

RESSOURCEMENT THOMISM

*Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life*

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF ROMANUS CESSARIO, O.P.

*Edited by Reinhard Hüter & Matthew Levering*



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## Foreword

J. AUGUSTINE DINOIA, O.P.



It has been nearly twenty-five years now since Father Romanus Cessario and I sat in an empty classroom over the course of a week working through alternative models for a new curriculum at the Dominican House of Studies. We were striving for intelligibility, comprehensiveness, and integration—three elements of the Thomistic vision of theological education that was fundamental to the work of the faculty.

This vision of theology had been cultivated throughout years of shared fraternal and intellectual life in the Dominican Order. Our paths had for the most part coincided through our Dominican formation (just a year separated us)—from Providence College where we began, through philosophical studies at St. Stephen's Priory in Dover, Massachusetts, and theological studies in the pontifical faculty at the Dominican House of Studies. Over these years, we had the same Dominican teachers—Dominic Rover, Michael Stock, Raymond Smith, Thomas Heath, Alan Smith, and William Hill (names that I cannot fail to mention here, for they had a profound influence on our intellectual development). He had written theses on the metaphysics of the person and on the Blessed Trinity, I had written on Heidegger and Rahner. After ordination, we both returned to Providence College to teach for a few years before going off to pursue doctoral studies. Only at this point did our paths diverge—mine led to Yale, his to Fribourg.

By 1980, we were back together again. We had arrived at the Dominican House of Studies within months of each other—he to become the academic dean, and I to teach theology. Thus it happened that when we sat in that classroom to design a new curriculum, our ways of thinking about theology had

been immeasurably enriched—his by O'Neill, Spicq, Nicholas, and Pinckaers, mine by Lindbeck, Frei, Kelsey, and Christian. He had greatly deepened his knowledge of Aquinas, writing a brilliant thesis on Christian satisfaction. I had rediscovered Aquinas, by way of Barth and Wittenstein, and parted decisively with Rahner. Sharing the common patrimony of our Thomistic formation, we had come by different routes to similar convictions about the nature of theology. Thus it was that we had a clear idea of what the new curriculum should look like.

Working together during those years at the Dominican House of Studies—in the revision of the curriculum and in many other projects—we came increasingly to share a common vision of theology and of theological education. As far as Aquinas was concerned, Father Cessario was way ahead of me. His wide reading in Aquinas and in the commentators had shaped his own teaching and writing, and, through our many long and deep conversations, it also began to shape my own. This is a debt I cheerfully acknowledge in these prefatory paragraphs in his honor. Reading Barth had persuaded me of the dangers of the subjective turn in theology and philosophy. Listening to my good friend Romanus alerted me to the shortcomings of the linguistic and hermeneutical turns. Over the years, we understood that above all else we sought a robust theological realism in our writing and teaching. Theology is not just about discourse, or narratives, or texts, he used to say to me, but about the living God and the realities of his saving work.

Throughout twenty-five years of teaching at the Dominican House of Studies and at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Father Cessario has touched the minds and hearts of many students and colleagues—something to which this volume bears eloquent testimony. The essays here range over most of the fields in which Father Cessario has worked and published: Christology, soteriology, sacramental theology, moral theology, and spirituality. Even those unfamiliar with his extensive output can recognize in this volume's table of contents the breadth of his theological interests and learning. It is a mark of the success of his teaching and writing that such an impressive array of scholars— young and not so young—should be united to honor him with this volume. It is a privilege for me to join my name to theirs in this brief but heartfelt foreword in homage to Father Romanus Cessario—my colleague, brother, counselor, and friend for more than forty years.

## Preface

MARY ANN GLENDON



In the autumn of 1996, I received an invitation to join a most unusual reading group. For the next six years, a small band of professors gathered from time to time around an oval mahogany table in a seminar room at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Massachusetts, to discuss just one book, one section at a time. The book was the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, and the discussions were led by such theological luminaries as Matthew Lamb, the late Ernest Fortin, Stephen Brown, Frederick G. Lawrence, and our host, Romanus Cessario. Among those of us who came to listen and learn were several young theologians, including Matthew Levering, a co-editor of this volume, and Law Professor Thomas Kohler. On occasion, we were joined by Bernard Cardinal Law, Bishop William Murphy, and my husband Edward Lev. Attendance varied over the years, but there was one constant. Father Cessario was always there to welcome us, radiating serenity in his white Dominican robes, ready to illuminate our path through the texts he loves so much and knows so well.

That seminar was my introduction to the range of gifts possessed by the new professor who was to become a cherished family friend. He had arrived in Boston in September 1995, the year before he celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination. His reputation as a leading moral theologian had preceded him, and I, as a member of the seminary's board of trustees, was well aware of our good fortune in securing the services of such an eminent scholar. In the context of the Aquinas Group, I soon had the opportunity to appreciate his pedagogical skills at first hand. With the Latin text in front of him, Father Cessario was as adept at elucidating an obscure point with a contemporary example as he was at correcting a faulty translation. His exchanges with

his fellow theologians were inspiring for this law professor to behold models of courtesy, collegiality, and openness.

The ministry of Romanus Cessario encompasses far more, however, than the teaching and scholarship deservedly celebrated by the contributors to this volume. Theology, as Bernard Lonergan has taught us, “mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix.”<sup>1</sup> When the cultural matrix is secular, skeptical, and materialistic, the theologian’s lot is challenging indeed. Father Cessario squarely faces that challenge in his widely acclaimed *Introduction to Moral Theology*, where the state of the culture is a central preoccupation. Eschewing “high-minded moralizing” in favor of Thomistic “moral realism,”<sup>2</sup> he has made it his business to be an astute observer of contemporary social trends. Often, after a meeting of the Aquinas Group, the participants would adjourn to a nearby Korean restaurant where talk would turn to the events of the day. In that setting, we came to know our Dominican friend as a great conversationalist, extremely well informed about current affairs—local, national, international, and ecclesiastical, ever ready with penetrating questions, and never at a loss for insights from the tradition. That rare combination of eloquence, spirituality, learning, and worldly wisdom made him the perfect choice for the memorable Good Friday meditations that he delivered in St. Patrick’s Cathedral in 2008.<sup>3</sup>

No armchair intellectual, Father Cessario has taken to heart the calls of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI to evangelize the culture. In 1997, he and a small group of associates in France and the United States launched an initiative that has reinvigorated the spiritual lives of many thousands of Catholics throughout the world. The idea was to create an attractive, pocket-sized monthly publication containing readings for each day’s Mass, plus morning and evening prayers, interspersed with arresting stories from the lives of the saints, and with short meditations drawn from the best spiritual writers, ancient and modern. The supposition was that such a service would fill an unmet need. They were more right than they imagined. Even the founders of *Magnificat* must have been astonished to see how great that need was. Delighted subscribers spread the news rapidly by word of mouth. Today, *Magnificat*, with Romanus Cessario as senior editor, has 250,000 subscribers for editions in three languages, and it continues to grow.

1. Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), xi.
2. Romanus Cessario, O.P., *Introduction to Moral Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), xiv, xvii.
3. Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Seven Last Words of Jesus* (Paris/New York: Magnificat, 2009).

In the wake of the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision mandating the issuance of marriage licenses to same-sex couples, Father Cessario joined the educational efforts of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference aimed at securing an amendment to the state constitution that would have permitted citizens of the state to vote on the issue. In the cold winter months of 2004, he was part of a hardy band of clergy and lay people who went from parish to parish night after night explaining why the preservation of marriage is important and what citizens can do to make their voices heard.

In these, and in countless other ways, Father Cessario has thrown himself into the new evangelization. To see him in action in different settings is to marvel at the way he is as much at home in a Brighton coffee shop as in a Roman academy. I am particularly struck, as I ponder his many “extra-curricular” activities on behalf of lay initiatives, by how effectively he has pioneered in giving real content to the concept of complementarity between clergy and laity. Having collaborated with him on a number of occasions, including the organization of a conference at the seminary on French and American visions of religious freedom and the preparation of a volume of the collected writings of Bernard Law,<sup>4</sup> I can personally attest to the boundless energy, intelligence, and good will that he brings to teamwork.

Truly it is fitting and just to honor this dedicated scholar whose presence has immensely strengthened St. John’s Seminary, whose writing has done so much to reinvigorate the Catholic intellectual apostolate, whose work has been honored with membership in the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, and who has poured himself out as a libation in the cause of advancing the civilization of life and love. It is a privilege to have been invited to preface these fine essays with a few notes about the Romanus Cessario I have come to know as a great priest, a wise teacher, a generous colleague, and a good friend.

4. Romanus Cessario and Mary Ann Glendon, eds., *Boston’s Cardinal: Bernard Law, the Man and His Witness* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002).

The Cornerstone  
Christian Faith and Modern Culture in Dialogue

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GUY BEDOUELLE, O.P.

TRANSLATED BY MARTHA RITCHIE



The editorial adventure of *Pierre d'Angle*, a French annual review that has been published in Aix-en-Provence since 1995, began with a conversation in the train between Fr. Romanus and me about a book by Norman F. Cantor, which he had given me. Perhaps, we thought, there was a need for a review that could modestly contribute to filling the gap that had opened up during the past centuries between the Christian faith and all the various forms of contemporary culture, a gap that is made manifest by modern secularization. We had noticed that in each of our countries, the United States and France, there was a reciprocal ignorance between specialists in theology and in the spiritual domain (or the simple believer) and those who were dedicated to various arts. If the transcendentals—the Good, the True, and the Beautiful—are really convertible, how could the Christian be indifferent to the efforts of those who, according to the gifts they have received, give over their lives to find meaning in the enigma of existence?

Our ideas were not very clear about how this project for a new review would take shape, except that it ought to be truly beautiful in its presentation, its typography, and its illustrations. The title sprang immediately from a suggestion made by Fr. Romanus. It should be called *Pierre d'Angle*, and we never wavered on this point. A third editor, Fr. Daniel Bourgeois from the community of the Brothers of St. John of Malta in Aix-en-Provence, rallied to our cause,

and his untiring curiosity and practical side have been ever so useful in assuring the realization of this *Cornerstone*.

As we said from the very first page of the first number: "Our modernity is the fruit of a prodigious meeting of many worlds and of great traditions . . . For the believer, the dynamic secret in this history, the cornerstone of this architecture, is the mystery of the living God Who never tires of enlightening and, in His truth and His beauty, creating human destiny. Christ, the Cornerstone, enables us to us to discover the past, the present, and the future of man, in light of this meeting of grace and freedom." The aim that this review pursues was more broadly presented in 1997 by the three sections of an issue, each of which was edited by one of the co-editors. Fr. Romanus's section urged theologians to take "another look, a free look" at the other sciences and at the arts.

Cautiously, the three editors of the review gave themselves five years to see if the challenge would be accepted. With a degree of self-assurance, we told ourselves that **there** had been short-lived reviews, the importance and quality of which had been recognized only after the fact! *Pierre d'Angle*, which has a limited print run, enters its fifteenth year with the 2009 issue. Producing a review such as ours is not done without discussion, but the differences that emerge are handled with mutual respect and friendship. The preparation of each number, which usually occurs in March, and in varying localities, gives us the opportunity to meet in order to share ideas and most particularly to hold on to the original intentions for the review.

In homage to Fr. Romanus I would like to emphasize the share he has had in contributing to the originality of our review. *Pierre d'Angle* is certainly not a theological review, but Fr. Romanus's varied contributions have always had a theological aspect, and that aspect has always been imbued with the thought of Thomas Aquinas. In addition, Fr. Romanus has persuaded such American scholars as John McIntyre, Carl A. Anderson, Mary Ann Glendon, George Weigel, Grace Goodell, and Peter John Cameron, among many others, to contribute articles to the review. In a sense, issue number 14 (2008), which collected the papers delivered at the colloquium organized by Fr. Romanus in Boston in October 2007 on the person and work of Fr. Ernest Fortin, is an example. The title is "God and Political Order: France and the United States." The number takes up the variations introduced by Tocqueville on the genius of two peoples and their institutions. Examining the different attitudes each country has toward religion, one can understand the source of some political and ideological misunderstandings that have arisen between France and the United States in spite of the friendship that has bonded them ever since the foundation of the American republic.

One should add here that Fr. Romanus has a great admiration, affection even, for such French saints as St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, the Little Flower. He knows pilgrimage sites like Ars, Lisieux, or Paray-le-Monial better than many a Frenchman does. He believes that the Catholic renewal through holiness will come from France, granting great things for our time.

Fr. Romanus has a keen interest in the Christian intellectuals, especially French, of the first half of the twentieth century, and particularly between the two world wars. His most recent contribution, to number 15 (2009), presents with elegance the strange character of Maurice Sachs, protégé of Jean Cocteau and of Jacques and Raissa Maritain. Sachs belongs to the generation of Maritain's converts around 1926; he first thought he was called to the priesthood, but then he turned away to follow a less edifying life. In his article, Fr. Romanus shows how grace works within an exceptional being, the possibility of rejecting grace, and the pedagogical patience and caution practiced by the Maritains, and he also raises the question of the weight of homosexuality in a permissive society.

Our review gives Fr. Romanus the chance to wonder aloud about our society in crisis, to recall the teaching of the Church in reference to Thomas Aquinas as well as to recent encyclicals, and last but not least to put his thinking into the wider context of literature, the fine arts and occasionally international politics. The articles that Fr. Romanus has contributed to *Pierre d'Angle* ought one day to be published in their original language, for they are mostly rooted in a lucid vision of the American society.

## Acknowledgments



On the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday, this volume gratefully acknowledges the manifold contributions of Father Romanus Cessario, O.P. In addition to the merit of his own theological writings, he continues to contribute in countless other ways to the health of theology in the United States and abroad. Thomistic theologians owe him a special debt of gratitude. In this sense, we speak for the contributors and for many others in describing the entirety of the volume as an acknowledgment. In addition to these, some scholars and friends, not named elsewhere in this book, deserve our special thanks for enabling the book to come to fruition. As Father Cessario's birthday approached, two institutions hosted conferences where many of our contributors honed their thoughts: Ave Maria University (on the sacraments) and Providence College (on the common good). Among the organizers of these events, Michael Dauphinais, Paul Gondreau, and Russell Hittinger stand out. But for the fits and starts endemic to the festschrift genre, these distinguished scholars and friends would be among the contributors to the book—as indeed they are through their work on the symposia. Many thanks to them for their ongoing friendship and encouragement. Mercedes Cox's work at Ave Maria University on behalf of the 2007 conference was profoundly appreciated by Father Cessario and deserves grateful notice here. James Kruggel at the Catholic University of America Press took an immediate interest in this project and skillfully shepherded it through the process. Along with the director of the Catholic University of America Press, David McGonagle, James is a wonderful person to work with and an erudite theologian in his own right. During the production process, the generosity of Father Matthew Lamb enhanced the quality of the book, and we owe him an extra debt of gratitude. Gilles Emery, O.P., and Guy Mansini, O.S.B., both read the manuscript and offered helpful comments: their theological wisdom and friendship continue to prove simply in-



valuable. Copyediting of the manuscript prior to submitting the final version to the Press was kindly undertaken by Judith Heyhoe and Louise Mitchell: many thanks to them for their excellent work. In acknowledging these many gifts of time and talent, we thank God, our Creator and Redeemer, for the spiritual and intellectual fruitfulness of his son in Christ Jesus, Father Romanus Cessario.

*January 28, 2009*

*Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas*

*Reinhard Hüter*

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## RESSOURCEMENT THOMISM

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