that his concession is relatively weak, especially as soon as he returns to French politics. But, that being said, he is not an absolutist, and clearly even in his most monarchist moments recognizes the need for counsel from various consultative

assemblies. It is all very French, but it does remain within the general boundaries of a certain kind of Catholic Aristotelianism of his period, especially in a nation like France, which experienced such great spasms of Revolution in modernity. I say all of this merely in an attempt to be fair, without being of exactly the same mind as my dear Thomistic master.

As regards the question of the Christian character of the natural political order, what he says is all in line with the magisterium from Leo XIII onward concerning the Christian constitution of states and the social kinsghip of Christ. To the degree that one wishes to speak of him as an "integralist," he shows himself to be fair and not a kind of fire brand. And, given that even the Second Vatican Council did state that its declaration on religious liberty leaves "untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ" (Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 1), I think that more contemporary Catholics—all too ready to accept liberal notions of religious liberty and ignore the "untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ"—need to interact with the classical integralist arguments, without, however, falling into the opposed excess of condemning the Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Religious Liberty*. *On the very terms of the document itself* it is necessary that one actually take seriously the requirements that Christianity asserts in the political order—obviously with all due nuance and recognizing how great will be the differences involved in practical positions in the domain of politics.

Finally, as regards liberalism, it goes without saying that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange is completely opposed to liberalism in any form that would establish human freedom as a kind of absolute principle of personal or political rule. But, he also is quite clearly set against any kind of statist collectivism as well. This comes through most strongly in his essay "La subordination

de l'état à la perfection de la personne humaine selon S. Thomas" (included in the *Philosophizing in Faith* volume as "The Subordination of the State to the Perfection of the Human Person According to St. Thomas").

This last essay actually engages in topics that are very important in relation to the affair that broke out surrounding Charles De Koninck's *On the Primacy of the Common Good, Against the Personalists*. That entire event is too contested to bring up in an article like this. I would merely note that, sadly, neither De Koninck nor Maritain actually address each other's works. Some seem to think that there was substantive engagement, but a clear reading of the works shows that this did not take place.

But in this particular article by Father Garrigou-Lagrange, we find the old Dominican drawing on the exact same distinction that Maritain uses, namely that between personality and individuality, or "the person" and "the individual", as two different ways of considering the citizen as a part of the political whole. And in point of fact, in this article, penned in 1947 (when the old Dominican was already well engaged in various conversations regarding the shortcomings of Maritain's political writings) he even cites Maritain's French articles on the person and the common good, without registering a negative comment (see Garrigou-Lagrange, "The Subordination of the State," 190n13). Even if one wishes to draw some distinction between their positions concerning how to apply the thought of Fr. Marie-Benoît Schwalm, OP (who, on their account, originated the use of the coupling *person-individual* as applied to this question), they are quite close together in the way that they use this terminology (which, granted, often does seem to obscure more than illuminate).

And although some have attempted to say that for Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange this distinction between personality and individuality is not a hard and fast, real metaphysical distinction, in

point of fact the opposite is the case. Ultimately, he insists upon this distinction precisely because of concerns in Christology to distinguish between the individuality of Christ's human nature and the personality of the Word. However, this latter discussion is quite metaphysical, and not particularly political. The only reason I have engaged it here is the fact that it shows that simple narratives about the relationship between, for example, Maritain and Garrigou-Lagrange are not in fact reflective of the data regarding the latter. For more information on this "person" / "individual" issue in Garrigou-Lagrange, see:

> *Thomistic Common Sense*, trans. Matthew K. Minerd (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2020), 288–270, 308
>
> *The Trinity and God the Creator*, trans. Frederic C. Eckhoff (St. Louis: Herder, 1952), 155-156.
>
> *Christ: The Savior*, trans. Bede Rose (St. Louis: Herder, 1950), 119ff.
>
> *De beatitudine* (Turin: R. Berruti, 1951), 85-87 and 372.
>
> "The Subordination of the State to the Perfection of the Human Person According to St. Thomas" in *Philosophizing on Faith*, ed. and trans. Matthew Minerd (Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2019), 183–204

Finally, also, a word should be said concerning the more controversial aspects of Maritain's thought. Already in the 1940s, the old Dominican corresponded with the Argentinian priest Julio Meinvielle concerning the latter's accusations that Maritain was falling into the exact same errors as the 19th-century French liberal cleric, Félicité Robert de Lamennais. In this correspondence, we find the old Dominican well aware of the weaknesses of Maritain's thought, but always fair and, in particular, ready to correct Meinvielle's polemical simplification of Maritain, equating the latter with Lamennais, a claim that Garrigou openly says is not only uncharitable but clearly untrue based upon the facts of both men's writings.

And, in the 1950s, the elderly Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was involved in considerations during the papacy of Pope Pius XII to condemn propositions drawn from Maritain and others concerning the relationship between Church and State. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was of the opinion that Maritain needed to write an article that clarified his position. This affair has been treated recently in an article by Philippe Chenaux published in *Archives Fratrum Praedicatorum*, "Maritain devant le Saint-Office: le rôle du père Garrigou-Lagrange, OP" (pages 401–420 in 2021). The entire article deserves reading. Here, I will only reproduce a translation of the letter that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange penned on behalf of Pope Pius XII, though the missive ultimately was never sent, and the condemnation (which was still under consideration during the preparatory discussions prior to the Second Vatican Council) was never issued. The words of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange are at once firm and yet marked by a remaining tenderness that should not be minimized:

> My dear friend,
>
> Remembering those most intimate days of retreat in Meudon, I now write to you, at the prompting of the Holy Father, to ease a pain that the Lord will render—I beseech Him on your behalf in this regard—very meritorious for you and for others.
>
> Given everything that is being written for and against you, you must by now be sensitive to the fact that, during these recent years, your book *Integral Humanism* has been examined very carefully and at length here by various theologians and by the higher authorities in the Church charged with watching over doctrine.
>
> Despite the profound pages that this book contains concerning many of today's most difficult questions, it has not been found to be sufficiently in conformity with the Encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI concerning the relationship between Church and State. Moreover, the teaching set forth therein is found more-or-less developed in other publications, such as those of Father Congar, Father Pribilla, and others. You have disciples (especially in Argentina, Brazil, and in France in the pages of the review *Esprit*) who reproduce your teaching, going far beyond what you yourself have said.

As a result, errors and a loose use of terminology have spread to many countries, which Holy Mother Church must correct, in the defense of revealed Truth and for the salvation of souls.

On the other hand, however, the Holy Father remembers your lively faith, your piety (these are his expressions), and all the services you have rendered for the diffusion of the doctrine of Saint Thomas in places where it was almost unknown.

In the midst of these conditions, in order to remedy the more or less serious deviations that have occurred, the Holy Father has prepared a list of erroneous or temerarious propositions, drawn from the various works in question, though without citing these works or the names of their authors. The Holy Office will answer the question: can these propositions be taught? Are they or are they not in conformity with the Church's doctrine? Thus, your name will not even be mentioned.

The Lord will answer your prayers to this end, and he will enable you to respond with an act of filial obedience and faith in the Church's authority.

You may say that your intention has always been to maintain the Church's teaching in its entirety and to show how its application is possible today. However, you must also add that you have not always sufficiently taken into account certain principles of that doctrine, and that many of your followers have gone far beyond what you have published.

In order that your answer may enlighten those who have followed and gone beyond what you yourself have said, it would be suitable that you publish an article in one of the major journals, in which you would highlight the principles of the great Encyclicals of Leo XIII, *Libertas* and *Immortale Dei*. To do so would furnish a very noble and beautiful example for those who have followed you. And it would also be the best way to prevent *Integral Humanism* from being taken out of circulation, if [its teaching] continued to spread [without correction].

This article would and will be, I hope, one of your best, perhaps the one that will have cost you the most, though the one that will be most meritorious. Your love of the Truth and of God Himself will inspire you to write it and to do so very well.

This, dear friend, is what I have been charged to tell you, on behalf of the Holy Father himself. I will offer a special Mass on your behalf, to ask our Lord to help you in this matter as only He can.

I send my kind regards to Madame Maritain and her sister.

Sincerely yours, as during the best hours of the retreats of Meudon,
Fr. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange

(Chenaux, "Maritain devant le Saint-Office," 417–18).

With these words, I wish to end this article, though I feel like it is screeching to a thudding halt. As I said above, it is the article where I find myself at once most nervous and also somewhat in disagreement with Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange – although, he was not always wrong to see infelicities in Maritain's writings on political matters. I find myself here faced with two men who are very dear to me and who are marked by their own limitations: an old man who correctly upholds the Church's teaching concerning the relationship between church and state; and the lay philosopher who rightly is sensitive to the way that the natural common good it's all too often swallowed up by clerical writings about political and cultural matters.

If nothing else, in this article, I have hoped to indicate—perhaps not "show", and certainly not "prove", for that would be beyond my abilities!—that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was no political monster. And what is more, I also hope that I have at least intimated the fact that his thought cannot be as easily boxed in as many progressives, conservatives, and traditionalists think that it can.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange and the "Nouvelle Théologie" Affair

We now come to one of the testiest of all the subjects regarding Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange: his intervention in a theological controversy that erupted during the period immediately following the Second World War, an event that came to be known as the affair over the "Nouvelle théologie."

I've been tempted somewhat to fire and brimstone as I have written some of these articles. Indeed, Dr. Tracy Rowland in particular was the focus of no small ire on my part. I feel justified in my vexation, for I find the kind of narrative that she recounts to be incredibly damaging to the collective memory of the Church. But, especially concerning a controversial topic such as this one, I will attempt not to step one inch further in my vexation.

Let's be honest: the very expression "the new theology" is pretty damn useless. It's as ham-fisted as speaking about "ressourcement theology." I grant completely that the expressions function as broad sociological labels for movements and theology in the mid-20th century, movements that had lengthy after-effects through the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent papacies. But let's think how useless the expression "ressourcement" can often be: it is applied, across the board, to thinkers who do a whole host of different things regarding "returning to the sources." And where do the borders stop? Should we not push back to St. John Henry Newman, to Jacques Paul Migne, to Mattias Scheeben, Tübingen School, and why not to Dénis Pétau (Petavius)? And merely to take the more "classical" group of *Communio* (or *Communio*-adjacent) "ressourcement" thinkers, we find them just as importantly engaging with modern philosophy and theology, alongside (and indeed even in and through) their desire to return to the Fathers. (I would cite here someone like Hans Urs von Balthasar.) Others continued take up such dialogue with the contemporary world, though with more focus on classical

theological themes, the Middle Ages, the Fathers of the Church, and Sacred Scripture. (Here think of the different nuances of Joseph Ratzinger, Henri de Lubac, and Jean Daniélou.) I understand the use of the expression "ressourcement," but it tends to paint with a broad equivocal brush the unique character and "projects" of many differing thinkers. And, let's also be clear too: it implies that *they* care about positive theology and the sources of theological speculation, in marked contrast from *those terrible ahistorical non-ressourcement Scholastics.*

From my side, I really don't like speaking of "the New Theology." Now, before someone screams about my hypocrisy, given the title of the book that I authored with Dr. Jon Kirwan, *The Thomistic Response to the Nouvelle Théologie*, I would caution you to be sensitive to the way that book titling takes place. That's a sausage machine that is messy with many inputs and pressures.

But, on the one hand, I don't like speaking of the "new" theology merely because it starts the conversation off on the wrong foot. Yes, I have use the expression many times, for just like "ressourcement," it gives one a kind of general sociological and historical marker for a conversation. But, in any case, it comes across as a slur, as though to say: "You are doing some kind of new, ersatz, likely modernist Theology. Also, here too, we have a kind of field for equivocation. Is it really intellectually honest to use one label for thinkers as diverse as De Lubac, Von Balthasar, Ratzinger, and Daniélou, let alone Chenu, Congar, and Bouyer, or even Schillebeeckx and De Chardin?

Still, the expression carries a lot of power in Catholic circles, and this whole affair in the late-1930s and 1940s has left immense scars in the minds of many Catholics. Sadly, however, the entire narrative is distorted, in my opinion, by both sides—at least, so to speak, the more reactionary sides. I'm very sure—I have been privately accused of this—that some people

believe that my work on Garrigou-Lagrange, and especially the *Thomistic Response to the Nouvelle théologie* volume, provide cannon fodder for the most radical elements of Roman Catholic traditionalists. I will admit that I agree with these traditionalists 1˚ that the Roman Rite was unjustly deconstructed and 2˚ in a more general sense I agree with their recognition of the malaise of faith during the post-conciliar period. I don't share with them the same analysis of the causes of this malaise, nor the same diagnosis of every particular issue, but it is almost *per se nota* to look at the post-Conciliar Church and see how many laypeople, priests, and bishops used the change of tone voiced at the Council as an excuse to allow the eruption of immense discontinuity in the Church, a discontinuity whose effects surround us. And as regards the ritual changes in the Roman Church, I merely ask: what would a Byzantine Catholic do if our liturgy were altered this immensely? I think that he would rightly scream against an injustice. Without thinking that the Traditional Roman Rite should be installed for an endless reign in its exact pre-Conciliar lineaments (or its pre-1955 lineaments, or whatever), I merely mean to assert that it's baffling to me how insensitive many conservative Roman Catholics just shrug off the damage done to the *sensus fidelium* by the deconstruction of all the elements of a liturgical rite. Again, we Byzantines would go insane if this happened—at least I should hope so.

But that being said, even if I am friendly with a number of traditionalists as friends, I wouldn't consider myself a fellow traveler ideologically. The wacky conspiracy theories, the increasing asperity of their tone, the lack of real and deep theological and philosophical thought—all of this is dispositive of the fact that I actually don't even spend a lot of time in traditionalist circles. I think they are treated with such rudeness by the hierarchy, but I also find them to be a difficult and often-rigid lot. Nonetheless, they are ill-treated by so many in the Church, and I don't know if they will ever be able to trust the mainstream because of the way

they have been treated. They are partly to blame for the situation they are in, broadly speaking, but I think that many others have played a role in helping to provide them with understandable reasons (which are different than justifications) for being as angry as they are.

And of course, there is, so to speak, the other side of this debate today. Some men found their works placed either on the index just before the 1940s affair really broke out in full (Chenu and Charlier come to mind). Others, among the Jesuits, found their works banned by their superiors and their teaching positions yanked out from underneath them. A number of these men showed themselves to be dedicated and faithful Churchmen, obediently accepting this state of affairs and eventually being rehabilitated during the Second Vatican Council.

In particular, I'm sure that many of my readers are thinking of the line of theology especially associated with the journal *Communio*, including figures like Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar, who were at the center of the major debates in the 1940s. Following the Council, especially after the advent of the papacy of Pope St. John Paul II, this line of thought basically was able to present the history of this affair unchallenged. In conservative *Communio* circles for some time this narrative alone ruled, and its disciples finds it quite difficult to be kind to pre-Conciliar scholasticism, reserving its own list of insults for those who pre-date the seeming Jahr-Null of 1962: ahistorical, unengaged with the times, not concerned with Scripture and the Fathers, legalistic, and so forth. Such things are still parroted today in perhaps slightly more nuanced terms not only by people like Dr. Rowland, but also by Bishop Robert Barron (whose work I deeply admire and believe does much good) and also by George Weigel. (Larry Chapp, who is very dear to my heart, sometimes engages in this narrative, but I think that he has softened a little bit—perhaps? It is, in any case, my true hope.)

Oh well… When it comes to this whole topic of the so-called "new theology," I really don't like the way that the traditionalists present the affair of the 1940s. Most problematically in my eyes, they often present the response of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange as a kind of prophecy of the Second Vatican Council (and even there, they limit their discussion to a single article). Granted, I do think that the relativism of the second half of the century was not helped by some of the undercurrents that the Dominican Fathers Garrigou-Lagrange, Labourdette, and Michel-Joseph Nicolas sensed and critiqued in the 40s. However, it also seems quite clear to me that Roman traditionalists have a knee-jerk desire always to get things shoehorned into their "birth narrative." In the end it historically distorts the very intervention that they wish to lionize.

There are two main themes that most people associate with this controversy: the increased use of the Fathers of the Church; and the question of the distinction between the natural and supernatural orders. I will return to the latter below. (It is actually far less important in this debate than most people think.) Interestingly, too, the first supposedly important point is actually not directly in the crosshairs in the articles penned by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. It was, in fact, his younger confreres Frs. Michel-Marie Labourdette and Marie-Joseph Nicolas who penned articles in the *Revue Thomiste* voicing certain concerns that they had regarding the tone of introductions and footnotes in the additions of patristic texts being published in the then-nascent series *Sources Chrétiennes*. As I believe that Dr. Kirwan and I show quite clearly—in Labourdette and Nicolas' own words—these concerns were registered with scrupulous care and even accompanied by protestations of their desire to recognize the great benefits that can accrue to theology—indeed they even said, that *should and must* accrue to theology—by an even deeper appreciation of the importance of history and the sources of theology. But when they looked at the claims made by the editors of volumes in *Sources Chrétiennes*, as well as by many of the

same authors in a parallel series of manuscripts published in the series *Théologie*, they noticed a kind of critique of scholasticism by way of insinuation, and also, a biased interpretation of the Fathers, claiming to find therein the categories of modern thought, to which Scholasticism, the editors and authors stated, was ultimately closed off. Such a bold claim, perhaps at times merely made by way of implication, though openly on other occasions, was none the less problematic to the eyes of the Dominican Fathers in Toulouse.

But, in addition to a brief article by Fr. Jean-Daniélou, it was in fact, and most critically, a work in the series *Théologie* that sparked the whole controversy: *Conversion et grâce chez s. Thomas d'Aquin* by Henri Bouillard, SJ. This text, based on his dissertation written during the war (in fact under the conservative Jesuit Charles Boyer), ends with the proposal of a kind of sketched out theory of dogmatic development. Whenever one compares this chapter with studies such as those penned by Reginald Schultes, OP, Francisco Marín-Sola, OP, even the very conservative Louis Billot, SJ, or even the older work of Mattias Scheeben, the remarks in Bouillard do not age well. That being said, it was a dissertation. Anybody who has written such a work is aware that it represents one's first attempt to write at this level, and therefore, also, is almost always (indeed should be) the worst such attempt.

But in this infamous closing section, Bouillard made certain claims that stood out starkly to the eyes of the Dominicans, who feared that looseness in formulation could be but one step away from the epistemological relativism of turn-of-the-century Catholic modernism. Fr. Bouillard presented a theory of knowledge in which a kind of pre-conceptual affirmation would take form in various, wholly relative conceptual expressions. As Fr. Labourdette noted, it is clear that Bouillard intends to retain the fixity of the affirmation in question; however, it was not so clear to him, nor to his older confrere writing in Rome, how the proposed theory managed to

speculatively withstand full-blown relativism. I will leave a more substantive presentation of this affair for the lengthy introduction written by Dr. Kirwan and myself.

It is quite unfortunate that, in the end, the authors ended up talking past each other. Of late, I've been doing work on lectures on dogmatic development written by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's confrere and fellow professor at the Angelicum, Fr. Reginald Schultes. Even if the text (from the 1920s) is very conservative in many ways, with the modernist crisis looming in the immediate context, nonetheless, Fr. Schultes makes much more latitude for conceptual development in the proposing of revelation over the centuries than I had expected. And Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange basically takes Schultes's position for granted. Had he been younger in the 1940s, I wonder if he would have at least tried to engage in a more technical discussion with Fr. Bouillard. Alas that this was not the case.

Instead, he was particularly vexed at Bouillard's claim that the notion of formal cause used by the council of Trent for declarations regarding created grace would ultimately be passé in a new era. As Dr. Kirwan and I show in the introduction to our volume, the best back-and-forth in the whole 1940s debate is, in fact, that which was between Frs. Garrigou-Lagrange and Bouillard. The latter substantively engaged the former, whereas sadly the much more profound articles written by Frs. Labourdette and Nicolas did not receive adequate response from the other Jesuit authors.

Now, in the history of this entire affair, the public relations campaign (whether explicitly or implicitly waged) by later-Cardinal De Lubac and his friends has led many to think that this controversy was primarily concerned with the particular history and theses proposed in De Lubac's work *Surnaturel*, on the relationship between nature and grace. Granted, the work is mentioned in the long series of articles gathered in the volume by Dr. Kirwan and me. But,

although I would need to revisit the tabulations that I jotted down somewhere, it is completely safe to recall that, for Garrigou-Lagrange, there might be seven or eight pages devoted to Fr. De Lubac's work, out of a series of sixty or seventy pages of articles. Almost all of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's concern falls to Bouillard and his defenders, Msgr. Bruno de Solages (of the Institute Catholique de Toulouse) and Fr. Jean-Marie Le Blond, SJ. In fact, a significant portion of his interventions are actually concerned with old battles that he had with the lay philosopher Maurice Blondel, whose intellectual influence he did not wrongly see to be operative in his interlocutors' thought. When the old Dominican comes to the question of the supernatural, he merely expresses (to my eyes justified) vexation that Fr. De Lubac so flippantly reads a particular interpretation into certain texts in Aquinas (texts which, I will gladly admit, are somewhat ambiguous on their own terms, at least when taken in isolation). But, the engagement is rather superficial, and Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange basically gestures toward his own lengthy study of the question in *De Revelatione*. For my part, I would also add a gesture to Dr. Lawrence Feingold's (in my opinion at least) definitive study, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas and His Interpreters*.

But Fr. De Lubac does not figure centrally in the work. Nor do the "general tendencies" that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange singles out in his first and most famous article, "Where is the New Theology Headed?" In that text he cites certain unnamed private manuscripts floating around various *studia*, texts written at least by Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, whose thought, though positively spoken of by popes St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI, has also over the years been subject to important critiques by thinkers who are no lightweights: merely to name several,` in English, consider Étienne Gilson (in *The Tribulations of Sophia*), Dietrich von Hildebrand (for example in *Teilhard de Chardin: A False Prophet*), and Jacques Maritain (in *The Peasant of the Garonne*). I

will admit that as a young man I had an immensely positive experience reading Fr. De Chardin, and for that reason alone I tend to be somewhat easy on him, because I think it would be unappreciative if I blasted him like certain traditionalists do. But, I think we also need to admit that his thought required development and correction, and that especially in the context of the 1940s and in view of the content of the texts circulating, it is at least understandable that someone would strenuously respond to things that he was writing.

But, in the end, the main focus of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was the conclusion to Bouillard's volume (and what the old Dominican thought to be a kind of pragmatic, "Blondellian" theory of truth at work therein). In fact, at least in 1946 (on June 2), we have private attestation from Jacques Maritain, written to then-Fr. Charles Journet, following upon a meeting with Garrigou-Lagrange. During their meeting, the men spoke about the state of mind reigning then at the Holy Office. Maritain said to Journet:

> From what he told me, it appears that no public threat seems possible against the [general] tendencies [and] the articles of the review (this relieved me). His predominating concern is with Bouillard's book (let them do with it what they will). My own opinion is that the Pope should promulgate a positive document, enlightening minds concerning the nobility of speculative knowledge and the need for Catholic thought to be inspired by the wisdom of St. Thomas (cited in Étienne Fouilloux, "Dialogue théologique? (1946–1948)," in *Saint Thomas au XXe siecle: Actes du colloque Centenaire de la Revue Thomiste; Toulouse, 25–28 mars 1993*, 168–69; see Kirwan and Minerd, *The Thomistic Response to the Nouvelle théologie*, 34n128).

In any case, as is clear when one looks at the crisscrossing history of this entire affair, it is nowhere near as simple as it is presented either by Roman Catholic traditionalists, nor by those who are proponents of Jesuit and Dominican figures at variance with Frs. Labourdette, Nicolas, and Garrigou-Lagrange. First and foremost, nobody involved was looking for a blanket condemnation—at least in the public record. (And even when a broader "condemnation" came in *Humani generis*, it was in many ways quite gentle and more open-minded than its critics

would have one think.) And I would be very careful about ascribing nefarious behind-the-scenes work without sufficient documentary evidence. To the degree that I have stumbled into details regarding Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's involvement in various interventions, he has at least appeared to be a fair, though vigorous, critic—not a vindictive censor. For whatever mistakes that he committed—and clearly, he must have done so, at least in the eyes of history and by way of excess, given how even people who are dear to me think that I'm accusing *Communio* folks of being modernists or relativists merely because I voice Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's own low estimation of Bouillard's concluding remarks—such mistakes should not be presumed to be completely out of a sclerotic reflex. And, especially when his comments are read alongside the writings penned by his younger confreres in Toulouse (who were substantially in agreement with him, though not in tone), we find that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was a bit of an old anti-Modernist, afraid of a localized fire that might spread much further, but he was not a firebrand shooting massive condemnations in all directions.

But—and here some honesty about the mess we are in today is necessary—when one reads these men's writings, one will realize that even if it would indeed be wrong to apply their criticisms to later theologians who—despite very different methods and even visions of what theology is—remained faithful to the Church, Garrigou-Lagrange, Labourdette, and Nicolas likely sensed broad ripples of the deeper stirrings of theological relativism that eventually *did* sweep over the Church. I personally think that this can (and should) be affirmed without in any way calling into question either the Second Vatican Council or the good-faith of many non-Thomistic theologians, including the many great members associated with the *Communio* group.

But, what I would ask of my own confreres on the "other side" of the divide is for a fair hearing and estimation of the conservative Thomists, not the knee-jerk epithets of "ahistorical"

and "losers" (at Vatican II, an expression implied by someone like Bishop Barron when he refers to his preferred party as "winners"). I get the point of both epithets: Scholastics were much slower to the draw on matters historical, *concedo*; and, the general "ressourcement" approach exacted major concessions from the scholastics at the Council (on many points all for the better), *concedo libenter*. But, this kind of "winners-losers" grandiosity distorts the very history of scholastic theology by way of the first epithet and slurs together theological schools and Conciliar authority by way of the second.

There are many ways to write a "hermeneutic of discontinuity," and by the way that certain exponents of the *Communio* group speak to this day, you would swear that, pre-Conciliar Thomism deserves to be tarred and feathered solely as being "reactionary" and "ahistorical." And here we return yet again to a continued theme of these articles: the street goes to ways. It is insulting for such people to always insist that conservative Thomists bow and scrape, while never a true concession seems to be made from the *Communio* folks. Their quick accusation of being reactionary or a traditionalist is insulting—not merely to contemporary scholars who do work in this vein but even to the history itself. If there is to be real collaboration and peace among parties, there must be mutual recognition of weakness and fault. The Thomists have had to do this for years and years, and I hope that they maintain continued humility too. But, I think—especially in light of a reading of the *immensely irenic* attempts that were made by Fr. Labourdette, now available in English—perhaps it would do some good ecclesially if significant *Communio* figures could just admit: our guys also played an essential role in the inflaming of that whole debacle.

This entire affair blew up just after a World War that could have ended human civilization. It is all too understandable that all parties would, in the end, overstep the bounds of

propriety. Why, however, must only one side apologize—especially upon reading all the articles that Dr. Kirwan and I have presented in English for the reading public? If you give the volume a fair reading, you may there discover that the "victorious" party—who has done much good, I hasten to say—nonetheless has somewhat lied (at least materially) about the details, tone, and ultimate concerns involved in "L'affaire nouvelle théologie."

A Man Who is Much More Than an Uninspiring "Roman Thomist"

As I draw these articles to a close, I consider this last entry to be something slightly more than a mere period at the end of a long and rambling sentence. I cannot attempt to be synthetic here, given all of the various things that I have discussed (and ranted about) over the course of these past few articles. However, I would like to end by thinking about the general place of Fr. Garrigou Lagrange in the history of Catholic thought, past and present.

Allow a few preambulatory remarks. First and foremost, the difference between theology and faith should be respected. Obviously, the former is homogeneous with the latter and draws all its essential light therefrom. However, we must never confuse a theological difference with a separation in faith. But, what is more, all too often even a difference at the level of theological formulation really represents nothing other than a kind of misunderstanding of how the data of revelation and also of human experience are formulated by various parties. There is a lot of talking past each other that takes place in both philosophy and theology… *Res ipsa loquitur…* However, let us hope that some goodwill can be maintained among those who disagree, so that perhaps some small mutual understanding might always be possible. Here-below in this mutable world, there will always be substantive differences between philosophical and theological approaches. Whether or not pluralism is *de jure* the state of human inquiry, nonetheless our finitude makes it *de facto* to be the case for all of our formulation and speculation through the wending paths of history.

Moreover, despite the accusation made against me by some, I am not the partisan of a kind of revanchist Thomism that would install the line of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange as the sole spokesman of a cramped orthodoxy, beginning a millenarianist reign over a Dominican empire.

The world would be far too boring if it were only seen from one perspective. Indeed, thought itself would thereby find its infinite horizons so cramped that the mind could only desire to break free from such shackles. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange is not the solution to the Church's contemporary problems (and they are many…), nor those of the world (and they are even greater in number). The only solution to such ailments is, in fact, the holiness of the Triune God communicated to the complete Christ, head and members. And it is before that Reality, the only Reality that truly and unqualifiedly "counts," that every theology, every philosophy, every created reality must ultimately bend its knee, if it is to make the self-offering that is at the heart of what it means to be created. To take an expression from Fr. Ambrose Gardeil: there is nothing that bespeaks a wiser order than that in which the creature is second and God first.

But, so much light has been shed into my own life from this old man writing in Rome, a priest who was deeply affected by the laicism of the France in which he grew up, and the modernistic relativism which to his eyes (and those of the Church herself) threatened to shake the very foundation of the absolute truth of salvation that we receive in and through Christ and His Church. And this light has been shed not merely from his own pen and in his own writings, but also by his many disciples and fellow travelers, who have been of such immense influence upon me, and upon many others whom I dearly love and appreciate in the Catholic world. Allow me to speak a few words, therefore, concerning "the full Garrigouvian hermeneutic". Unfairly is he declared by no few to be, in the end, of the same mind as contemporary traditionalists (who themselves are often mischaracterized, I admit). Instead, the great line in which he figures is much broader than many imagine.

I could never imagine a world in which the thought of Jacques Maritain would have been possible had Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange never taken up his pen. If you open up the early works that Maritain wrote against Bergson, you will there find many important echoes from the early-century philosophical works of the old lion of Thomism. If you read anything about the spiritual life ever written by Maritain, there too you will find the mark of the Dominican theologian who could fill the great hall of the Angelicum in Rome. If you consider the theory of moral knowledge presented by Maritain, its great lines are derived from insights that he no doubt gained from the works of the man who unjustly has been called "Reginald the Rigid." And although the two men would come to differ in the practical and political order, Maritain's manner of being a Thomist is ultimately the same as the old Dominican, marked by the great confidence of the period after Leo XIII's call to a renewal of Christian philosophy in the form of scholasticism, in particular a philosophy that was not afraid to look backwards to the great masters after the 13th century—even those men of the baroque period and the time thereafter. Yes, men like Gilson were also inspired by the era of *Aeterni patris*, and they, as well as many others, labored on behalf of a Christian philosophy. But whereas someone like Gilson ultimately was historically bounded by the hermeneutic of a medievalist, Maritain—and also Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, on his most inventive days at least—looked to insert Thomism into the modern world and the questions and problems facing it. I'm not claiming that Gilson, or any of the other sub-branches of "neo-scholasticism" did not have such concerns for the problems facing contemporary men and women. Rather, what I am saying is that, in the end, there is more methodological continuity between Maritain and Garrigou than between Maritain and Gilson.

I might continue here with someone like Yves Simon, that brilliant and clear pen, ready at hand to bequeath to his readers a pound of gold in a space that, for most other authors, could only fit perhaps an ounce. Simon, interested in the many cultural and political shortcomings of scholasticism, nonetheless was indebted to the theory of cognition, virtue, and moral truth that he inherited from Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange through Maritain. And in the end, this great philosopher, who died far too young, stands in the line of those Thomists who believe that thought did not end with St. Thomas but, instead, lived on in a tradition of inquiry, with its sclerotic weaknesses but also its well-honed ability to continue the inquiry into reality inaugurated in the line of Saint Thomas.

We might pick also a more minor figure, but one whose profundity should not be overlooked: Father Pierre-Marie Emonet, who wrote a touching *in memoriam* for Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange and was the author of several small books of Thomistic philosophy for non-experts. It is the spirit of these texts above all that I commend to the reader. In them, one feels the influence of the master theologian about who Fr. Emonet writes lyrically in his brief little remembrance, "Un maître prestigieux."

And I would be remiss if I did not note also that great mid-century editor of the *Revue Thomiste*, Fr. Marie Michel Labourdette. This priest, a close friend of Maritain and a staunch defender of an open-minded yet traditional Thomism, is far too underappreciated in our day. Sadly, he was not an active writer, at least in the way of monographs. But, his existing articles, as well as his lengthy republished lecture notes in moral theology, are of immense value for understanding a renewed moral theology that does not scorn its own history, sawing off the branch upon which it sits. To read Fr. Labourdette is to read an important liminal attestation to

the organic connections between the thought of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange and Maritain. Alongside Fr. Labourdette, we might also include Fr. Marie-Joseph Nicolas, as well as Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's own younger collaborator, Fr. Marie-Rosaire Gagnetbet, who played an important role as a peritus at the Second Vatican Council and also served at Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's side during his failing years.

And here too, we could mention Cardinal Charles Journet. His intellectual itinerary was in the line of Maritain, but it is clear upon reading the great Swiss theologian that one is dealing here with a man who writes out of the same great tradition that links together all of the figures that I have mentioned in this article. Imagine how different the world would have been after the Council if voices like his were allowed to echo more profoundly, providing an expression of continuity between the great scholastic tradition and the new reflection of "ressourcement" thinkers. Sadly, this was allowed neither by the progressives (who had little interest in such classical theology), nor by many conservatives (who wished to cast aside what they thought to be an overly baroque, out of date Thomism).

And here in America, we could site Monsignor Clifford Joseph Fenton, whose long labors at the *American Ecclesiastical Review* and at the Catholic University of America would lead him to the heights of influence at the Second Vatican Council as peritus to Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani. But even more profound a student of Garrigou than he was the great, and still today somewhat ignored, Fr. Emmanuel Doronzo. Alas, this great Italian-American theologian wrote his extensive corpus of sacramental theology and dogmatic theology in Latin during a period when this language was beginning to fade from the Roman Catholic intellectual context. Theology has developed and expanded in many ways since he wrote his many treatises.

Nonetheless, a full picture of theological speculation—especially on the sacraments, though also on the dogmatic topics that he touches at great depth—will require theologians one day to deeply engage with the breadth, depth, and insight of his many works. Of him, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange once wrote, in words that echoed the exact same spirit with which the old Dominican himself tried to theologize: "He is not guilty of the short-coming that we can see in those who are more concerned with conclusions to be drawn rather than with principles."

And another figure, more idiosyncratic, but also coming to be known by some people nowadays, is the Australian Thomist Fr. Austin Woodbury. A man who by all accounts was an inspiring lecturer in Philosophy and Theology, Father Woodbury presents a kind of synthetic snapshot of the Dominican Thomistic school, though developed in many ways in the line of Garrigou-Lagrange, Maritain, and others like them. If more graduate students in Thomistic philosophy began with Woodbury as their master, they would more fruitfully return to their shared doctor, Saint Thomas Aquinas. How I hope there comes a day when we can take for granted the sort of clear and developed Thomism that Fr. Woodbury offers as a kind of rigorous introduction into the great tradition of philosophy bequeathed by the Thomist school and its masters.

And in dogmatic theology there is someone, for example, like Fr. Jean-Hervé Nicolas, whose works are becoming better known in English by way of translation. Father Nicolas, a man straddling two eras of Thomism, perhaps downplays his dependence on the tradition that reared him. However, to ears that can hear, one can find in him an echo of a great formation that all too often is presented, even today, as being a kind of cramped orthodoxy, a tight straight jacket. Fr. Nicolas' various works and, especially, his many articles, put the lie to such

claims. May he and the other figures listed here teach us how to theologize and philosophize in vital communion with our tradition, while also always keeping our feet planted upon the reality and questions of our day.

And, funny enough, it is the last figure in this long parade who is, in fact, perhaps my greatest master, even more than Maritain, at least as regards some of the most important insights that guide my own reflection and interests: John Deely. Anybody who has read Deely's work knows how torturous his prose is and how unique his own incorporation of Thomism along semiotic lines is. But ultimately, he is a man of the great Dominican tradition in which Garrigou-Lagrange figures. Blessedly, this dear curmudgeon breaks the bonds of a sclerotic and "cyclopean" Thomism that is far too insensitive to the profound implications of the domain of *ens rationis* and *relatio secundum esse*, so well sketched by the Thomists, but so underutilized for paving forward in a truly post-modern scholasticism. From the days when I was blessed to spend time with John as he closed out his sojourn upon this mortal coil, I have been convinced that there is a profound hermeneutical continuity between him and Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, although Deely's work also obviously marks out a revolution that the old conservative in Rome would never have himself been able to take up.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not, so to speak, look backward in time as I close out this series of articles. My long days spent with the "sacred monster of Thomism" have indeed taught me that so many of the stories that I heard about "neo-scholasticism" were profoundly mendacious concerning the figures who wrote and taught faithfully in the 19th and 20th century, let alone in earlier centuries. Through the old Dominican I have learned the importance of listening, when possible, to the great Thomists of yore, men like, yes, Capreolus, Cajetan,

Sylvester of Ferrara, John of St. Thomas, Domingo Bañez, and the *Salmanticenses*, but also Gonet, Guernois, Goudin, and Billuart, as well as spiritual theologians like Thomas de Vallegornera and the Carmelite Joseph of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, how many great figures of the 19th and 20th century provide guidance for true continuity in thinking as a Catholic, who should never throw aside former eras merely because they had their limitations (sometimes significant, yes): Berthier, San Severino, Zigliara, Schwalm, Schultes, Lehu, Janvier, Arintero, Hugon, Gardeil, and Merkelbach…

Perhaps it is a question of temperament, a latent conservatism born of the hills of Appalachia, but I find it very useful to think within a kind of continuity. As a layman, not a member of the Order of Preachers, I am not by vocation connected to the school that, in a sense, found me. But the immense fecundity of these forebears—who have been of such profound influence not merely on my intellectual life but on my personal and spiritual life as well—places upon my shoulders a duty of filial obligation to defend and speak well of a tradition that even to this day does not receive a fair shake, whether from progressives who have no interest in it, or from a certain kind of conservatism that all too often acts as though the Second Vatican Council spelled an end to this line (even, according to some people, including Maritain himself, at least where he is all too in line with the Thomist commentators), and even from a form of rigid traditionalism that often does not see (or at least does not seem to truly appreciate) the living and developing character of the philosophical-theological line of thought in which Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange figures centrally.

If nothing else, it is my hope that you who have read these articles—whether they have enraged or interested you, or, likely, both!—will at least realize that so many of the simple

"boxes" of Catholic history fail to give adequate place to a tradition that must openly and profoundly be part of the conversation in contemporary Catholicism, even in "polite" academic circles. I personally don't think that peace will come through facile agreement. We should, in any case, hate that kind of bland theology, an amalgam of heterogenous parts—or, perhaps, somewhat like the androgynous, gray, featureless "Greendale Human Being" from the show *Community*. Vigorous unity-in-difference, such has been the colorful story of true Catholicity, in her various Churches, ritual forms, spiritualities, and theologies.

However, to be clear: what is now needed is not retrenchment within new camps, but rather, mutual understanding in the midst of the variety that marks faithful theological reflection today, lest we repeat the dénouement of the 1940s now anew in 2023, with a "dialogue of the deaf." I hope, in spite of my stridency, I have helped in some small way to make this be the case by trying to set the record straight, in justice, regarding Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, whom some would still like to call the "Ahistoircal Sacred Monster of Thomism," but whom I (and others dear to me) most gladly recognize as one of my central masters in philosophy and theology.