

sign, go to prison, or be exiled rather than take Elizabeth's Oath of Royal Supremacy in 1559. Nicholas Heath, archbishop of York, a former Henrician and Edwardian conformist, now warned that Church unity was based on Peter, and so "by our leaping out of Peter's ship, we must needs be overwhelmed by the waters of schism, sects and divisions." Equally astonishing was "the rejection of Elizabeth's settlement by a majority of the clerical elite of England." An "extraordinary exodus" ensued after 1559 of "cathedral prebendaries and office-holders conscien-

tiously unable to conform." More than half resigned or were deprived, a "dramatic stiffening of spine and principle among the higher clergy" that was completely new in Tudor England, and even in Europe. The pope and the Mass had become the "touchstones of conscience" for which they were willing to give up everything.

At Oxford and Cambridge, the Oath of Royal Supremacy and the Book of Common Prayer were widely rejected. Almost every head of house in Oxford stepped down, and many "ardent young intellectuals" fled to

Louvain or Douai — among them Thomas Stapleton, William Allen, Richard Bristow, and Nicholas Sander. These men's convictions would merge "seamlessly into those wider movements for reforms" called the Counter-Reformation. At the Council of Trent's final sessions, the English reform under Mary Tudor took on a new European significance: It inspired Trent's greatest innovation — the seminary. Moreover, the catechism that Bartolomé Carranza had prepared for England became the framework for the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*. ■

THOMAS STORCK

BLOWING THE COVER OFF THE AUSTRIAN "CULT"

The Church and the Libertarian: A Defense of the Catholic Church's Teaching on Man, Economy and State. By Christopher A. Ferrara. Remnant Press (PO Box 1117, Forest Lake MN 55025). 383 pages. \$25.

In his apostolic letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971) commemorating the eightieth anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Paul VI wrote that "we are witnessing a renewal of the liberal ideology [which] asserts itself both in the name of economic efficiency, and for the defense of the individual against the increasingly overwhelming hold of organizations, and as a reaction

against the totalitarian tendencies of political powers." Despite the understandable appeal of this ideology, Pope Paul reminded us that "at the very root of philosophical liberalism is an erroneous affirmation of the autonomy of the individual...." This condemnation is hardly a novelty; it has been expressed, in varying ways, by all or most of the supreme pontiffs from the nineteenth century until today.

Many Americans will encounter a certain difficulty with these terms, because by *liberalism* the popes always mean classical liberalism, the doctrine that favors free-market economics and which has historically been hostile to Catholic faith and

morals. While here in the U.S. this might seem like an unusual combination, in the rest of the world it is taken for granted. Even here, however, it is hardly unknown. Milton Friedman, for example, saw his support for both free-market economics and legalized abortion as an affirmation of the "autonomy of the indi-

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vidual” criticized by Paul VI. But in the U.S. the terminology is complicated — most of those who call themselves conservatives share important elements of the “liberal ideology,” while those who identify themselves as liberals (or progressives) are also liberals, although of a somewhat different sort. But all liberalism, of whatever type, is part of a movement that has historically been one of the most effective enemies of Christian civilization.

It is in the U.S. that the classical liberal ideology has had its chief locus for some time, and it exercises a powerful influence over the American mind. Even within the Church this is the case, and one thinks of such well-known writers as Michael Novak or George Weigel, or of the Acton Institute, an organization bold enough to choose the well-known nineteenth-century liberal Catholic dissenter and opponent of papal infallibility, Lord Acton, as its patron.

In *The Church and the Libertarian* Christopher Ferrara deals principally with a group even more extreme in its liberalism. His book takes a critical look at the libertarian adherents of so-called Austrian economics,

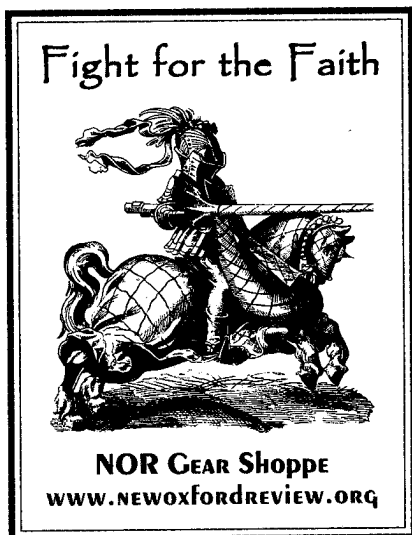
and especially their chief Catholic spokesman in the U.S., Thomas E. Woods Jr. These individuals, most of whom are affiliated with the Mises Institute in Alabama, collectively offer not only an explicit criticism of papal social teaching but, to one degree or another, either argue for the legality of abortion, same-sex marriage and adoption, blackmail, and even more bizarre practices such as selling children to the highest bidder or starving them to death at the whim of their parents, or at least fail to condemn those among them, such as the late Murray Rothbard, one of their principal theorists, who do espouse such things. The Catholics among them do not necessarily think such practices are *moral*, only that they should be legal. They themselves, no doubt, are “personally opposed,” but they do not want to restrict the freedom of others who may want to do such things.

Austrian economics developed in the late nineteenth century from the writings of Carl Menger, which were considerably refined by Ludwig von Mises, both of whom were from Austria. Their work has been carried on by a number of disciples, notably Rothbard, Friedrich Hayek, and others, most of whom are Americans. As an economic theory, Austrian economics is a variation on the standard deductive neo-classical model, but in the hands of many of its practitioners, it has extended its reach into political theory and even moral philosophy. In fact, it has become something of a ruling philosophy that is supposed to explain nearly every aspect of human action and guide our conduct in many areas of life. Not without reason have some critics described it as a “cult.”

The most curious thing about the Catholics in the Austrian school

is the degree to which they manage to pass themselves off on the unsuspecting as orthodox Catholics. For example, Ferrara amply documents Jeffrey Tucker’s writing in support of the legality of same-sex marriage and of the adoption of children by same-sex couples. Yet Tucker, as a promoter of Gregorian chant and the traditional Latin liturgy, continues to write for orthodox Catholic publications that would never allow a self-proclaimed progressive to write for them on any subject.

Now, not all libertarians are Austrians, but all or nearly all Austrian economists are libertarians. As such, they regard the state as an evil — perhaps as a necessary evil, but always an evil. They like to characterize the state as having “a monopoly on violence,” as if that were its essential characteristic. The high place given the state in Catholic thought does not move them at all — even the Catholics among the Austrians think that their system of thought is superior to the teaching of the Church. Whenever a conflict exists or arises between them and the Church, they simply announce that the Church is wrong, the popes have overstepped the correct bounds of their teaching mandate, and that is that. Yet they react with a certain amount of hysteria if anyone should accuse them of being dissenters or label them as “social modernists,” the term Pius XI used for those who dissent from the Church’s social doctrine. If ecclesiastical authority were as vigilant today about suppressing heresy and dissent as it was in 1910 or 1950, the Catholic Austrians would either have to shut up or leave the Church. But, alas, such is not the case, and they continue with their career of deception and misinformation to the hurt of not a few Catholics.



Hence the timeliness of Ferrara's book. He exposes the mechanics of Austrian thinking, some of the more loathsome conclusions they draw from it, and sets forth the clear teaching of the Catholic Church and her supreme pontiffs in opposition to the Austrian notions. Ferrara is particularly adept at pointing out the incoherence of many of the fundamental Austrian concepts and the inherent anti-Catholic bias of their liberalism and its offspring, capitalism.

Ferrara writes with the passion of old-fashioned Catholics in his denunciation of the exploitative economic practices sanctioned by the Austrians and by many other free-market Catholics. He skewers the Austrian polemic against just wages, unions, workplace safety, intervention by local government to block big box stores, etc. Ferrara partakes of that zeal for justice so noticeable in the writings of Pius XI and Pius XII when they taught on the social order. It is a delight to read his attack on excessive CEO salaries and his explanation of the current recession, which, he rightly points out, was brought about by corporations and government in league with one another.

Ferrara offers distributism as the Catholic alternative to the Austrian model. This is commendable, but we should remember that the Catholic critique of economic liberalism that arose in the nineteenth century espoused not only distributism but other theories, such as those associated with the German Jesuit economist Heinrich Pesch. Distributism is certainly *one* Catholic approach, but it is going too far to say that it is the *only* approach acceptable to Catholics. While there are important overlaps between distributism and Pesch's solidarism, they have different em-

phases. Both, however, accepted the teachings of the Church as expressed in the papal social encyclicals, unlike the Austrians who openly dissent from those teachings with their puerile claim that popes have no authority or competence to teach in the area of economic morality.

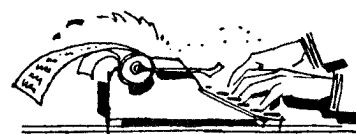
Ferrara also tends to interpret the principle of subsidiarity, first enunciated by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*, too rigidly. What Pius actually wrote is quite general: "It is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, fixed and unchangeable, that one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry. So, too, it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, to transfer to the larger and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser and subordinate bodies. Inasmuch as every social activity should, by its very nature, prove a help to members of the body social, it should never destroy or absorb them."

Pius was too wise to be specific here, and Ferrara is too doctrinaire when he suggests that subsidiarity sanctions only *local* laws regulating the economy or that it would necessarily be opposed to federal regulatory agencies such as OSHA. No doubt if all the mandates of papal social teaching were implemented, the intermediate bodies proposed by Leo XIII and his successors would take over most or all of the economic regulation presently carried on by the state. But Catholics should remember that Pius XI praised Catholic legislators who pushed for government regulation of the economy at a time when respectable opinion held that the state was the "mere guardian of law and order."

John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus* was likewise explicit about the need for the state to intervene in and regulate the market. There is room for legitimate differences of opinion here among Catholics, but the chief thing to note is that Catholic social teaching, always realistic in its judgments, recognizes that current circumstances must be taken into account before reforms are implemented. It would be

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foolish to dismantle federal regulation before intermediate bodies and local governments were in a position to take over that function effectively.

Some readers might be aware that Christopher Ferrara and his publisher, Remnant Press, have been associated with some rather sharp and, in my opinion, ill-conceived public criticism of recent Roman pontiffs and their governance of the universal Church. Obviously this review is not an endorsement of those criticisms. One need not agree with every policy of the post-conciliar popes to consider that kind of criticism as contributing little or nothing to Catholic discourse or to a genuine restoration and re-

newal of the life of the Church. But readers need not shy away for that reason from buying and reading this book. Ferrara clearly accepts the teaching authority of John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI. He writes of matters that are part of the patrimony of the Catholic faith and that are of immense importance if there is to be any hope of restoring a sane social order or even merely helping Catholics to think according to the mind of the Church. Still less should one pay any attention to charges that Ferrara is motivated by personal animosity toward Thomas Woods, a former collaborator of his. Of course, no man can read another

man's mind, but there is no reason to look for any personal bias on Ferrara's part, and he need not apologize for his forthright exposition of Catholic teaching and his sharp criticism of serious error and of those who propagate it.

His book is a timely contribution to the understanding of both Catholic teaching and its Austrian counterfeit. Any Catholic, especially any American Catholic, would profit from reading and studying it. The appeal of Austrian economics to ill-informed Catholics is such that the strong medicine of Ferrara is more than welcome, and will prove, one hopes, equally efficacious. ■

briefly reviewed

Go to Joseph. By Richard W. Gilsdorf. Edited by Patrick F. Beno. *Star of the Bay Press (distributed by Catholic Word, W5180 Jefferson St., Necedah WI 54646; www.catholicword.com; 800-932-3826). 160 pages. \$8.95.*

In the Holy Family there exists what might be called a hierarchy of familiarity. First and foremost in this "earthly trinity" is Jesus, the Son of God, the central figure not only of the Christian religion but of the history of mankind. A close second, at least for Catholics, is His mother, Mary. In a distant third place, and overshadowed almost entirely by the other two, is the elusive figure of Joseph, Mary's chaste husband and Jesus' earthly father.

Who was St. Joseph? Scripture isn't much help, and offers little more than a basic sketch: A descendant of the House of David, he was a carpenter of meager means and is described fleetingly as "a just man" (Mt. 1:19). His most memorable actions are to heed the messages delivered to him by angels in his dreams. Beyond that, Scripture is silent. Joseph himself is silent too: not a word of his is recorded in Scripture.

According to the late Fr. Richard Gilsdorf, this "mystery of silence" has a "divinely intended purpose." His book *Go to Joseph*, edited by Patrick Beno and released posthumously, is an attempt to plumb the knowledge of the Church in order to help bring the nebulous figure of St. Joseph into focus — that makes it a short book. Fr. Gilsdorf also aims to debunk some of the popular myths and even heresies about St. Joseph that have arisen in the absence of sufficient reliable historical data, especially those found in the "ravings of the apocrypha," such as that Joseph was a decrepit, senile

widower when he was espoused to Mary, or that he had numerous children from an earlier marriage, or that he possessed a miraculous flowering staff that allowed him to overcome Mary's other suitors. Along the way, Fr. Gilsdorf provides a solid defense of the traditional teaching regarding Joseph's virginity.

Fr. Gilsdorf identifies the Old Testament Joseph, who saved the Israelites by bringing them to Egypt, as the biblical type of the New Testament Joseph, the "patriarch of the New Covenant," who brought the Savior out of Egypt. With the aid of the various saints, popes, and Fathers of the Church, as well as a few Church-approved private revelations, Fr. Gilsdorf fills out the picture of the Holy Family's daily life and elucidates Joseph's exclusive mission to rear, educate, and "defend and protect the living Bread of Heaven for the life of the world" as He grows into manhood. Fr. Gilsdorf captures Joseph's silent strength as he fulfills this crucial role: "By natural law, Jesus was subject to them [his parents] in His