

## MODELS OF THOMISTIC STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY NORTH AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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The history of the dialogue between Thomists and the modern world in the past century reveals many shifts and transformations unforeseen yet instigated by Leo XIII, in his 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. The evolution of “Thomism” —that Christian philosophy deriving its inspiration from the works of Thomas Aquinas— in the past 125 years has centered on the twin issues of authenticity (conservation) and enculturation (innovation), *viz.*, “How can Thomist philosophers be authentic interpreters of Aquinas while simultaneously engaging mainstream contemporary philosophies by contributing in some meaningful way to the concrete particular concerns of the present age?” With this problematic in mind, the author traces the evolution of Thomism as practiced in North American institutions of higher learning, and discerns five “models” or approaches of Thomistic studies, namely, exclusivist (triumphalist), formational, conservative (traditionalist), dialogical, and pluralist (inclusivist). The future prospects of Thomism are argued to rely largely on the degree of success to which Catholic educators are able to transmit Aquinas’ ethics and spirituality to the postmodern mind.

### *I. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION*

The perennial wisdom of St. Thomas Aquinas has been taught in celebrated seats of learning for more than seven hundred years. A robust tradition, Thomism has waxed and waned, only to flourish again many times over the centuries. One of the more fascinating and useful sagas today is the story of twentieth century Thomism<sup>1</sup> in English-

<sup>1</sup> Without debating here the merits of the name, “Thomism” refers to that emphatic formulation of Christian philosophy which derives its inspiration from the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas.

speaking North America. This episode in the long and uneven history of Thomistic studies began in late nineteenth century Europe, where a major effort to promote the Angelic Doctor to primacy within Catholic intellectual thought occurred during the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878–1903). Leo insisted that the scholastic approach to philosophy at its apogee was the work of St. Thomas. He envisioned a Thomistic revival, coupled with the centralization of ecclesial authority in Rome, as the best antidote and alternative to the rapidly spreading influence of secularism, agnosticism and scientific materialism in modern culture. In his famous 1879 encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris*,<sup>2</sup> Leo described the problem as he perceived it, urging its resolution through the reintroduction of St. Thomas' thought into Catholic higher education:

Domestic and civil society [. . .] is exposed to great danger from this plague of perverse opinions, [and] would certainly enjoy a far more peaceful and secure existence if a more wholesome doctrine were taught in the universities and high schools—one more in conformity with the teaching of the Church, such as is contained in the works of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>3</sup>

Leo XIII named Aquinas patron saint of all Catholic universities, colleges, and schools worldwide. In the same encyclical letter, Leo identified several schools and academies of Europe—Paris, Salamanca, Alcalá, Douay, Toulouse, Louvain, Padua, Bologna, Naples and Coimbra—as having at one time or another maintained strong intellectual ties with the thought of St. Thomas.<sup>4</sup> Had Leo written a century later, undoubtedly he would have added to his “short list” the *new* centers of Thomistic thought that arose in North America as well as Europe in response to his call. It was chiefly the ecclesiastical faculties in Rome, especially the institution known today as the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (the *Angelicum*), which Leo founded in part to undertake the perennial commission of producing a critical edition of St. Thomas's writings in the *Editio Leonina*. Along with the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie in Louvain, these new centers for the study and dissemination of St. Thomas's thought initially spurred Neo-Thomism and medieval studies into their modern heyday, which was attained during the second quarter of the twentieth century.

<sup>2</sup> Leo XIII: *Aeterni Patris*, encyclical letter On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy, issued August 4, 1879.

<sup>3</sup> *Aeterni Patris*, 28. English translation extracted from [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) (Vatican web site), Nov. 4, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> *Aeterni Patris*, 20.

Catholic higher education in North America followed Europe's lead by embracing the *philosophia perennis* — notably in Canada at Toronto's St. Michael's College, at Laval in French-speaking Canada,<sup>5</sup> and in the United States at numerous sites such as Catholic University of America, Notre Dame, Saint Louis, Marquette, Fordham, and elsewhere. Each in its own fashion supported and enhanced the Thomistic revival that had occurred in Europe between the world wars; and in the decades prior to the Second Vatican Council, these North American institutions contributed unique opportunities for higher learning and advanced scholarship infused with Thomistic and Neo-scholastic theology, philosophy, and history. As the post-war European Thomist revival reached its zenith between the years 1926 and 1930, a remarkable development of Neo-Thomism was occurring in North America. As Gerald McCool wrote in 1988: "Reflecting upon its history fifty years later, it is clear that, in its American evolution, the tradition of Saint Thomas had a stronger and more lasting influence on philosophy in general and on Catholic higher education than it had in Europe."<sup>6</sup>

Thomism's roots in the United States date at least to the emergence of The Catholic University of America (CUA), located strategically in the nation's capital, which today refers to itself as "the national university of the Catholic Church in the United States."<sup>7</sup> Leo XIII chartered the "flagship" university in 1887, partly to satisfy the desire of certain American church leaders who sought to make accessible to Catholics in North America a graduate education along the lines of the modern German research university. CUA is the only American university licensed by the Vatican to teach Catholic theology, philosophy, and canon law; and it is the only American university with ecclesiastical faculties that grant canonical degrees in these disciplines. Leo's main objective in allowing the establishment of CUA seems to have been at odds with the vision of the American leadership. The Americans, led by Bishop John Spalding, sought to use CUA as part of a larger strategy of evangelizing American culture by mainstreaming existing Catholic

<sup>5</sup> Although outside the purview of this essay, it is important to note that French Canadian Dominicans established the École Supérieure de Philosophie at Laval University in Quebec, and in 1930 opened the Institut Saint-Thomas d'Aquin at Ottawa, which later moved to the University of Montreal. Cf. L. K. Shook: *Étienne Gilson*, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984: 193–194.

<sup>6</sup> G. A. McCool: 'The Tradition of Saint Thomas in North America: At 50 Years', *Modern Schoolman* 65, 1988: 186.

<sup>7</sup> The Catholic University of America web site ([www.cua.edu](http://www.cua.edu)). Cf. McCool (1988: 187f).

thought. In contrast Leo XIII, with the appointment of the first Apostolic Delegate to the United States, in part, to “correct errors,” left no doubt that the American church was *not* to be encouraged to engage the larger world on the world’s own terms. Instead it was to focus on strengthening its own distinctively Catholic worldview by introducing Thomistic ideas and ideals to Catholic intellectuals residing in English-speaking North America.<sup>8</sup> Leo’s successor, Pius X, writing in 1914, made abundantly clear his understanding of Leo’s intention, with his directive to “order and command that teachers of sacred theology in Universities, Academies, Colleges, Seminaries and Institutions enjoying by apostolic indult the privilege of granting academic degrees [...] use the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas as the text [...] and comment upon it in the Latin tongue.”<sup>9</sup> The 1917 Code of Canon Law issued under Benedict XV required all professors of philosophy and theology to hold and teach the doctrines of St. Thomas.<sup>10</sup> And in 1923 Pius XI declared that “St. Thomas should be called [...] the Common or Universal Doctor of the Church: for the Church has adopted his philosophy for her very own.”<sup>11</sup>

Within a decade of Pius XI’s pronouncement, Toronto asserted itself as Canada’s premier center of Thomistic learning. If ever there was a jewel in the crown of the publicly chartered and mostly state funded University of Toronto’s St. Michael’s College, that jewel was the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies—commonly known as “PIMS.” Canadian historian Laurence Shook, writing in 1971, referred to PIMS as “an autonomous teaching and research institute, at the graduate and post-doctoral levels, specializing in the thought and culture of the middle ages as recoverable and as bearing on man in subsequent times in-

<sup>8</sup> Leo XIII’s concerns are amply described in his encyclical letter on the Catholic Church in the United States, *Longinqua Oceani* (Jan. 6, 1895). In it, Leo refers to the establishment of the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC (para. 7), and announces and explains his motives for naming a papal legate to the United States (para. 11ff).

<sup>9</sup> Pius X, *Doctoris Angelici* (June 29, 1914), Appendix II, in J. Maritain, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, London: : Meridian Books, 1958: 215–221.

<sup>10</sup> Code of Canon Law (1917). Cf. J. C. Livingston: *Modern Christian Thought*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, *The Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997: 343. See esp. ch. 13, ‘Movements of Recovery and Conservation: Ultramontaniam and the Neo-Thomistic Revival’, pp. 327–355, and ch. 14, ‘Roman Catholic Thought at the End of the Century: The New Apologetics and Modernism’, pp. 356–383.

<sup>11</sup> Pius XI, *Studiorum Ducem* (1923).

cluding the present.”<sup>12</sup> The Institute was established in 1929 at the encouragement of world-renowned Thomistic historian Etienne Gilson, who joined the faculty. Jacques Maritain, arguably the world’s leading proponent of Thomistic philosophy at that time, was a frequent lecturer. The Institute achieved its pontifical charter in 1939. Its basic funding and support came from St. Michael’s College, the Basilian Fathers, and its own fellows. As late as the 1980s, PIMS offered courses leading to the licentiate and doctorate in medieval studies, provided a specialized research library for scholars, and published material related to its specialization, and Shook referred to PIMS in his day as the “paradigm” of Catholic post-secondary education at the post-graduate and research levels.<sup>13</sup> Even today, scholars at PIMS continue to labor over the Leonine Edition of St. Thomas’s works.

Following the Second World War, Thomistic philosophy came under increasing criticism from Catholic scholars who claimed they were increasingly out of touch with mainstream intellectual inquiry. Faced with the threat of ever new forms of “Modernism” and secular relativism, Pius XII defended the continued use of St. Thomas in Catholic education, noting in the encyclical *Humani Generis* that Aquinas’ teachings were by that time “scorned by some, who shamelessly call it outmoded in form and rationalistic, as they say, in its method.”<sup>14</sup> Only with the reign of John XXIII (1958–1963) was strict adherence to a Thomistic framework relaxed; and with Paul VI and the Second Vatican Council (1963–1965), for a time “all things Thomistic” were considered *passé* as Catholic historians, philosophers and theologians scrambled to dialogue with and appropriate diverse philosophical systems.

## 2. TWENTIETH-CENTURY CONTROVERSIES

At the turn of the twentieth century, Thomism had no sooner become the favored system of thought for Catholic scholarship than Catholic

<sup>12</sup> L. K. Shook: *Catholic Post-Secondary Education in English-Speaking Canada: A History*, Toronto & Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1971 : 210.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Pius XII, *Humani Generis* (Aug. 12, 1950), 31. Pius continues, in para. 32: “[T]he Church demands that future priests be instructed in philosophy ‘according to the method, doctrine, and principles of the Angelic Doctor,’ since, as we well know from the experience of centuries, the method of Aquinas is singularly preeminent both for teaching students and for bringing truth to light; his doctrine is in harmony with Divine Revelation, and is most effective both for safeguarding the foundation of the faith and for reaping, safely and usefully, the fruits of sound progress.”

scholars themselves began to dispute its method and meaning. Gilson and Maritain, along with Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange and Maurice Blondel, debated whether it was desirable or even possible in the modern era to achieve a genuine “Christian philosophy.”<sup>15</sup> If Blondel was criticized in 1896 in the *Revue thomiste* for allegedly embracing neo-Kantian subjectivism,<sup>16</sup> the attack on him was mild when compared to the rethinking of Thomistic philosophy in the early twentieth century by men such as Pierre Rousselot and Joseph Maréchal. The period between World War II and the Second Vatican Council, saw the maturation of the branch of Neo-Thomism now known as Transcendental Thomism—so named for its affinity for Kant’s transcendental method.<sup>17</sup> In addition to leading mid-twentieth century Continental theologians such as Henri de Lubac (1896–1991) and Karl Rahner (1904–1984), the University of Toronto’s Regis College had its own Transcendental Thomist in the person of Bernard Lonergan (1904–1984). Whatever their differences, all Neo-Thomists faced the same fundamental tension: In what way, and to what extent, ought their philosophy to be authentically Thomistic while simultaneously engaging mainstream contemporary philosophies by contributing in some meaningful way to the concrete particular concerns of the present age?<sup>18</sup> Leo XIII en-

<sup>15</sup> Cf. A. C. Pegis: *St. Thomas and Philosophy*, Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1964. This volume, dedicated to Gilson, was based on Pegis’s 1964 Aquinas Lecture at Marquette University.

<sup>16</sup> Livingston (1997: 363).

<sup>17</sup> The quarrel was whether the transcendental method managed to maintain the integrity of the “architectonic theses” of the Angelic Doctor’s metaphysics while undertaking the “necessary absorptions” of modern thought, i.e., could this approach, which sought to accommodate modern (post-Kantian) philosophical presuppositions, succeed without misinterpreting or misapplying St. Thomas’s thought? A description of the so-called “error” of Maréchal’s approach is provided by R. J. Henle, S.J.: ‘Transcendental Thomism: A Critical Assessment’, in: V. B. Brezik, C.S.B. (ed.): *One Hundred Years of Thomism: Aeterni Patris and Afterwards, A Symposium*, Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, University of St. Thomas, 1981: 92–116. For a more sympathetic analysis, see G. McCool: *The Neo-Thomists*, Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994, esp. pp. 97–135. In this volume, McCool also traces the history of the “Christian philosophy” debate.

<sup>18</sup> Doubtless, a contributing factor to the malaise resides in the difficulties inherent in interpreting Thomistic language in a way that remains true to its author’s meaning yet is made comprehensible to the modern person without presupposing a lifetime of study in Scholastic categories and concepts. On the other hand, many modern and postmodern philosophers have stubbornly resisted meaningful engagement with Thomistic philosophy under any circumstances. This prejudice against a Catholic philosophy borne in Thomistic thought is at heart the modern rejection of transcendence, i.e., that St. Thomas’ use of theology breaks the rules of modern philosophy. As Pegis

visioned Thomistic thought as an antidote and an alternative to the decline of modern culture. Thomistic scholars and the academic centers that have supported their scholarship, on the other hand, generally recognized the need to engage the wider world. Brian Shanley, looking back on a century of Thomism on the eve of the new millennium, aptly describes the dilemma but only hints at the solution:

What emerges from [...] twentieth-century Thomism is that the tradition has always been marked by the tension between conservation and innovation, between doctrinal fidelity and dialogue. This has been true throughout the entire history of Thomism, and it will continue to be true in the new century. How could it be otherwise? A Thomism that stayed in a defensive intellectual ghetto would cease to be a living tradition, while a Thomism that accommodated itself to every philosophical movement would cease to be Thomism. Each age demands both a genuine fidelity to the original and a genuine willingness to dialogue with what is new in philosophy.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps because of its tension between conservation and innovation, Neo-Thomism has never attained mainstream prominence in English-speaking North America; but it has never completely evaporated, either. Its resilience was apparent even during the 1970s, when in the aftermath of Vatican II scholarly and public interest in Thomism and medieval studies reached its twentieth century nadir, just as competition for limited funds from other interests within the universities increased sharply. But even then, the decline of Toronto's Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies could not have been predicted. PIMS had served,

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explains (*op.cit.* : 86f), "the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas aims at its very substance to direct man's vision to his encounter with a transcendent God within the universe; it aims, by the very metaphysical urgency of that encounter, to locate the human person in the known presence of an unknown God. This is the philosophy of St. Thomas in its principles, in its aim, and, above all, in the personalist spirit of his intellectualism. Our own problem is that this philosophy exists in its author for a higher than human purpose. Can we, in the condition of our own day, give to this same philosophy a human purpose and a human existence without violating the theological dedication that St. Thomas himself wrote into it in creating it?" The debate in France, beginning in 1931, is chronicled in M. Nédoncelle, *Is There a Christian Philosophy? (Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism)*, New York: Hawthorne Books, 1960: 85–99; cf. A. Henry, 'La querelle de la philosophie chrétienne: histoire et bilan d'un débat', in: J. Danielou (ed.): *Philosophies Chrétiennes, Recherches et Débats*, Paris: Librairie Fayard, 1955: 35–68. Ralph McInerny provides an excellent summary of the debate in North America: R. McInerny: 'Reflections on Christian Philosophy', in: Brezik (1981: 63–73).

<sup>19</sup> B. J. Shanley: *The Thomist Tradition*, Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, vol. 2 in *Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* series, Eugene Thomas Long, ser. ed., p. 20.

after all, as the “perfect” answer to a major dilemma at the University of Toronto. Although the federation of colleges participating in the publicly funded and largely secular University of Toronto had allowed Catholic studies in general and scholastic philosophy in particular to flourish at the undergraduate level for its Catholic member institutions St. Michael’s College, Regis College, and St. Augustine’s Seminary, the same system had cut off its denominational colleges at the graduate level. Today Toronto has a seven member Toronto School of Theology which offers graduate degrees in Catholic theology through the three Catholic member institutions, but in 1929 was no outlet for the more profound interests of faculty or students either in graduate study or in research in Thomistic higher learning at St. Michael’s College. The same system that made it economically feasible for a student to do honors work in scholastic philosophy made it very difficult to provide the academic environment proper to faculty capable of teaching that work.<sup>20</sup> PIMS was created at great expense by St. Michael’s College to provide just such a work environment, and for several decades PIMS succeeded in attracting to Toronto several of the world’s leading Thomists, in addition to Gilson, including over the years such names as Anton Pegis, Joseph Owens, Armand Maurer, and other scholars of medieval philosophy, history and theology.

During the 1980s and 1990s, with academic interest in “medievalia” on the wane, PIMS suffered from a decline in funding and decided to drop its academic programs so as not to duplicate courses offered elsewhere in the University, and to focus its efforts almost entirely on the reprinting of scholarly publications concerning the great minds of the Middle Ages. Recently, however, PIMS fortunes appear again on the rise. With an increase in support from the Vatican as well as significant funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, PIMS is emphasizing the medieval interaction between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Its refocus on ecumenism appears to have ensured the future of PIMS. But how this restructuring of PIMS’ mission will affect the future of Thomistic studies at Toronto remains largely unanswered.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Shook (1971: 211f).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. F. Erb III: ‘What American Educators Need to Know About the “Toronto Model” of Catholic Higher Education’, unpublished manuscript presented at American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Roman Catholic Studies Group (A-126), Toronto, November 24, 2002.

### 3. *SPECTRUM OF THOMISTIC STUDIES IN NORTH AMERICA TODAY*

The Second Vatican Council (1963–1965), with the intellectual fervour that followed, left Thomism hopelessly fragmented in North America as in Europe. Yet, as Gerald McCool suggests in his recent history of Neo-Thomism, although there is no longer an “organized movement” as in the pre-conciliar period, several current approaches to the tradition of St. Thomas are indeed full of promise.<sup>22</sup> That Thomism in its various ideological forms still flourishes today in small but vibrant communities of higher learning throughout the U.S.A. and Canada is undeniable. On the other hand, to accurately identify and fairly categorize these programs by institution and initiative can be problematic. Although the majority of Thomist enclaves are associated in some way with Catholic institutions, individual Thomists and a few independent societies devoted to Thomistic thought stem from other-than-Catholic colleges and universities. While it is possible to identify by name certain centers of Thomism in Canadian and American higher education today, it is perhaps more useful to attempt to develop in a preliminary sense a categorization or taxonomy of academic approaches to the study and transmission of Thomism in North America today.

Drawing in part from a recent classification of Catholic studies programs at U.S. Catholic colleges and universities,<sup>23</sup> this five-fold typology of programs of Thomistic studies in English-speaking North America is intended to differentiate among the various paradigmatic ideologies that are utilized today in schools and institutes which offer explicitly Thomistic studies or which take some form of Thomistic approach to preserving or spreading Christian philosophy or the Catholic intellectual tradition. Returning to Shanley’s remark that the entire history of Thomism has been marked by tension between conservation and innovation,<sup>24</sup> it is this struggle between the efforts of some Thomists

<sup>22</sup> McCool (1994: 160).

<sup>23</sup> Mary Ann Hinsdale formulated a four-fold typology of Catholic studies programs based on diverse understandings of the “Catholic intellectual tradition” and its (dis)content, in an unpublished paper entitled ‘Catholic Studies: Models and Motives’, which was read at a conference of the American Academy of Religion in Boston, MA, on November 22, 1999. Cf. F. Erb III: ‘Preserving the “Catholic Moment” by Inaugurating Catholic Studies at Non-Catholic Colleges and Universities’, in: A. Ramos & M. George (eds.): *Faith, Scholarship, and Culture in the 21st Century*, Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2002: 219–247.

<sup>24</sup> See footnote 19 above.

who emphasize doctrinal fidelity and others who stress dialogue with influential alternative philosophies and ideologies, that accounts for the spectrum<sup>25</sup> of Thomistic studies.<sup>26</sup> In our view, five distinct models of Thomistic studies have emerged and are present in higher education in the United States and Canada today, signifying (in sociological terms) an ideological spectrum or range from “closed” to “open” groupings. Although the identifiers we have chosen to apply to each model are less significant than the philosophies of education that undergird them, for the purpose of identification and nothing more, we have labeled the spectrum of approaches toward Thomism in English-speaking North American higher education as: exclusivist, formational, conservative, dialogical, and pluralist. The five models are described as follows:

The first of the models is *exclusivist*, representing the “right wing” of the spectrum. This paradigm, which might have been labeled *triumphalist* or *utopian*, attempts to provide a safe haven for Catholic intellectuals who may be searching (perhaps implicitly) for a utopian enclave in some form based on revitalized Thomistic values. A stated

<sup>25</sup> Helen James John, in *The Thomist Spectrum*, New York: Fordham University Press, 1966, provides a thorough description and analysis of the (arguably healthy) controversies that occurred within Thomistic scholarship between 1900 and 1960, all or most of which impacted upon the aforesaid tension between conservation and innovation. McCool’s *The Neo-Thomists*, and Shanley’s *The Thomist Tradition, op.cit.*, offer more recent insights into these debates.

<sup>26</sup> Both the historical and contemporary debates in twentieth century Thomistic scholarship have been driven by this tension, which is inevitable whenever one philosophical system is impelled to encounter another, or is revitalized as Leo XIII promoted Thomism as a response to the systems that undergird modern culture. Before constructing a typology, a few helpful caveats: To begin with, we are not attempting to identify Thomistic programs by their purported adherence to the traditional “schools” or “movements” within Thomism. Such identifications inevitably change over time with the intellectual climate and as administrators, teaching and research faculty come and go, influencing the interpretation of missions and development and execution of curricula over time. As a consequence, there can be no “pure” examples, regardless of the typology. And while it is possible to categorize Thomistic studies programs in countless ways (e.g., by size of faculty or student enrollment, by patterns or extent of funding, by institutional affiliation or degree of acceptance among the wider academic community, by stated mission or goals, or by unwritten or understood or otherwise “covert” philosophy of education, aims or goals, by status or standing within one or another accrediting authority, by research output, by prestige, etc.), each potential method of classification poses its own difficulties. Further, it is impossible to please or satisfy everyone, whether they are partisan or presumably disinterested observer. For our purposes, therefore, we propose a modest typology based on our perception of the degree to which a particular program of Thomistic studies engages—and is influenced by—the wider intellectual environment of modernity and postmodernity.

goal may be to transform society by preparing future leaders in a world perceived as hostile to Catholic values and the Thomist tradition. This approach seeks to restore a unified Catholic worldview consistent with the thought of St. Thomas, while preparing students and scholars to go forth into the world as witnesses to Christ. It is exclusivist because its stated aim is to reclaim the Western culture for Christianity. In practice this type of program emphasizes a dichotomy and an irreconcilable tension between a mindset based on Thomistic values and a mainstream modern (or postmodern) secular worldview. Equipping the student to evangelize or to offer themselves as witnesses to Catholic truth may constitute an important byproduct of the educational philosophy, but the notion of a struggle (of cosmic proportion) between clashing worldviews is the most prominent characteristic of the program. This model's main strength is its zeal (which, when put to good use, has helped initiate many formidable movements within Catholicism, e.g., St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius Loyola); and certainly zealous groups such as fundamentalist Protestant sects such as the Assemblies of God denomination have gained huge numbers of converts in the United States and Canada in recent years. But there are drawbacks to this approach. First, there is a tendency to become so "out of touch" with the outside world that, like the Amish today, a triumphalist enclave could devolve from a self-imposed ghetto into a utopian nightmare. Another concern of this extreme end of the spectrum is the ever-present chance that its studies may devolve into manualism, i.e., the clear but uninspired exposition of safe Thomistic doctrine that does little to stimulate thought in the contemporary mind. Suffice it to say, the pervasively fideistic flavor of this paradigm is far from the Angelic Doctor's own conviction that the one truth requires us to draw from and exploit all sources of wisdom, whether pagan Greek or Jewish or Muslim scholarship.<sup>27</sup> In this respect, St. Thomas was the quintessential inclusivist!

Since exclusivism is far from the present mainstream of Catholic higher education, few if any "pure" examples exist today. One approximate representative is Christendom College, a small Catholic liberal arts college located in Front Royal, Virginia, comes close to embodying this model. Christendom was founded in 1977 on the vision of historian Warren H. Carroll who dreamed of a Catholic college that rejected the

<sup>27</sup> Cf. John Paul II, encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* (43), On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason (Sept. 14, 1998); see also St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 7.

1967 Land O'Lakes declaration<sup>28</sup> by proclaiming its perpetual fidelity to the Catholic Church's teaching magisterium.<sup>29</sup> The College's mission is expressed in this statement:

Christendom's essential purpose is to place students on the path to Christian wisdom [...] The chief goal of the academic program is to form intellectual virtues in the students. The activities, events, community and spiritual life on campus also foster the cultivation of wisdom, helping students to form the moral virtues, the habits of Christian living, which will enable them to order properly the goods and things of the body and the higher goods and things of the soul. These moral habits, as traditionally understood, make possible the speculative life; without them, a person is incapable of true contemplation, for contemplation is a matter not only of the mind, but also of the will, of the heart, of the whole man. Man is called not only to know the truth, but to love it, and to make it the formative principle of his life. Encouraging these habits is the responsibility of the College as a whole.<sup>30</sup>

Christendom's explicit emphasis on holistic character development to prepare its students to reenter the post-Christian culture armed with Pauline vigor, strikes us as commendable in its zeal but unrealistic if it anticipates a reconversion of the present society in the way that early Christian martyrs might have anticipated the eventual conversion of Roman culture with Constantine. To accomplish its lofty aim, Christendom relies heavily on Thomistic studies.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> In the "liberating" atmosphere which followed Vatican II, Catholic university presidents and other representatives of the U.S. Catholic Church and higher education, met at Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin, in 1967, to redefine the Catholic university in the postconciliar setting. Their statement called for an end to "theological or philosophical imperialism" and, in effect, embraced the "pluralist" model discussed in this essay. A detailed account of Land O'Lakes, its development and aftermath, is found in D. J. O'Brien: *From the Heart of the American Church: Catholic Higher Education and American Culture*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994.

<sup>29</sup> By the 1980s, Rome was attempting, not without difficulty in the United States, to reassert its doctrinal influence over Catholic higher education worldwide. John Paul II's encyclical letter on Catholic Universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (Aug. 15, 1990) eloquently reclaims Catholic higher education for the Church. Debate over the "Catholic identity" of Catholic colleges and universities in the U.S. made headlines during the 1990s, but the unresolved conflict has been eclipsed since 2002 by the more pressing problem of sexual scandal involving the clergy.

<sup>30</sup> Christendom College's web site ([www.christendom.edu](http://www.christendom.edu)), Sept. 29, 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Descriptions of the College's introductory courses in philosophy and theology prominently feature St. Thomas. Christendom's core curriculum includes "[...] a systematic exposition of Catholic doctrine in the freshman year, followed by courses in Sacred Scripture, moral theology and apologetics, enabling the student both to defend

The second or *formational* model is slightly less withdrawn from secular society, as it struggles to maintain a Thomistic identity in an overwhelmingly unreceptive world. This model is formational because it strives to reestablish Thomistic thought or Christian philosophy and theology at the heart of the curriculum. Openly proselytizing, such programs seek to inculcate in the student, reader or devotee, a Thomistic frame of reference from which those being “formed” will thereafter view the world, thereby recreating a viable contemporary Thomistic *Weltanschauung*. Examples of this paradigm are only slightly more plentiful, as the initial zeal expressed by their founders often tends to mellow and wane as the years pass. One example of the formational model is the popular Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. A recent statement by the University’s academic dean clarifies its relation to the larger culture:

[W]e resist the temptation to be “relevant” in a shortsighted way. We teach many important subjects that do not have direct consequences for dealing with the burning social issues of the day. On the other hand, we recognize our responsibility for addressing these social issues in our teaching and writing [...] We affirm all that John Paul II says in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (especially in paragraphs 32–34) about the dialogue that the Catholic university should have with the larger culture in which it is situated. We also affirm what he says about the unique contribution the Catholic university precisely as university can make to the Church’s work of evangelization.<sup>32</sup>

Although not Dominican in its intellectual origins, Franciscan University’s curriculum appears nonetheless influenced by Thomistic scholarship, which plays a prominent role in courses for undergraduates (including men in the pre-theologate) on metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of religion, philosophy of human nature, aspects of Catholic dogmatic and moral theology. One upper level course, “The Thomistic Tradition in Philosophy,” focuses on St. Thomas and several modern Thomists, including Gilson, Maritain, Fabro, Lonergan, and Rahner.

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the faith and to apply it to his own life. In conjunction with this, courses in Thomist philosophy of human nature and metaphysics assist the student in using reason to understand the nature of reality and to illumine further the truths of revelation.” The first (Fall 2003) lecture in the College’s new speakers program is entitled, “Learning from Aquinas: Dante on Free Choice and the Will.” Core readings (required of all undergraduate students) include works by St. Thomas (including parts of his *Treatise on Man*, *On Being and Essence*, and *Summa Theologiae*), as well as selections by Wippel, Maurer, and other modern authors of Thomistic metaphysics and natural law ethics. (Web site, Sept. 29, 2003.)

<sup>32</sup> Franciscan University web site ([www.franciscan.edu](http://www.franciscan.edu)), Nov. 4, 2002.

Another course, “Great Catholic Thinkers,” has sometimes focused exclusively on St. Thomas.

The third or *conservative* model attempts to preserve and pass on “Western culture” through Thomism, thereby keeping alive the Catholic intellectual tradition as it has been interpreted in the twentieth century by Maritain, Gilson, and their disciples. It is “conservative” because its primary mission is to conserve the Thomistic tradition, while secondarily engaging modern and postmodern philosophies in meaningful dialogue. One prominent example is the newly formed<sup>33</sup> Ave Maria College in Ypsilanti, Michigan, along with its planned expansion as Ave Maria University in Naples, Florida. Like Christendom College and Franciscan University, Ave Maria offers students a solid formation using a core curriculum that draws heavily from Christian philosophy and Catholic theology, especially St. Thomas and his twentieth century commentators. In doing so, however, Ave Maria seems to operate less *in loco parentis* than these other institutions, and appears to make a greater attempt to engage the outside world, both the popular culture and the intellectual mainstream.<sup>34</sup> Apart from the Thomistic emphasis in its course offerings, Ave Maria College through its newly formed Aquinas Center for Theological Study, in August 2003, hosted an academic conference entitled “John Paul II and the Renewal of Thomistic Philosophy.”<sup>35</sup>

The fourth, the moderate or *dialogical* model, is so named because its primary objective is engagement through dialogue between Thomism and contemporary varieties of modern and postmodern secular philosophy, as well as the philosophies underlying Eastern religious traditions. This approach seeks to promote the “objective” study of

<sup>33</sup> Ave Maria Institute was founded in 1998, and it became a four year college in 2000. The college received regional accreditation in May, 2003.

<sup>34</sup> See Ave Maria College web site ([www.avemaria.edu](http://www.avemaria.edu)).

<sup>35</sup> The Aquinas Center for Theological Renewal is a new academic institute created to foster the renewal of Catholic theology, founded in 2001 by two professors at Ave Maria College, Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering. Ave Maria’s web site (Sept. 29, 2003) describes the new institute: “Grounded by its founders’ interest in the theology of Aquinas and with projects that involve scholars from colleges and universities around the world, the Aquinas Center hopes to contribute to the development of a vibrant theological renaissance [...] The Aquinas Center reaches out to scholars and graduate students around the world who share in its vision of a dynamic renewal of theology in fidelity to the Magisterium. The Center has a Thomistic emphasis and an interest in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. The major projects of the Aquinas Center are the English-language edition of a semi-annual journal, *Nova et Vetera* and international conferences.”

St. Thomas and Thomism with an “open mind” while considering the potential promise and value of all philosophical systems and ideologies that have intellectual standing in the present day—which is arguably closest to St. Thomas’s own position. It also appears consonant with John Paul II’s 1998 encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio*, in which he maintains that Thomism can hold its own in dialogue with other philosophies and worldviews.<sup>36</sup>

While there are numerous colleges and institutes throughout North America that today offer a dialogical approach or some variant, one stellar example of this model in practice is the “Christianity and Culture Program” at Toronto’s Saint Michael’s College. According to Toronto’s Kenneth L. Schmitz, the Second Vatican Council dramatically altered the landscape of Thomism, by undermining the impetus for scholarly engagement in Thomistic thought because the American “pragmatic penchant” diverted energies to the attention of the Council in the post-Conciliar era, placing high priorities on ecumenism and liturgical renewal.<sup>37</sup> As an educator, Schmitz has been involved in developing the hugely successful Christianity and Culture Program established in 1979 by Janine and Thomas Langan and other concerned faculty of St. Michael’s College, to reintroduce the younger generation to the *philosophia perennis*. Writing in 1979, Janine Langan lamented the almost unlimited freedom of choice to enroll in courses throughout the Toronto system that was enjoyed and exercised by St. Michael’s students, and that as a result these students were becoming ignorant of the richness and uniqueness of their own Catholic-Thomistic heritage. The fact that so many St. Michael’s students were taking a large part of their coursework outside the College meant they were missing the Catholic formation that at one time had been such a prominent feature of St. Michael’s. Janine Langan was one of several St. Michael’s faculty who were instrumental in the creation of an interdisciplinary “Christianity and Culture” program at Toronto. This innovative Catholic-Christian studies program with Thomistic thought as an integral component, was intended to fill a gap in Toronto’s Arts and Sciences curriculum, by giving students systematic access to the Catholic-Christian tradition in its fullness. The program is taught by profes-

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Fides et Ratio* (44): “Profoundly convinced that “whatever its source, truth is of the Holy Spirit” (*omne verum a quocumque dicatur a Spiritu Sancto est*), Saint Thomas was impartial in his love of truth. He sought truth wherever it might be found and gave consummate demonstration of its universality.”

<sup>37</sup> Schmitz, *Communio* (Fall 1992), p. 477.

sors who are expert in various academic disciplines but who are also committed Catholic-Christians, and whose courses focus on the nexus between the Christian traditions and mainstream culture. Langan's vision of the Christianity and Culture Program, she says, is based on two insights which serve as founding principles: The first was to clarify to students what makes Christianity unique, which is, in fact, the challenge of the incarnation. The second principle was to convey to students that Christianity is not a culture among others, but an openness to the Spirit of God which operates in and through any culture, continually reforming Christianity and making its intellectual and lived tradition relevant and meaningful in all cultural settings.<sup>38</sup>

Now in its twenty-fifth year, Christianity and Culture today offers a minor, a major, and a specialist (honors) degree. In 1999, the Toronto Archdiocese gave one million Canadian dollars to St. Michael's College to endow a faculty chair in Christianity and Culture. Janine Langan, who recently retired from active involvement in the program's administration but will teach a course or two this year, says that, ironically, most of the resistance to the now highly successful program came not from non-Catholics quarters as one might have expected, but from *within* St. Michael's College, from members of its faculty who feared the program would reduce the numbers of students enrolling in existing courses offered at St. Michael's.<sup>39</sup> Christianity and Culture is certainly among a handful of curricular initiatives that may prove useful to the growing number of Canadian and American educators who are concerned with bringing genuine Thomistic studies to publicly supported universities. While St. Michael's Christianity and Culture like other such programs depends upon the training and intellectual bent of individual instructors for its strengths and weaknesses, is not exclusively Thomistic, it does serve as a model for Thomistic higher education at the undergraduate level.

The fifth and final model is *pluralist* or inclusivist, a "cultural studies" approach that tends to accommodate and sometimes appropriate twentieth century modern philosophies and contemporary postmodernism. This model tends to view Thomism as historically important and potentially useful, certainly deserving of study and reflection, though ultimately "one philosophy among many."<sup>40</sup> While some de-

<sup>38</sup> From a personal interview with Janine Langan in Toronto, Aug. 23, 2002.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> John Paul II, who is apparently concerned about the extremes when modeling Thomistic studies programs, wrote in *Fides et Ratio* (43), quoting Paul VI, who wrote

partments of philosophy, theology, and religious studies at Catholic colleges and universities in English-speaking North America, ensconced in a post-Vatican II mentality of liberal Catholicism remain openly hostile toward the thought of St. Thomas and Neo-scholasticism, most U.S. and Canadian Catholic colleges today are not averse to integrating some elements of Thomistic philosophy into their curricula, with the proviso that it is “one among many” and poses no threat to the intellectual *status quo*. The philosophy, theology, and religious studies departments of most major Catholic colleges and universities in the U.S.A. and Canada today can be said to possess faint traces of Thomism in their educational philosophy, or to have individual members of their faculties, usually tenured or emeritus, who are known to be sympathetic to the thought of St. Thomas.<sup>41</sup> During its heyday in the first half of the twentieth century, Thomistic studies occurred (often in “manualist” form, and sometimes with a Suarezian interpretation) in Roman Catholic seminaries. By the 1940s, major Catholic universities (along with several teaching and research faculty at non-Catholic universities) were teaching and expanding Neo-Thomism, and for a generation those schools supplied teachers of philosophy and theology to approximately 300 smaller Catholic colleges and seminaries throughout the U.S. and Canada. Today, only traces of this pre-Vatican II era Thomism remains in English-speaking North America. Since the early

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in *Lumen Ecclesiae* (8), issued Nov. 20, 1974, on the occasion of the seventh centenary of the death of the Angelic Doctor: “Without doubt, Thomas possessed supremely the courage of the truth, a freedom of spirit in confronting new problems, the intellectual honesty of those who allow Christianity to be contaminated neither by secular philosophy nor by a prejudiced rejection of it. He passed therefore into the history of Christian thought as a pioneer of the new path of philosophy and universal culture. The key point and almost the kernel of the solution which, with all the brilliance of his prophetic intuition, he gave to the new encounter of faith and reason was a reconciliation between the secularity of the world and the radicality of the Gospel, thus avoiding the unnatural tendency to negate the world and its values while at the same time keeping faith with the supreme and inexorable demands of the supernatural order”.

<sup>41</sup> Examples include The Catholic University of America, Notre Dame, Marquette, Fordham, St. John’s, Georgetown, and many others. Moreover, with few exceptions (one noteworthy exception in recent years was Cornell’s “analytic Thomist” Norman Kretzmann, whose protégé Eleanor Stump has already achieved prominence), serious students of St. Thomas today generally do not select these schools for the express purpose of receiving an introduction to the Angelic Doctor’s thought, although some are still known to offer an adequate grounding in scholastic and medieval philosophy in general.

1980s, however, various priestly and lay orders<sup>42</sup> have begun to promote Thomistic thought. Indeed, the personalist Thomism of John Paul II<sup>43</sup> has contributed “moral support” to a modest revival of Thomism in Canada and the United States today. As of yet, many of these “pockets” are so small they go unnoticed, yet they may eventually affect the “big picture.”

The few examples cited above of institutional centers of Thomistic studies in English-speaking North America today surely do not approach a comprehensive list. A more thorough study would identify the recently established Lumen Christi Institute at the University of Chicago; the Center for Thomistic Studies at the University of St. Thomas<sup>44</sup> (Houston, Texas); the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, Minnesota); and Robert Royal’s Faith and Reason Institute (Washington, DC). More research into Catholic studies programs both at Catholic and other-than-Catholic private and public colleges and universities in the United States and Canada would be likely to produce an extensive list of small though occasionally vibrant centers of Thomistic higher learning.<sup>45</sup>

Several noteworthy individual Thomists were still writing in the opening days of the new millennium, men such as the independent thinker W. Norris Clarke who has effectively dialogued with a wide range of scholars including linguistic Thomists and Whiteheadian process thinkers. Today, however, most Thomistic scholarship is no longer advanced mainly by priest-scholars whose education and training was paid for either by diocesan funds or by one of the major religious orders, and who perhaps studied at Saint Louis or at any of a number of

<sup>42</sup> E.g., the Priestly Fraternity of the St. Charles Borromeo Missionaries, the Opus Dei Personal Prelature, and the Legionaries of Christ, as well as instructors and professors (more than a few of whom are non-tenured) at seminaries and pontifical universities.

<sup>43</sup> Although Neo-Thomism in Poland and Eastern Europe is outside the limits of this essay, the influence of Karol Wojtyła’s proposal (while a member of the philosophy faculty at Lublin) of a contemporary Thomist metaphysics in *The Acting Person* is influential in North American Thomism, if only because this metaphysics which is centered on the individual person, consciously aware of himself as the responsible source of the free actions which bring about his self-determination, has also found expression in the widely read writings of Wojtyła as John Paul II, especially in the present pope’s Christian ethics.

<sup>44</sup> For details of the founding of the Center for Thomistic Studies in 1979, which Anton Pegis envisioned, see V. J. Bourke, “The New Center and the Intellectualism of St. Thomas”, in Brezik (1981: 165–172).

<sup>45</sup> See Erb III (1992), esp. 24–26.

Catholic seminaries which taught Neo-Thomistic philosophy and theology prior to Vatican II in the United States, Canada, or Europe. Thomism today is more commonly carried forward, for better or worse, by an odd assortment of lay professors, independent scholars, and a handful of non-Catholic scholars. North American Thomists meet and occasionally publish through the auspices of the Canadian and American Maritain Associations, and to a lesser extent two former Neo-Thomist strongholds, the Catholic Theological Society of America and the American Catholic Philosophical Association (ACPA).

Ironically, the ACPA, which was founded in 1926 to establish forums and advance publications for Neo-Thomist scholars who at that time were excluded from mainstream philosophical reflection, is today neither Thomist nor predominantly Catholic in its membership and interests. The successor to ACPA in recent decades as a leading forum for Thomistic philosophy is the American Maritain Association, which produces an annual volume of essays, currently published through CUA Press. Indeed, university presses at CUA, Notre Dame, Fordham, Marquette, SUNY, Mercer, and elsewhere have published hundreds of collections of essays, manuals, *Festschriften* and assorted scholarly treatises on all aspects of Thomistic thought, including theology, philosophy, and natural law ethics from various Thomistic perspectives. Thousands of excellent essays and articles attempting to further the cause of Thomistic philosophy and theology have appeared over the years in various North American scholarly journals, notably *The Thomist*, *Modern Schoolman* (formerly *The New Scholastic*), *Theological Studies*, *Communio*, Fordham's *Thought*, Marquette's *Philosophy & Theology*, College Theology Society's *Horizons*, Society for Christian Philosophers' *Faith and Philosophy*, and ACPA's *Proceedings*—to name a few of the more prominent and influential periodicals.

Not all Thomism has remained sequestered within the ivy-shrouded cloisters of *academia*. The influence of Thomistic education on the popular mind is also present in North America today. Besides the perennial Catholic radio, electronic media since the late 1980s has included the enormously successful Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), an Alabama-based cable and satellite television programming network operated by the rapidly growing, conservative religious Sisters of the Eternal Word, founded recently by celebrated TV talk-show host Mother Angelica. EWTN's philosophy is neo-conservative, and its current programming is favorable toward the legacy of St. Thomas Aquinas and to fostering a Thomistic worldview. Several Catholic magazines promote

Thomism in the States, including a former scholarly journal turned popular periodical, the Maryland-based *Crisis* magazine, founded by Thomistic scholar Ralph McInerny and presently owned and edited by Deal W. Hudson, a Maritain scholar. McInerny, who directs Notre Dame's Medieval Institute, is among a small group of successful American and Canadian academics-turned-novelist whose writings popularize a Thomistic pattern of thought, however nostalgically, to the wider public. *First Things*, a conservative journal of Catholic thought edited by Richard John Neuhaus, often features Thomist-inspired original writings aimed at a wider intellectual public. While several publishing houses operated by Catholic religious orders and numerous university presses, PIMS, and even major publishers occasionally produce new books about St. Thomas and his thought, or reprint Thomistic works, Thomas A. Nelson, founder of TAN Books and Publishers of Rockford, Illinois, since 1967 has begun the task of reprinting in affordable paperback editions many previously out-of-print classics of Thomistic theology, philosophy, and spirituality.

Over the years, Thomism in North America has crept out of narrowly Catholic intellectual circles, and at times it has enjoyed a following among non-Catholics of various stripes. One good friend to Maritain and hence to the philosophy of St. Thomas—albeit to a peculiar interpretation overflowing with Aristotle but deficient in explicitly Christian doctrine—was American educator Robert Maynard Hutchins (1899–1977). The controversial University of Chicago chancellor was an outspoken advocate of liberal higher learning in the 1930s and was involved in the Great Books movement of the 1950s. Although a Protestant-turned-agnostic, Hutchins proclaimed the wisdom of St. Thomas as paradigmatic for the renewal of American higher education, and he delivered the 1949 Aquinas Lecture at Marquette University.<sup>46</sup> Another Thomistic philosopher, the late Professor Mortimer Adler, was general editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, director of the Aspen Institute for several decades, and a close friend and former colleague of Hutchins who collaborated on the Great Books movement during the 1950s. Adler did not convert to Catholicism until his death was imminent, but he contributed regularly to Thomistic journals throughout his long career, and he quoted St. Thomas liberally and frequently in his numerous writings that were often intended not for his fellow philosophers but for an educated general readership.

<sup>46</sup> Hutchins' lecture was subsequently published as *St. Thomas and the World State* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1949).

#### 4. *A FALLIBLE PROGNOSIS*

To speculate with any degree of certainty on the future of Thomistic studies in English-speaking North America is a daunting task. Thomism's decline in the last decade can be traced to two main causes: First, there was the inability of several leading Neo-Thomists during Thomism's heyday in first half of the twentieth century to rise above their personal career interests as professional philosophers and theologians, and work together for their common cause. This internal discord effectively undermined Leo XIII's earlier vision of a unified Thomism that could serve as a viable alternative to modern atheistic ideologies, even though the debates produced some healthy results by stimulating philosophical inquiry that widened the scope and breadth of Thomistic studies. Out of frustration, Gilson's once remarked, "Truth is important, we are not."<sup>47</sup> Second, intellectual atrophy caused by the breakdown of a united "school" within Thomism by the third quarter of the century, combined with the mainstreaming efforts of Catholic colleges and universities in the United States, provided the setting in which intellectual pluralism flourished in the postconciliar period and Thomism appeared to be forgotten as aging scholars retired from their positions and were replaced by faculty who were unfamiliar with Thomistic thought or scholastic language.

During the final quarter of the twentieth century, North American higher education began to exhibit new interest in St. Thomas and Thomism. As Gerald McCool wrote modestly in 1988, "the tradition of Saint Thomas, despite its ups and down, has still a valuable contribution of its own to make to American philosophy and higher education. And indeed, the neutral historian of ideas might find that the history of an intellectual movement as vigorous, widespread, and yet as little chronicled, as North American Thomism is not without intrinsic interest."<sup>48</sup> Especially since the early 1990s, as various competing modern materialist and postmodern nihilist philosophies moved ever closer to intellectual bankruptcy while taking their toll on human dignity and fostering intellectual cynicism, we may be witnessing a resurgence of interest in personalist and realist philosophies which are sympathetic toward the legacy of St. Thomas. The burgeoning interest in spirituality within the popular culture, which has accelerated since September 11, 2001,

<sup>47</sup> E. Gilson: *Wisdom and Love in Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1951: 29.

<sup>48</sup> McCool (1988: 186f).

bodes well for Thomism as Catholic intellectuals search for solutions to a growing spiritual crisis among the new generation of college students.<sup>49</sup>

The prospect of Thomism exerting any real influence over the next generation of Canadians and Americans will depend, in no small part, upon the ability of those Catholic educators and intellectuals to make the spirituality of St. Thomas accessible to the postmodern mind. Adler's vision of simplifying St. Thomas for the educated masses has merit today, especially as regards Aquinas' ethics and spirituality. For such a program to succeed, sophistry in the form of professional Thomists arguing amongst themselves must be replaced by women and men whose lived experience is consistent with the virtuous Christian life from which Thomas's own achievements arose. Young people today are quite capable of spotting the difference between professional philosophers and those teachings are guided by *fides quaerens intellectum*. Moreover, those who carry on the Thomist tradition may well do so because of the profound influence of the present pope, whose teachings accompanied by personal sacrifice is well recognized to be a living example of personalist Christian humanism undergirded by Thomistic realism. Thomism's future in North America will hinge in large part upon the dedication of those who are committed to carrying forward the legacy of John Paul II.

<sup>49</sup> Conrad Cherry and colleagues provide a thoughtful assessment of the new spirituality among college students in *Religion on Campus* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Colleen Carroll reports a perceived rise in spirituality among young Catholics today in *The New Faithful* (Loyola Press, 2002).