

Josephinum Journal of Theology
Volume 15, Number 1: Theology and Philosophy Ten Years after Fides et Ratio

Introduction

In anticipation of this year's tenth anniversary of Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio: On the Relationship between Faith and Reason*, the present issue of the *Josephinum Journal of Theology* brings together several essays loosely organized around the general theme of philosophy and theology.

Our issue opens with the address that Pope Benedict XVI intended to give at Rome's La Sapienza University on January 17, 2008, but was prevented from doing so by protests among students and faculty. Such protests – especially when seen in light of the Holy Father's eminently reasonable, respectful and appropriate address – make evident an ongoing crisis of reason in Western intellectual centers and culture. Against the modern Western understanding of a reason deliberately detached from its historical roots in Greek philosophy and Christian theology, Benedict encourages the recovery of a broader understanding of reason. By recovering its place within “the great dialogue of historical wisdom,” contemporary thought can avoid the distortions introduced by self-interest and utilitarianism and foster the “sensitivity to truth” that must characterize the university and the intellectual life in general. In our second essay, J. M. McDermott, SJ offers an insightful reading of twentieth century Catholic theology, which he contextualizes in light of the early Christian appropriation of Greek philosophy, the Thomistic synthesis, the subsequent development of “Cajetanian Thomism,” the challenges to this tradition arising from historical studies, and the Neo-Thomistic revival centered in Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* (1879). This sets the stage for his discussion of twentieth century theology focused on the development of “transcendental Thomism,” which ironically led to the widespread abandonment of Thomism and the adoption of “a pluralism of philosophies and theologies,” often geared toward social praxis. More positively, McDermott indicates various contributions toward a more adequate synthesis, noting John Paul II's integration of person, nature and freedom.

The third essay by Kevin Hart discusses an important aspect of the encounter between postmodern philosophy and Christian theology. This involves what can be called the theological turn in recent (and especially French) phenomenology as exemplified in the work of Jean-Luc Marion, a significant intellectual current that maintains a lively contact with the work of Aquinas. Whereas the “radical orthodoxy” of John Milbank and his collaborators “make a half-turn back to the Platonism of the Fathers and so revive the question of being,” thinkers like Marion offer an approach that “develops within the horizon of the end of metaphysics” to affirm a “God without being.” Hart discusses not only the work of Marion, but also that of Louis-Marie Chauvet and Jean-Yves Lacoste who similarly proceed through critical engagement with the thought of Martin Heidegger. Next, Fergus Kerr, OP offers a contribution that seeks to remedy the lack of serious engagement – outside of analytical Thomism – by Catholic (and also Protestant) theology with the analytic tradition that has dominated Anglo-American universities for over 50 years. He does so by discussing the influence of Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy on three twentieth century Catholic scholars: Elizabeth Anscombe, Cornelius Ernst and Herbert McCabe. Kerr concludes that these thinkers gained various insights from Wittgenstein including

those regarding the nature and function of language, along with others helpful in retrieving premodern understandings of orthodox Catholic ethics and Eucharistic doctrine.

In our fifth essay, Eleanor Stump enters into a debate among contemporary (i.e., analytic) philosophers regarding the nature of love. After noting the strengths and seemingly insurmountable difficulties of both the “responsiveness” and “volitional” accounts of love, she shows the soundness of Aquinas’s approach and its ability to address the various deficiencies of the alternatives. Moreover, she shows the explanatory power of Aquinas’s approach in addressing important related questions, such as those concerning the nature of forgiveness. Next, Prudence Allen offers a study of friendship, vocation and gender that draws comprehensively upon sources ranging from ancient to contemporary. Though it is obviously a substantial piece of scholarship, this essay also has considerable practical relevance in helping readers to recognize deficiencies in certain understandings of friendship. In the seventh contribution, Kenneth R. Schmitz reflects with his characteristic philosophical wonder upon the mystery of being. He does so from three perspectives: as it is known, as it pertains to free human action, and as it pertains to human creativity. Next, in returning to the thought of Josef Ratzinger on the relation of philosophy and theology, Patricia Pintado offers a comprehensive survey of a central and recurring theme in his writings and a central part of his critique of modernity, namely the self-limitation of reason in modern thought. Pintado summarizes Professor and Cardinal Ratzinger’s account of how this self-limitation develops through three successive stages in the history of philosophy, and of how it leads to an impoverishment that must be overcome. Finally, Joseph T. Papa shows the fecundity of Husserlian phenomenology in a study of Ignatian spiritual experience. In particular, after introducing readers to the philosophical framework, he shows how Husserl’s understanding of “motivation” sheds light on different kinds of consolations treated by Ignatius.

It is our hope that this issue of the *Josephinum Journal of Theology* will be of assistance to readers in their ongoing reflection on the relation between philosophy and theology, which in the mind of our current Holy Father and his predecessor is so important to the intellectual and pastoral life of the Church.

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