

Introduction

This issue of the *Josephinum Journal of Theology* opens with five essays covering diverse topics, followed by a symposium on the 2010 *Decree on the Renewal of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy*, comprised of four essays which have been translated for this occasion from the originals that were published in an issue of the Roman Journal *Seminarium* dedicated to the *Decree*.

Our first essay is an expanded version of the text from a public lecture given at the Pontifical College Josephinum on November 19, 2014 by our scholar in residence, Jared Wicks, S.J. It was the third in his ongoing series of lectures on fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and is entitled “Vatican II in 1964: Major Doctrinal Advances, But Also Fissures on Addressing the Modern World.” The essay begins by encouraging a “re-reception” of the council, and then proceeds to show how the inner coherence of the sixteen conciliar documents can be seen in light of the doctrine of *Lumen gentium*, before highlighting the reform-character of the council, and concluding with a reflection on the “lights and shadows” regarding the council at the time. Our next essay is also the text of a lecture given at the Josephinum in the Fall semester of 2014, this one by Fr. Robert Barron. In it he seeks to articulate a “thick” account of Christian anthropology through a consideration of what the Eucharistic liturgy reveals about the human person, including that such persons are formed in light of a call from God, through ongoing repentance, through especially liturgical praise, through receiving the Word of God, through self-giving in union with the Eucharistic offering, and through a unique personal mission in Christ. This essay is followed by one by John M. McDermott, S.J. who assesses some recent efforts to recover an appreciation for the work of Maurice de la Taille (1872-1933). In so doing, he highlights de la Taille’s ability both to uphold traditional doctrine and to draw on Patristic sources to articulate a more dynamic understanding of the work of Grace in the baptized. Our fourth essay is by Fr. Peter Kucer, M.S.A. and it explores the thought of the influential Anglican theologian John Milbank, especially regarding some apparent developments in his thought that bring him closer to a Catholic understanding of truth and stability. This is followed by an essay by Kent Lasnowski that looks at the question of embryo adoption in light of an especially wide range of resources from the Catholic tradition.

Our symposium on the *Decree on the Renewal of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy* begins with an essay by Msgr. Lluís Clavell who argues that the *Decree* should be understood as providing a new impulse to evangelization by encouraging a reform of philosophical studies in harmony with theology. The symposium continues with a contribution from Georges Cardinal Cottier, OP who argues that the *Decree* correctly locates the place of Aquinas’s thought as a vital intellectual resource that should be seen broadly, on the one hand, as something more than a mere historical example, but on the other hand, as something less than an exclusive authority. In our third reflection on the *Decree*, Fr. Pierre de Cointet counters

possible opposition that one might see between the spiritual life and the philosophical studies that the Church requires of seminarians; he does so by showing instead how a proper philosophical formation fosters a spiritual life which, he shows, is properly seen as a configuration to Christ that is both experienced personally and understood in light of the rationality of the faith for which philosophy plays an essential role. Our final essay is by Emmanuel Tourpe who offers an interpretation of how the call of the *Decree* - to recover the place of metaphysics as “the original vocation of philosophy” - might be seen in a way that does not merely point us back to the ancients, but also engages in a vital dialogue with modern and contemporary philosophy.

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