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Nature and Grace and the Appearance of Insincerity. Silencing the Catholic Voice

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME AUSTRALIA

Nature and Grace and the Appearance of Insincerity. Silencing the Catholic Voice

Abstract
In moving into the Roman world, the first Christians encountered a secular culture whose social, political and cultural characteristics bore a striking resemblance to the contemporary period. Yet these Christians did not feel constrained to present only those aspects of their message that would be acceptable. For most of its history, the presentation of a Christian message in the "public square" has entailed both theological and philosophical perspectives. Today, Catholics seem "self-limited" by an unspoken demand that they argue solely from philosophical and scientific positions in public debates. This approach often fails to present a distinctively Christian viewpoint. As early as 1946, Henri de Lubac pointed out that this side-lining of the Christian view was not solely the result of secularist agitation. Since the sixteenth century, the generally accepted notion that human reality is composed of two separate dimensions – natural and a supernatural – has given the impression that one can speak of a discrete natural order which is unaffected by grace. While this approach still has its defenders, many Catholic intellectuals have pointed to its shortcomings, both theologically and philosophically. When Catholics confine themselves to naturalistic arguments, they deceive no one. Secularists – who argue from their own perspective of "belief" – are able to accuse their Catholic opponents of having a hidden agenda, and of lacking the courage of their convictions by concealing what really motivates them. Any movement away from this situation is likely to be met with derision. Nevertheless, while neither Christians nor Secularists should impose their political views on others, Catholics should feel free to mount the full range of their arguments in public and should reject the notion that they are bound by rules of engagement set by their intellectual opponents.

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Nature Or Grace And Appearance Of Insincerity: Silencing the Catholic Voice in Public Life.

Gerard O'Shea

Introduction

Since the time of the "Great Commission", Christians have believed that it is their role to spread the message of Christ.[1] From the vantage point of 2000 years, the task that faced the first disciples can seem very romantic – almost easy compared with the task today. Consider some of these characteristics:

1. A globalised culture where easy communications and relative peace contribute to general prosperity and a tendency to rely on human efforts to meet every challenge;[2]
2. A society imbued with a secular vision of happiness acknowledging no need for traditional religions, but with a striking openness to New Age cults;
3. An intellectual class that denigrates Christian revelation as lacking in credibility and encourages people to "think for themselves" – along the lines outlined by the informed intelligentsia;
4. A cult of celebrity and personality – where sports stars and actors become heroes and their exploits capture the popular imagination;
5. A falling birth rate flowing from a devaluing of life itself.

This may appear to be a gloomy picture of contemporary society, but not so. It is a description of the Roman Empire – the world into which the apostles were sent to proclaim the message of Christ. The points of similarity are startling.

Contemporary engagement with our culture, however, tends to take a different approach. It is framed in language designed to accentuate the "reasonableness" of the message without drawing too much attention to any specifically Christian content. This is not entirely new; St Paul did the same in addressing the Athenian Areopagus.[3] What stands out in that Biblical account, however, is Paul's lack of success in this attempt to meet people on their own terms. Since the Enlightenment, however, Catholics have found themselves increasingly bound by a set of tightening intellectual parameters. Benedict Ashley has pointed out that this partly derives from the empirical presuppositions of many intellectuals who argue in the public forum. "[N]ot only are they sceptical about transcendental realities, as are all Humanists since Kant, but they attempt to show that 'God-language' is 'meaningless' thus rendering discussions with Christians and other theists impossible."[4] This position puts pressure on Catholics – should they engage in no dialogue at all, or should they meet such intellectuals on their own terms? In accepting this implied secular imperative, Catholics have essentially

[1] *Matthew*, 28:18-20

[2] Some have argued that the large number of slaves within the Roman Empire and the constant wars are hardly an indication of peace. In response, one only has to look at the state of chaos that pertained after the Empire fell – the widespread local warfare and general lawlessness – to understand the value placed by this society. The "peace" within the Roman Empire (as well as our own) should be seen principally in terms of its capacity to establish "the rule of law".

[3] See: *Acts of the Apostles,* 17:16-34.

[4] See: Benedict Ashley, *Theologies of the Body. Humanist and Christian.* Baintree, Massachuesetts, 1985, p.67

agreed to argue from a position that they do not believe. It is true that rational argument is a necessary component of debate, but it can never stand coherently by itself. In the words of John Paul II: "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth".[5] The implicit insincerity of this stance is unlikely to appeal to uncommitted bystanders, particularly in contemporary society, which puts a high value on "passion" and authenticity. This has been well made in Michael Jensen's recent book *Martyrdom and Identity.*[6] In simplifying his argument for a wider audience, Jensen makes a series of compelling observations, including the experience of former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who was "told by his spin doctor, Alastair Campbell, when he was about to talk about his Christian faith in an interview with *Vanity Fair*, that 'we don't do God'."[7]

The Problem of Nature and Grace: A Clash of Ideas

It can seem puzzling at first to understand why Catholics would agree to argue from such a position. Indeed, for some years, many Catholic scholars have seen this approach as problematic and have claimed that it comes from a particular understanding of the way in which the nature and grace relationship has been presented in recent centuries – a view that sees the two as self-contained separated entities. Among others, Cardinal Walter Kasper insists that an integrated view of nature and grace must underpin the idea of a "civilisation of love" promoted by Pope John Paul II:

> [A] civilisation of love is the model of a culture renewed by Christianity... a model that follows from the relation between nature and grace … In Jesus Christ, the new Adam, God revealed to man the final meaning of his human existence.[8]

Perhaps the most constant contemporary critic of the possibility of two separated orders of nature and grace has been David Schindler….

> Whenever the relationship between nature and grace is severed…, then the whole of worldly being falls under the domination of 'knowledge,' and the springs and forces of love immanent in the world are overpowered and finally suffocated by science, technology and cybernetics. The result is … a world in which power and the profit margin are the sole criteria, where the disinterested, the useless, the purposeless is despised, persecuted and in the end exterminated – a world in which art itself is forced to wear the mask and features of technique.[9]

Schindler believes that when nature and grace are held to be separate realities, the message of the Church is itself divided and gives needless credence to the ideology of Secularism….

> A true understanding of and challenge to the secularisation of the modern world can begin only when one understands that nature is given as ordered from its depths to religious form – to the form, that is, which, concretely, is the love of the trinitarian God revealed in Jesus Christ, and received into Mary and the Church by the Holy Spirit. … The claim that would

[5] *Fides et Ratio,* 1998, Preamble.
[6] Michael P Jensen, *Martyrdom and Identity. The Self On Trial,* T.T. Clark International, London, 2010
[7] Michael P Jensen, 'Why not use religious arguments in public debates?', *ABC Religion and Ethics*, Accessed: http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2011/03/15/3164427.htm [10/10/2011]
[8] Walter Kasper, 'Nature, Grace and Culture: On the Meaning of Secularisation' in David L. Schindler (Ed), *Catholicism and Secularisation in America,* OSV, Huntington, Indiana, 1990, p. 49
[9] Hans Urs von Balthasar,. *Love Alone: The Way of Revelation,* Burns Oates, London, 1968, pp. 114-15.

> make nature neutral of religious form merely succeeds thereby in giving nature the religious form of Liberalism.[10]

Schindler claims that the practical application of this would not be to provide an opportunity for evangelisation, but rather the entrenching of the Liberal position of a social justice divorced from any religious input. He does not claim that Catholics should impose some kind of "Theo-centric state" by force of argument. He acknowledges the need for Christians to respect the freedom of those who hold a different view. What he does argue for, however, is the right of Catholics to express their view *as* Catholics.[11]

History of the Nature and Grace Question

The manner in which this theory of two separate entities of nature and grace arose and then dominated is multi-faceted and complex, but it is claimed that the most significant developments in this area occurred during the period following the Reformation. Catholic theologians of the time were being challenged to find a middle ground between two claims coming from opposite ends of the spectrum: Calvinist anthropology denigrated human nature, and the Baianist heresy made extravagant claims for it. A good summary of the Calvinist view can be found in the early writings of Karl Barth:

> man as he lives in historical reality, in independence from God and in his reflection on himself, does not live in this, his true nature; that which is unnatural became his nature. To speak of continuity and fulfilment would actually be to speak of man's final self-destructive closing off, to canonise his damnation rather than lead him to salvation. Grace, then, cannot be continuation or fulfilment of man, but can only mean discontinuity, paradox, crucifixion.[12]

In responding to challenges of this kind, Michael De Bay (1513-1539), a Louvain professor of theology, asserted that humanity, in the state of innocence, had no need of grace.[13] Grace was not to be seen as divine assistance flowing from the goodness of God; it was simply humanity's right. In De Bay's view, human beings in the state of innocence could attain their end in God by purely natural merit. Thereby, the supernatural was reduced to the natural; "grace" was simply part of human make up and not really a gift at all. This failure to acknowledge the gratuity of grace was to provoke a predictable reaction among Catholic authorities and his views were condemned by Pope Pius V in 1567.

The Post-Reformation and Baroque Period

In trying to steer a path between Calvinism and Baianism, theologians articulating the relationship of nature and grace in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries developed a solution which came to be known as the *Duplex* Ordo thesis. According to this account, there were two different ends for humanity – a natural and a supernatural. The natural human level was good, but inadequate for achieving union with God and final happiness. The supernatural gift of grace needed to be added to this. Hence, according to this

[10] David L Schindler, 'Introduction: Grace and the Form of Nature and Culture' in Schindler, *op. cit*., p.24
[11] See: *Ibid,* p.22
[12] Joseph Ratzinger, 'Gratia praesupponit nautram: The Meaning and Limits of a Scholastic axiom', *Dogma und Verkundigung*, p. 4
[13] See: Henri de Lubac trans. Lancelot Sheppard, *Augustinianism and Modern Theology,* Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1969, pp.1-14

view, every human being was created first of all for a natural human happiness to which could later be added a second level of happiness –supernatural beatitude – something totally beyond natural human endowment and accessible only by means of grace. This was a neat solution when viewed in terms of the challenges faced. On the one hand, it did not condemn human nature as totally depraved and unredeemable; on the other, it allowed grace to be seen as a superabundant gift of God.

In proposing this thesis, theologians appealed to the works of Cardinal Cajetan (1469-1534), a well regarded sixteenth century Thomist, who had defended Catholic doctrine against Luther. Cajetan asserted that a *Duplex Ordo* theory was taught by St Thomas Aquinas, with antecedents in Aristotelian philosophy. In explaining this thesis, Cajetan needed to raise the question of whether it was possible for human beings to have a natural desire for God. His answer was no. (Herein lies the root of the Catholic acceptance of arguing only from natural premises when dealing with "natural" human beings.) Cajetan used the definition of nature drawn from Aristotle's physics to maintain that human nature was a reality closed in on itself, having its own intrinsic powers, desires and goals.[14] In other words, human nature was not necessarily made for union with God. Incremental developments in this view can be traced through the works of Ruard Tapper (1487-1559) to Luis de Molina (1535-1600) who proposed another key concept of the *Duplex Ordo,* the idea of a *finis naturalis* – a natural end for a natural order. [15]

One further step remained, and this was taken by the Jesuit theologian, Franciscon Suarez (1548-1617). Starting from Molina's idea of natural beatitude for a natural order, Suarez asked: … "Why should not the state of pure nature be prolonged in this way into a natural order, fitted to find its fulfilment in a natural end?"[16] Suarez, then, proposed a theory of "pure nature" – a human nature that was completely devoid of any natural orientation to the grace of God, thus taking Cajetan's speculations into the mainstream of theology. His account of "extrinsic grace" was developed into a systematic account in two books *De ultimo fine hominis* (1592) and *De Gratia* (published posthumously in 1619). The final shape given by Suarez to the *Duplex Ordo* thesis was to remain more or less constant for centuries. The influence of Suarez in his own time and for centuries after is difficult to overstate. As an indication, de Lubac quotes the great French commentator, Bousset: "Suarez, in whom can be heard all the others…"[17] His views became widespread – evident in the works of such luminaries as John of St Thomas, the Salamanca Carmelites, Peter of Godoy, Lessius and Vasques. Even into the twentieth century, Suarez's version of the *Duplex Ordo* had its defenders – most notably, Charles Boyer and Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange.

Setting Aside the Tradition

While it is possible to follow the logic of the *Duplex Ordo* in terms of the historical climate in which it developed, there are some aspects of its rise that are puzzling. It seems that the adoption of the idea of "pure nature" as describe by Suarez, contradicted the traditional way in which the relationship of nature and grace had been explained. Take for example St

[14] See: Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas. Versions of Thomism*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2002, p.136; Joseph Ratzinger, 'Gratia praesupponit nautram: The Meaning and Limits of a Scholastic axiom', *Dogma und Verkundigung*, p. 4
[14] See: de Lubac, *op. cit.*
[14] See: Kerr, *op. cit.,* p.136
[15] See: de Lubac, *op. cit.,* p.253
[16] *Ibid.,* p.253
[17] Quoted in *Ibid.,* p.181

Augustine's *cor inquietum:* "for you have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you."[18] Augustine himself had stood within the consensus of the Fathers on this point, a consensus which can be articulated in three parts.[19] Firstly, man was created in the image of God, and continues to bear this divine image – human nature was damaged by the Fall, but not corrupted beyond redemption. Second, there is a call to a divine destiny. In the words of St Irenaeus, "He became what we are to empower us to become what He is." [20] Ireaeus also proposed the distinction between image and likeness which most of the Fathers accepted. "Image" was to be seen as the enduring rational nature, while "Likeness" described the presence of divine grace. Thirdly, "divinization" was brought about by adoption into the family of God through identification with Christ. There was no place in this consensus for any type of human being who was not created for a divine end.

Nevertheless, Augustine's own historical circumstances provided some difficulties for the way in which he explained the nature and grace relationship. Much of his writing was produced in response to the Pelagian heresy – the view that human beings were capable of imitating the example of Christ by their own moral effort and did not stand in need of additional grace. By contrast, Augustine insisted that not one spark of what was necessary for eternal life remained in man. This insistence on the inadequacy of human nature fed into a denigration of this nature as "the sinful flesh".[21] Perhaps there were good reasons pertaining at this time that would have caused devout Christians to try to avoid emphasising the goodness of creation. G.K. Chesterton makes this case in his biography of St Francis, arguing that it took centuries for the European imagination to be cleansed of the associations which "nature" held for them:

> It is no metaphor to say that these people needed a new heaven and a new earth; for they had really defiled their own earth and even their own heaven. How could their case be met by looking at the sky, when erotic legends were scrawled in stars across it? ... It was no good telling such people to have a natural religion full of stars and flowers; there was not a flower or even a star that had not been stained. They had to go into the desert where they could find no flowers or even into the caverns where they could see no stars. Into that desert and that cavern the highest human intellect entered for four centuries; and it was the very wisest thing it could do.[22]

Only when this purge of the religious imagination was complete, claimed Chesterton, could a St Francis of Assisi speak once again of fire and water, sun, moon and stars as the brothers and sisters of a saint. [23] Only against this background could the Scholastics now renew their exploration of "nature".

Invoking St Thomas Aquinas

In dealing with the Augustinian legacy, theologians of the Scholastic period needed to reconcile the view that human nature bore the continuing image of God with a widespread popular denigration of that nature as "the sinful flesh". It was Philip the Chancellor

[18] St Augustine, *Confessions,* Penguin Books, Hammond, Middlesex, 1963, Book 1,1
[19] This view was convincingly argued by the German scholar, Matthias Scheeben. See: Matthias J. Scheeben trans. Cyril Vollert, *Nature and Grace,* B. Herder, St Louis, 1954, p.97
[20] *Against the Heresies* pp. 3, 18, 7; 4, 38, 4-9.
[21] The language of "sinful flesh" comes originally from St Paul. See: *Romans*, chapters 7 and 8.
[22] G.K Chesterton, *St Francis of Assisi*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1924, pp.31-2
[23] *Ibid*, p.37

(University of Paris, 1218-1230) who began using the terms *natural* and *supernatural* to make this distinction. This approach had significant advantages. It ended the confusion between sinfulness and finitude and also the idea that grace was the opposite of sin. Perhaps more importantly, it now became possible to distinguish mentally between the natural and supernatural dimensions of human beings, which in fact were united in the same human person. St Thomas Aquinas further clarified this usage by arguing that supernatural grace humanizes by divinizing. In arguing this point, he taught that…

> It is necessary that some supernatural disposition should be added to the intellect in order that it may be raised up to such a great and sublime height. Now since the natural power of the created intellect does not enable it to see the essence of God… it is necessary that the power of understanding should be added by divine grace.[24]

On first appearances, Aquinas can seem to be arguing for separated orders of nature and grace – the mental distinction between natural and supernatural appears to be an actual separation of two self-contained realities. Passages such as this one, taken in isolation, appear to support the *Duplex Ordo* thesis. Yet this was not Aquinas's actual position. While he acknowledged that there were aspects of human happiness that were attainable through the powers of human nature, these could never truly satisfy human beings, who were actually created for God: "Wherefore God alone can satisfy the will of man, according to the words of Ps 102… Therefore God alone constitutes man's happiness."[25] Expressions of this view are encountered throughout the *Summa Theologica.*[26] This example is indicative:

> Imperfect happiness that can be had in this life, can be acquired by man by his natural powers … But every knowledge that is according to the mode of created substance, falls short of the vision of the Divine Essence ... Consequently, neither man nor any creature, can attain final happiness by his natural powers.[27]

Aquinas did not see nature and super-nature as two separated realities; they were meant to be seen in dynamic relationship. He viewed the severance of human nature from the supernatural as a disorder. Eventually, contrary to Thomas's intentions but nevertheless in his name, Baroque Scholasticism would reify and classify natural and supernatural activities into a two-story world of nature and grace.

Duality of Approaches in Catholic Life

The *Duplex Ordo* thesis gradually led to a remarkable duality in Catholic life. While on a philosophical level, nature and grace were explained as completely separate realities, in the devotional and theological life of the Church continued to present it differently: human beings were made for God. Examples taken from the lives of the saints during this period can be multiplied, but some highly significant examples will serve to illustrate the point. St Francis de Sales, in his *Introduction to the Devout Life* continued to echo Augustine: "Thou hast made me, O Lord, for Thyself, to the end that I may eternally enjoy the immensity of Thy glory."[28] St Alphonsus Ligouri likewise held that humanity's true destiny lay with God,

[24] *Summa Theologica*, 1, q.12, a. 5.
[25] *ST* 1-2, q. 2, a. 8.
[26] For example, see *ST* 1, q. 103, a. 5; 1-2, q. 1, a. 7; q. 9, a. 1; q. 13, a.2; q. 91, a.2
[27] *ST* 1-2, q. 5, a. 5
[28] St Francis de Sales trans. John K. Ryan, *Introduction To The Devout Life*, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1953, p.24

as expressed in *The Great Means of Salvation and Perfection*: "If then, God loves all men, He must in consequence will that all should obtain eternal salvation, which is the one and sovereign good of man, seeing that it is the one end for which he was created."[29]

The Progress of the Duplex Ordo Thesis

Despite the duality of approaches, historical circumstances were to ensure that the *Duplex Ordo* thesis would continue to exert a powerful hold among Catholic scholars and St Thomas's carefully crafted synthesis of science, philosophy and theology was set aside. The *Duplex Ordo* required a different methodology – a separation into natural and supernatural arguments, reflecting the status of the audience. Thereafter, Catholic intellectuals accepted a de facto compartmentalisation of the Christian message. Louis Dupré describes this in his book *Passage to Modernity.* He refers to the "disintegration of the [Thomist] synthesis into an order of pure nature separate from one of grace…"[30] According to Dupré, this became evident from the middle of the Baroque period:

> Around 1660, the last comprehensive integration of our culture began to break down into the fragmentary syntheses of a mechanist world picture, a classicist aesthetics and a theological scholasticism. Soon a flat utilitarianism would be ready to serve as midwife to the birth of what Neitzche called modern man's small soul.[31]

Why does Dupré identify this moment of history as the watershed? It was at this time that an elite intellectual movement which had its origins in Renaissance Humanism was separating itself from Christianity and preparing the way for the Enlightenment. Benedict Ashley agreed, and he further claimed that this process received its major impetus from the intolerance and persecution of the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Foremost among these was the "Thirty Years War" (1618-1648), which took place in northern and central Europe.[32] This conflict resulted in the absurd settlement summarised in the formula "caius regio, eius religio" – one's religion would be determined by the local ruler. No less ferocious was the Catholic-Calvinist conflict in France, which resulted in the revocation of the Edict of Tolerance in 1685. The spectacle of a religion whose intellectual and spiritual teachings could be subverted by politics and judicially sanctioned violence undermined the credibility of Christianity with many serious thinkers. Much of their experience of Christianity was coloured by the bitter wars that had been fought in its name. In such circumstances, a secular kind of Humanism could be presented as an attractive alternative. The "alliance of throne and altar" had been so complete that in the popular mind the two were seen as inseparable and Christianity could be portrayed as the major contributing cause of the excesses of the Wars of Religion, goading the secular authorities to acts of barbarity in pursuit of political goals. Apologists for the new form of Humanism claimed to retain what was best in Christianity (justice, mercy, compassion etc.) while detaching themselves from the demands of an obscurantist faith whose doctrines resisted testing by the principles of human reason. In this context the *Duplex Ordo* style of argumentation became very useful.

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[29] St Alphonsus Ligouri trans. Eugene Grimm, *The Great Means of Salvation and Perfection. The Ascetical Works. Volume III*, The Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn, 1927, p. 88
[30] Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity,* Yale University Press, New Haven, 1993, p.174
[31] *Ibid.,* p.248
[32] Ashley, *op. cit.,* pp.51-90

Negative movements such as this one, however, are usually inadequate to sustain an intellectual movement beyond a single generation. Another positive factor also worked in its favour - the rise of science. It could now be argued that one need not invoke the mysterious hand of God to explain many natural phenomena. As science began to offer plausible accounts for what had previously defied explanation, God became less "necessary". It now seemed possible that the world would eventually yield up all its secrets and there would be no mysteries left to describe. At most, God might be seen as a remote master craftsman who set the world in motion, and left it to run – Deism. Philosophy also kept pace with the demand for new explanations, and figures such as Thomas Hobbes and David Hume offered ways in which it could be undergirded. Under these circumstances, the appeal of the *Duplex Ordo* becomes obvious. In the context of engagement in intellectual argumentation in the public square, God could be bracketed out of the equation, and then re-introduced for the edification of believers only. This would allow Catholic intellectuals to side-step the charge of obscurantism and make their mark in intellectual debate.

Nineteenth Century Examples

The immediate impact of the Enlightenment on European Catholic cultural life was "muted" at first. It was not until the French Revolution and the Napoléonic Wars that Enlightenment principles began to be generally applied. The role of the Catholic Church was increasing confined to the religious domain - despite the vigorous resistance of the Papacy. In England and Ireland, however, Catholics experienced the Enlightenment differently. Ironically, the accelerated spread of Liberal principles led to a *lessening* of official Catholic persecution in the British Empire so that by 1829, the Catholic Emancipation Act gave civil rights to Catholics for the first time since the Reformation. It would be simplistic to claim that Liberal principles alone stood behind nineteenth century Catholic emancipation – the ongoing threat of insurrection in Ireland also weighed on British consciousness. Nevertheless, a climate of Liberal tolerance for the views of others, whatever one's personal dislike for them, certainly took hold in the English mind-set.

Irish Catholics learned to argue for their rights without reference to religious convictions, not only in Ireland but throughout the Empire. The historian, Patrick O'Farrell, provides evidence of this in Australia throughout the nineteenth century. He notes that by 1825, Father Therry, the Catholic chaplain, had learned not to plead for recognition of Catholic rights on religious principles, but on Liberal ones, calling the Governor "a friend to religious and civil liberty, inimical to tyranny, and oppression."[33] The willingness of Irish Catholics to take this line scandalised other Christians in Australia. From 1836, the Anglican Bishop Broughton undertook a public campaign against Catholicism. While much of this included the standard predictable material – that Catholicism was idolatrous, inquisitorial and so forth – it was also condemned as "socially dangerous in that it was willing, for its own designs, to ally itself with the evil forces of Liberalism."[34] So entrenched was this strategy within Catholicism that by the 1870s, when secularists succeeded in ending support for religious schools, Bishop Patrick Moran, viewing the Australian educational situation from Ireland "found it difficult to accept that such religious discrimination was possible in a liberal and enlightened nineteenth century".[35]

[33] Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia. A History,* Thomas Nelson, Melbourne, 1977, p. 8
[34] *Ibid.,* pp. 49-50
[35] *Ibid.,* p. 240

Initially, under the leadership of Archbishop Roger Vaughan, the Church in Australia confronted the secularisation of education with reference to Religious principles:

> We, the Archbishop and Bishops of this colony, with all the weight of our authority, condemn the principle of secularist education, and those schools which are founded on that principle… they contravene the first principles of the Christian religion… they are seed-pots of future immorality, infidelity, and lawlessness, being calculated to debase the standard of human excellence, and to corrupt the political, social and individual life of future citizens.[36]

The arrival of Archbishop (later Cardinal) Moran to take up the see of Sydney in 1884 saw a change in policy. Moran believed that it was essential to pursue government funding for Catholic schools, and he was prepared to compromise. Moran conceded the secular assumptions of Australian politics and argued from a *Duplex Ordo* perspective. He acknowledged that if government assistance were provided for Catholic schools, he should not insist on support for the religious education provided within them. Instead, he sought government funding on the basis that his schools would teach what the state taught. Under Moran's direction, Catholic schools adopted the same syllabus as that of the state schools – plus religion. He invited inspection of Catholic schools by state education officials. Similar instances can be cited from English speaking jurisdictions around the world.[37] Interestingly, Moran failed to convince the governmental authorities with this argument.

The Neo-Thomist Revival

By the mid-nineteenth century, philosophical study within the Catholic community needed renewal. The dislocating effects of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and newly formulated Subjectivist and Secularist challenges to Christian faith had presented significant difficulties for the Church. A serious attempt at restoration was launched in 1879, with the publication of Pope Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris.* The philosophy of Thomas Aquinas was declared the "perennial philosophy" of the Catholic Church and this was the stimulus for launching the Neo-Scholastic project. But this did not mean that there was a restoration of the Thomist synthesis of faith and reason. Regarding the nature and grace relationship, it was the Thomism of Suárez that was revived, and given a the opportunity of extending itself even deeper into Catholic life. This so called *Leonine* Thomism became part of the intellectual training of the Catholic priesthood until the mid-1960's.

De Lubac and *Surnaturel*

Eventually, challenges to the *Duplex Ordo* began to surface. In 1946, a French Jesuit, Henri de Lubac, articulated a full-scale attack in his seminal article, *Surnaturel*. He developed the theme further in three later works. *Augustinianism and Modern Theology* and *The Mystery of the Supernatural* were both published in 1967 followed by *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace,* in 1981. De Lubac insisted that the current state of alienation between religion and culture could not be attributed solely to the work of rationalist philosophers and enemies of the Church. A large part of the blame must be shared by theologians and philosophers. De

[36] *Ibid.,* p. 184.

[37] See, for example, the proposals in the Archdiocese of St Paul-Minneapolis, where Archbishop John Ireland (1838-1918), advocated a very similar strategy to that of Moran,. The state was invited to rent existing Catholic schools and also pay staff salaries for the teaching of secular subjects during class time, while religious instruction would be offered on the property after hours.

Lubac argued that the *Duplex Ordo* thesis, particularly the theory of *pure nature* was undermining the Christian message. He observed that it was not traditional and had never received universal acceptance: "These theories, unknown to both the Greek and the Latin Fathers … were never universally accepted in the West, and were unknown or denied both by the majority of Orthodox theologians and the Christian philosophers of modern Russia."[38] The iron-clad separation attending the study of philosophy and theology, the secularisation of politics, empirical sciences – all reflected the notion of separation between nature and grace. Theology, formerly queen of the sciences, was relegated to splendid isolation. As a consequence, religion was separated from the mainstream of human cultural life. The emphasis in any description of human nature was based on what it could be achieved from its own resources and de Lubac saw this as simply Humanism without proper reference to God.

The Necessary Distinction

De Lubac did not dispute the fact that the sacred and the profane play different roles; but this distinction is a necessary mental abstraction – an acknowledgement that human thought is incapable of God-like apprehension of everything simultaneously, and must proceed by putting together different aspects of reality by analysis and synthesis. It was not meant to be a description of that actual state of human existence. What de Lubac had to explain was how the gifts of nature and grace could be intrinsically related if they were two separate gifts – otherwise he could be accused of Baianism. To summarise de Lubac's position, we could say that if we insist that grace is *merely* given to complete an already existing "pure nature", we give the impression that grace is an added optional extra. Rather, the intention of God in creating human nature is to communicate His divine life to beings other than Himself. The gift of sanctifying grace is incomparable. Human nature exists to receive grace – grace does not exist for the sake of human nature; the purpose of nature is to receive grace, even though nature can still function in some attenuated form without it.

At first, de Lubac's views were furiously resisted by Neo-Scholastic philosophers, many of whom claimed that they were condemned in Pius XII's 1950 encylical, *Humani Generis* which had stated: "Others destroy the gratuity of the supernatural order, since God, they say, cannot create intellectual beings without ordering and calling them to the beatific vision."[39] After this, de Lubac was silenced by his Jesuit superiors for ten years. When he returned to his theme of nature and grace in *The Mystery of the Supernatural* in 1967, de Lubac went out of his way to show deference to *Humani Generis:* "We may still continue to say… that God could, if he had wished, not have created us at all; and then, in addition, that he need not have called this being which He has given us to see him."[40]

The argument around de Lubac's views continues to this day and this can be followed in the works of those who favour his position (David Schindler, Louis Dupré, John Milbank and Nicholas Healey) or those who contest it (Lawrence Feingold, Stephen Long).[41] The contrary

[38] Henri De Lubac trans. Bro. Richard Arnandez, F.S.C., *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1984, pp.24-25.
[39] *Humani Generis*, 1950, para. 26
[40] Henri de Lubac trans. Rosemary Sheed, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1967, p. 104
[41] See: Louis Dupré, *op. cit.*; Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St Thomas Aquinas and His* Interpreters, Apollinare Studi, Rome, 2001; Nicholas J. Healy, 'Henri de Lubac on Nature and Grace: A Note on Some Recent Contributions to the Debate', *Communio*, Vol.35, Number 4, 2008, pp.535-564; Stephen A. Long,, 'On the Loss and the Recovery of Nature as a Theonomic Principle: Reflections of the Nature and Grace Controversy', *Nova et Vetera*, Vol.5, 2007, pp.133-83; John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle. Henri*

argument of contemporary Neo-Scholastics is competently argued on a number of levels and continues to make strong claims for a *Duplex Ordo* thesis. Nicholas Healey has proposed these key differences between de Lubac's position and that of the contemporary Neo-Scholastics …

> Both sides acknowledge that the beatitude proper to human nature is "twofold," natural and supernatural. De Lubac, of course, stresses the incompleteness or penultimate character of "natural felicity," whereas his interlocutors (Long in particular) emphasize that the "natural end" is truly a final end in its own order, though it is not, they acknowledge, a perfect end. Finally, both sides agree that the supreme ultimate end of human nature—the only end that fully perfects and fulfils human nature in every respect—is the vision of God.[42]

In Feingold's own words, "It is ultimately contradictory to suppose that our nature itself—without the addition of a supernatural principle—could be intrinsically determined by a supernatural finality, or have a supernatural finality inscribed upon it."[43] Stephen Long criticises de Lubac for what he calls "a unilateral stress upon certain aspects of St. Thomas's teaching about the natural desire for God led de Lubac to deny the existence of a proportionate natural end as opposed to the supernatural *finis ultimus*."[44] Healey sums up the position of those who follow de Lubac thus: "Christ reveals the nature of nature as receptive readiness for a surpassing gift. By including a human nature within his Person and mission, Christ reveals the deepest truth of nature's desire and nature's capacity to mediate God's love."[45]

But whatever the force of argument brought to bear by either side, the Catholic Church in its magisterial documents has now accepted de Lubac's principal positions – that human beings are made for God, and they have a natural yearning for this destiny; it is not added later as an optional extra. These views have been expressed in *Veritatis Splendor*, *Evangelium Vitae* and the *Catechism.*[46] The most explicit statement comes from the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*:

> The likeness with God shows that the essence and existence of man are constitutively related to God in the most profound manner. This is a relationship that exists in itself, it is therefore not something that comes afterwards and is not added from the outside. The whole of man's life is a quest and a search for God. This relationship with God can be ignored or even forgotten or dismissed, but it can never be eliminated.... The human being is a personal being created by God to be in relationship with him; man finds life and self-expression only in relationship, and tends naturally to God.[47]

Cardinal Ratzinger also was (and remains) a critic of the Neo-Scholastic position, stating that he is of the opinion that "Neo-Scholastic rationalism failed which, with reason totally independent from the faith, tried to reconstruct the "pre-ambula fidei" with pure rational

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de Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural, William B. Eerdmans, Cambridge, UK, 2005; David L. Schindler ed., *Catholicism and Secularisation in America*, OSV, Huntington, Indiana, 1990

[42] Nicholas Healey, *Ibid.,* p.551

[43] Lawrence Feingold, *op. cit.,* p.526

[44] Steven A. Long, *op. cit.,* p.135

[45] Healey, *op. cit.* p.564.

[46] See: *Veritatis Splendor*, 1; *Evangelium Vitae*, 35; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1993, 356, 358.

[47] *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2004, 109

certainty. The attempts that presume to do the same will have the same result." [48] In 2010, as Pope Benedict XVI, he became quite explicit about this in an address to the leaders of British society in Westminster Hall:

> This is why I would suggest that the world of reason and the world of faith - the world of secular rationality and the world of religious belief - need one another and should not be afraid to enter into a profound and ongoing dialogue, for the good of our civilisation.[49]

Witnessing to the Culture Without Forcing Its Hand

Yet there persists in the public mind a view of Catholic teaching that bears little resemblance to the Church's actual teaching. If de Lubac is correct, this is at least partially caused by an over-dependence on "natural" arguments in the public forum. The motive for this may be unimpeachable, resting on both the *Duplex Ordo* theory and a desire to avoid sectarian abuse. The strategy, however, has failed and there is no compelling reason to persist with it simply because the alternative may not be well received by a powerful segment of the audience. It is not "sectarian" to express a point of view from a Religious perspective and allow others to make their own judgements about it. On the contrary, "secular sectarianism" seems to be imposed on Catholics who engage in public debate. Catholics involved in intellectual debate need to recognise that if they continue to present only the rational/ philosophical side of their arguments in public, they also run the risk of being caricatured as "insincere". While it may be expedient when putting a point of view to government authorities to emphasise the rationality of the presentation, it must be remembered that others are watching too. To quote Michael Jensen, "in public debate, victory isn't everything."[50] In the current circumstances, the only acquaintance that many people have with the Church's teaching comes through tuning into the public forum. The argument being mounted may be lost, but the passionate and sincere presentation of the truth may still have a wide effect on others who are following it. Perhaps this might best be viewed through another lens. What might have happened if Jesus himself had adopted a *Duplex Ordo* strategy? Would his mission have been more effective if he had directed the bulk of his teaching to the Roman authorities and tried to convince them of the reasonableness of his vision for society? Probably not; let us not forget that Christ himself lost his judicial case before Pontius Pilate.

The *Duplex Ordo* has largely failed to win converts. Could it be that philosophical arguments fail to touch the human heart at its deepest level of yearning – at that point of "restlessness" so eloquently articulated by St Augustine; the part that desires to meet its God?[51] It is undeniable that a degree of caution must be exercised in the public forum. Some types of direct political action can give the impression that the Catholic Church is attempting to impose its will by force and this will be counterproductive. It is individual human beings who must be persuaded and it is inappropriate to impose religious practice without consent – a mistake made too often in the past by those seeking to subvert the Christian message for

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[48] Joseph. Ratzinger, 'Relativism: The Central Problem For Faith Today', Address to the Doctrinal Commissions of the Bishops' Conferences of Latin America, May 1996

[49] Benedict XVI, 'Meeting With The Representatives Of British Society, Including The Diplomatic Corps, Politicians, Academics And Business Leaders', Westminster Hall - City of Westminster Friday, 17 September 2010, Accessed: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100917_societa-civile_en.html [21st October, 2011]

[50] Michael P. Jensen,, 'Why not use religious arguments in public debates?', *ABC Religion and Ethics* Accessed: http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2011/03/15/3164427.htm [10th October, 2011]

[51] "You have made us for yourself O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." St Augustine, *Confessions* 1,1,1: PL 32, pp.659-661

political purposes. Nevertheless, a society which actually discriminates against a politician solely on the basis of holding Catholic views can hardly be considered non-discriminatory either.

Conclusion

There can be little doubt that any change in current style of argument in the public forum will be met with resistance from many who do not share the same convictions. Yet this situation is artificial, since the absence of religious belief is itself a "belief system". It is not possible at this point to begin an exhaustive study of alternate models of argumentation which proceed from an integrated understanding of nature and grace, but it has been present throughout history. For example, one can point to the method of Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* – a work in which the best of contemporary philosophical and scientific knowledge was harmonised with revealed doctrines. Likewise, the great Italian educator, Maria Montessori had no difficulty in articulating a highly respected theory of education in which the religious dimension was accorded an honoured place. Perhaps the most prominent exponent of this approach in the contemporary world, however, has been Pope Benedict XVI. As Austen Invereigh has observed of the Pope's Westminster Hall speech:

> This fruitful exchange - which is the direct opposite, of course, of the secularist ambition of excluding or privatising faith as an individual matter of personal belief - is the best way, the only way, of overcoming the temptations to sectarianism and fundamentalism, whether of religion or of political creeds; and it is the foundation of authentic pluralism.[52]

The challenge remains, however, to encourage Catholic intellectuals to present integrated arguments for their positions, drawing on both nature and grace. Until the full set of reasons for Christian belief is articulated, those listening can rightly claim to be puzzled by the "missing pieces" and perhaps dismissive of Christians who are arguing in a way that so lacks passion and conviction that they are not even willing to tell their whole story.

[52] Austen Ivereigh, 'Catholic Humanism Is Superior To Today's Exhausted Secularism.', *ABC Religion and Ethics,* Accessed: http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2011/10/21/3344756.htm [21st October, 2011]