

# Introduction

In a departure from our recent series of thematic issues, this issue of the *Josephinum Journal of Theology* is not organized around a particular theme but instead presents a collection of essays addressing a broad range of topics.

The opening essay is by Bishop Daniel Flores, who argues for the importance of recovering an appreciation of St. Thomas Aquinas as a commentator on Scripture or Scriptural theologian. Bishop Flores does so by drawing upon Thomas's commentaries on the letters of Saint Paul in order to show how they influenced his teaching in his more widely known *Summa Theologiae*. The second essay, by William M. Wright IV, illumines the way in which John's Gospel (especially Jn 6:1-21) draws upon the Old Testament. The third essay offers another example of contemporary Biblical scholarship. In it, John Clabeaux shows how the emphasis on justice in Old Testament ethics should be understood as inseparable from a theology of the presence of God, as reflected in physical actions and concrete symbols.

In our fourth essay, John M. McDermott, SJ, considers what he calls "the sacramental structure of reality." He argues that the recognition of this structure helps to overcome the limitations of alternative theological approaches. The fifth essay is by Duarte Sousa-Lara who offers our readers another component of his broad study of Aquinas's understanding of the specification of moral acts: that is, how their moral species or "kind" (and quality as good or evil) is determined. In this essay, Sousa-Lara considers Thomas's understanding of the *ordo rationis* (order of reason) that has been largely neglected by many writers on Aquinas's action theory, but which is crucial for understanding the interrelated aspects of this complex area of moral philosophy. By so doing, Sousa-Lara is able to provide an integrated view of several aspects of Aquinas's moral theory such as the order of right reason, the order of virtue, the order of natural law, the moral relevance of the *materia* of the act, the ends intended by the agent, the choice, and the moral object.

The sixth essay is by José Noriega of Pontifical John Paul II Institute in Rome, through which he offers a complementary perspective on moral acts and the order of reason that directs and measures them. Noriega emphasizes that the order that reason puts into human actions comes not merely from our lower nature and inclinations, but also takes into account the perceived good of encountering other persons and recognizing the need to build a communion of friendship and love with them. In our seventh essay, Daniel B. Gallagher explores the tension in Benedict XVI's *Spe Salvi* between secular and properly Christian hope, which tension reflects the intimate relation between faith and reason. The eighth essay is by Gerald J. Beyer and considers the proper role of government in the economy according to Benedict's social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. Byer presents Benedict's encyclical as a timely and balanced statement on contemporary social questions such as financial regulation, health care policy and environmental stewardship, while rightly avoiding the errors of socialism and libertarianism. In our final essay, William Newton provides a valuable study of the favorite conciliar texts of Pope John Paul

II, namely *Gaudium et Spes* 22 §1 and, to a lesser extent, 24 §3. After showing the centrality of these texts in the teaching Pontificate of John Paul II, and that he was not the author of the them, Newton concludes that this last fact further indicates the importance of the texts given that John Paul's preference for them was not due to personal ownership but to a recognition of their significance in the teaching of the council.

It is our hope that our readers will find this issue of the *Josephinum Journal of Theology* a helpful stimulus to ongoing reflection on these important themes.

William F. (Bill) Murphy, Jr.  
Associate Professor of Moral Theology and Editor