

Knucklehead's
The ^ Guide to *Covenantal Theology*

The Unauthorized, "Normal Person's" Introduction To Fr.
Donald J. Keefe, S.J.'s *Covenantal Theology*

Or, Why It's Actually Very Grown-Up To Have Exactly the
Same Catholic Faith As Your Grandmother

John Kelleher

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WARNING

This work was written for the purpose of illustrating ideas in *Covenantal Theology* in terms that 'normal people' may be able to understand. Please remember, though, that I may have misrepresented Fr. Keefe's thought in one or more ways. On the other hand, as of this writing, Fr. Keefe is still very much alive and kicking, and, of course, *Covenantal Theology* itself is available to any one who can read with fresh eyes. In this *Knucklehead's Guide* I am only trying to illustrate just how fresh those eyes must be. In that way I hope, without unduly embarrassing Fr. Keefe, to enlarge the possibility that his amazing contribution to Catholic theology will one day be read by those whose faith seeks understanding.

If you would like to correspond with Fr. Keefe, as of this writing his address is

Donald J. Keefe, S.J.
Loyola Hall
Fordham University
Bronx, New York 10458-9993

Copies of *Covenantal Theology* are very hard to come by. A few copies of the first edition (published in two volumes) exist at theological or academic libraries in some Catholic universities and colleges. The revised edition, printed in 1996, and partially funded by a charitable trust, contains both volumes of the original work between its covers, and includes a new Appendix, along with other revisions. This revised edition is a handsome, leather-bound book, but was even less widely distributed. Contact Prof. Keven McMahon, 41 Constance Street, Bedford, NH 03110; kmcmahon@anselm.edu if you wish to purchase a copy of this important work.

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How to Use This Book

You are not reading a book that will make complete sense to you all at once. Not only are Fr. Keefe's ideas really new, he also talks about things that are so ancient in the Church that they look new, and on top of that, no doubt I will somewhat bungle the job of explaining all of that to you. But do not forget that you will literally be learning new words as you read this book.

Here is how people learn new words: Please pass the zac. The zac is on the dining table, in a shaker. I want the zac so I can flavor my food. Old Ned -- he's the zac of the earth.

My basic strategy in this book, then, is to keep using Fr. Keefe's new words in sentences, so that you too can learn what they mean, by learning how they are used. So, this is not a normal book. It is a book that tries to teach 'normal people' like yourself some new words, using the process by which people actually do learn new words in real life. Therefore, be very patient with yourself -- and, if you can, with me. You're not even supposed to understand the new words right away on the first try. Please pass the zac.

On the other hand, I'm not going to kid you: Fr. Keefe's ideas are not easy to grasp. They're truly new, very tough, but also very faithfully Catholic -- a rare and vital combination.

Covenantal Theology is a *fundamental* critique of the most basic intellectual assumptions of Catholic theology, both 'traditional' and 'liberal' -- but it is more than that. It is a generous and constructive outline of how Catholic theology can begin to correct its basic intellectual problem -- but it is more than that, too. For *Covenantal Theology* also insists that the needed fundamental intellectual and scientific improvement will become possible for Catholic theology only when it realizes that it must become a great deal more Catholic than it is now. Since all authentic developments in Catholicism are deepening, rather than in any way repudiating, of what is "ever ancient, ever new," it's possible that *Covenantal Theology* will eventually be known as the first genuine "post-Vatican II" work of Catholic theology.

It wouldn't be worth finding out about Fr. Keefe's ideas if they were only a tad different from things you already knew all about. On

virtually every page of this book, I'll be throwing out ropes, life rafts, handholds, puns, references, kitchen sinks, which I hope you'll be able to use to pull yourself toward the remarkably original world of Fr. Keefe's thought. Through absolutely no fault of your own, much of what I toss your way may do you no good at all.

Think of yourself as being in one of those classes where they teach you a language by immersion. You've been successful in at least one of those before -- you did learn English. I am not a great teacher, but if you hang in there, slowly some things will start to sink in.

This book is a sort of Junior Illustrated Classics version of *Covenantal Theology*, but it is still no easy read. Fr. Keefe's ideas are not just hard to grasp, they're hard to believe. I'll do my best to make them clear to you, but it's a safe bet that I'll bungle the job sometimes. It's me, not you.

However, always remember: this book is practically guaranteed not to make sense to you all at once. In this *Knucklehead's Guide*, you will be learning a new language. It's just a fact of life that new languages begin to make sense to people only gradually. Somewhere around Chapter 8 or 9, you may actually find yourself understanding most of what you're reading. This is normal! This book will provide you with many new things to think about -- thoughts that are much easier to think using Fr. Keefe's language. You may indeed find that reading it was worthwhile, in spite of how patient you had to be, not only with me, but with yourself. So, cut yourself tons of slack -- but also, give yourself time to allow some of the ridiculously amazing ideas of *Covenantal Theology* to register with you. That's how to use this book.

Why To Read This Book: On Children, Grandmothers, and Grown-ups

In 1991, the first edition of Fr. Donald J. Keefe, S.J.'s two-volume work, *Covenantal Theology*,¹ was published. It had three problems: nobody read it, nobody understood what they read when they did read it, and nearly everybody would have objected to the book even more than they did, if they had understood it.

Covenantal Theology bears an *Imprimi Potest*, a *Nihil Obstat*, and an *Imprimatur*. Fr. Keefe quite rightly wrote, in his Preface to the First Edition, that these are only tentative guarantees that the book is faithful to Catholicism. The Eucharist is in the end its own protection. (This is one of the many facts that seems just silly nonsense nowadays.)

Fr. Keefe did something very important in his book. He reconverted Catholic theology precisely to that Eucharistic Event, the New Covenant in the Lord's Blood, which will be the judge not only of Fr. Keefe's work but of all theological works, and which is in fact Catholic theology's sole object of study. No science could more urgently need a re-turning to what it ought to be studying, for Catholic theology has long -- long -- been wandering away from the only reality that can matter to it -- or to anyone.

Not that any of the wandering was necessarily a sin. There is a big difference between a mistake, and a sin. Theology is a science, and scientists do make mistakes. If we are lucky, other scientists will eventually correct the old mistakes, and, if we are very lucky, the questions the new scientists ask, and therefore, the mistakes they will make, will be of a higher quality than had previously been possible. We call the process of scientists asking better questions, making higher-quality mistakes, "progress." There has been precious little of such progress within the theological science of the last several hundred years, for by and large the questions theologians have asked during all those years have not been better questions, and theologians have not made higher-quality mistakes, but only the same ones, over and over.

Only time will tell, but one day, Fr. Keefe's accomplishment, in Catholic theology, may be compared to Albert Einstein's, in physics; it

1. Keefe DJ (1996). *Covenantal theology: the eucharistic order of history*. Revised edition (2 vols. in one, with Appendix). Novato, California: Presidio Press. A limited number of copies are available for purchase from: Prof. Kevin McMahon, 41 Constance Street, Bedford, NH 03110 kmcmahon@anselm.edu.

may be that creative, that deep, and that fruitful for future generations. However history judges, already we know that Fr. Keefe's work has something in common with Einstein's. It was the product of the type of question that only Einsteins ask; that is, the type of question only children ask, because adults think that its answer is obvious.

Thus *Covenantal Theology* began when Fr. Keefe began to ask the childish questions, What is nature? What is grace?, and when he really asked those questions, he discovered that the answers the grown-ups had given to them -- even grown-ups like St. Thomas and St. Augustine -- could not possibly be fully correct, if Jesus really were Lord, if "This is My Body" really means what it says, if, in a word, Catholic sacramental worship really were real and the Catholic proclamation really were true.

Again, for a theological scientist to find a mistake in the thinking of another theological scientist is something to want, not something to fear. A mistake in the science of theology no more alters the reality under study than does a similar mistake in physics. The nature of reality is not going to change, just because a good scientist makes a mistake in his account of it. Furthermore, things like television sets, as well as any other man-made glory, including theological ones, really arise (much contrary to some people's grand claims) not from advances in 'knowledge,' but from better questions, higher-quality mistakes. The knowledge that any true science possesses is always, in a way, a negative kind; scientific knowledge always comes down to saying, "Boy, I hope I don't make that stupid mistake in my thinking again!" Being able to say that, and nothing else, is human "progress," and no man-made glory has any other proximate source.

One day my Mary B., my wife, asked me why I couldn't translate Fr. Keefe's argument into "words used by normal people." On the one hand, this would be possible. The research psychologist Mr. Jerome Bruner spoke well when he said that "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development."¹ Mr. Bruner's remark, contrary to American educational cant, has been confirmed over and over within mainstream psychological science.

On the other hand, the truth of Mr. Bruner's remark in no way implies the truth of that other pernicious dogma of American life, that everybody is an expert. It is not true that you, if you just had the spare hour, and really, really wanted to, could sit down and figure out the universe.

So, as I said to my Mary B., there are still two problems. Imagine using really small words (instead of the really big ones Fr. Keefe uses all the time) to explain what television is, and how it works -- to people

1. Bruner J (1960). The process of education. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. p. 33.

a thousand years ago. The first point is the sheer number of 'small words' you would need to do that. This means that you are still going to have to work in order to read this book, even if I have been successful and you can understand my 'translation' of Fr. Keefe's thought.

This relatively minor problem is then really a major practical difficulty. The simple truth is that 'normal people' don't read books like this one. If you have read even this far in this book, your status as a 'normal person' is seriously in jeopardy.

But the second and major point is, using small words might make it possible for those people a thousand years ago to 'understand' you when you explained television to them -- but the effect would be, that they would move from suspecting that you were nuts, to being certain of it.

Just for example, one implication of what you would have to say to explain television to those people is that the table you were all sitting around is almost entirely 'empty' space. Another implication is that, even if they put their own hands on that table and pressed as hard as they could, nothing 'material' would ever come into contact. And so forth.

So, you could 'explain' television to people a thousand years ago -- but in the process, you would convince nearly all of them that the 'explanation' contained far too many things that they simply couldn't swallow. The more they understood exactly what you were saying, the crazier they would think you were.

This is why to do what Einstein did, to think like a child, is so difficult for grown-ups. To think like a child, grown-ups have to give up too much of what they already 'know.' On the other hand, giving up what you know is definitely no formula for arriving at truth. There are very good reasons, usually, to hold very tight to what you know. Einstein thought like a child, but not childishly.

It is this distinction, between thinking like a child and thinking childishly, that the world no longer makes with regards to Catholic worship. To take Catholic sacramental realism really seriously has become childish, by definition.

The sad fact is that a very large majority of American Catholics whose current job is ideas, who get paid to think, also consider the matter obvious -- it is childish ('fundamentalist,' 'obscurantist,' 'unprogressive,' 'unenlightened,' 'paternalistic,' 'sexist,' and 'authoritarian' are bigger but similar words that are also used) to take the Eucharist seriously, the way your grandmother did.

The late comedian Allan Sherman (who was not Catholic and actually did not seem to think all that highly of Catholics) once wrote

an essay to kids, in which he told them something very true, and very important. They would encounter two kinds of adults: the grown-ups, and the 'shrunk-downs.' By and large, the American Catholic academy has been 'shrunk down' by an intellectual onslaught only partly its fault. In the intellectual culture of today it really does seem just crazy, childish -- at best -- to take the Eucharist seriously, the way your grandmother did.

So, trying to remain faithful nevertheless, many American Catholic academics do what any of us would do in similar circumstances -- they fudge. They try to make the Catholic faith as little about 'nonsense' as possible. They try desperately to be 'grown-up' Catholics, but the first thing they feel compelled to do is to agree with the culture, that their own grandmother's faith was at least quaint, if not childish, if not embarrassing, if not dangerous. So, trying to be grown-up Catholics, they 'shrink down' a little more.

Of course, the world is not satisfied with any amount of fudging. The world will continue to wait just outside the offices of these academics, unmollified, for the world's claim is that to be Catholic at all, even a little bit, is childish, not at all grown-up. Thus these 'shrunk-down' Catholics may ironically even feel, not hypocritical, but heroic. Fudging might feel to them like a heroic defense of the faith in a faithless world, even if the 'heroism' amounts in the end to nothing less than apologizing for the faith of your own grandmother -- and to denying three times that you yourself would ever be a party to something so patently naive, childish, and objectionable.

There are two problems with this. The first is that New Class American Catholic academics have not been sophisticated enough to realize that they themselves will eventually become somebody's grandmother. They too will inevitably become a source of embarrassment to a younger generation committed to 'progress,' which will always be erroneously defined as, a more strenuous apology to that world which finds Catholicism childish by definition.

The other problem is that Catholics who don't think their grandmother's faith was naive are inevitably going to be accused of being naive -- and now, by their fellow Catholics, ever striving to look grown-up.

Fudged Catholicism is "why bother?" Catholicism. It exists as a childish indulgence, engaged in at the pleasure of the modern, the 'serious,' world. "Why bother?" Catholics are playing a perpetual game of "Mother, May I?" with people who don't even like them. Yet the question remains, asked of us all: what are you going to stake your life on, or, to put it precisely, "But who do you say that I am?"¹

1. Mark 8:29 RSV

But the worst of the current American 'Catholic' academy are not the vast majority, who in less than fifty years' time will be clearly known by all as total fluffballs, narrow technicians, or latent bureaucrats, but those who are really 'serious'; that is, those who are not at all willing to stake their lives on their grandmother's faith, but who are more than willing to stake their lives on -- something different. We should be afraid, very afraid, of those people. They will take us with them, toward the new heaven and the new earth of their own invention, if they can.

Finally, there are the tiny minority of American Catholic academics completely proud to say that their own faith is identical to their grandmother's. Unfortunately, though their pride is fully justified, they are not the solution, but one real source of all the trouble.

One very good reason the vast majority of the current American Catholic academy consists of fluffballs, technicians, latent bureaucrats, and ideological zealots, is the indisputable fact that, for centuries, that same Catholic academy has been markedly overpopulated with previous editions of much those same people. Replace the current ideological zealots with the previous generations' equally-smug systematists, and the match is exact.

This is the trouble with mistakes in a science, and why we should always be hoping that our theological scientists can find the old mistakes, and then make mistakes of higher quality in the future. Scientific inquiry based on a mistake will always be a waste of time. Since men always make mistakes, this guarantees that scientists will do many things that will eventually be seen as wild goose chases or turns into blind alleys. But no matter how long the mistake is persisted in, it will always be a mistake, and it will always impede scientific inquiry, even when that scientific inquiry is engaged in by generations of no doubt earnest, intelligent, good-hearted, or even holy people. Holy people make mistakes, geniuses make mistakes, all men make mistakes. A mistake is not a sin. Nevertheless, a big mistake persisted in, however earnestly, however innocently, must lead to grave defects in any scientific inquiry.

What's more, the few faithful American Catholic academics left appear completely unable to see that it is very big mistakes in the thinking -- not the faith -- of people like St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine, which, never corrected, have led inevitably to the present situation, in which even those Americans who wish to believe, find Catholicism at least vaguely embarrassing from an intellectual standpoint. There are intellectual holes in the thought of traditional Catholicism, and those holes have been there, in fact, essentially from its inception. Picked at and worried over, the holes only became larger.

This was good, since holes not noticed, can not be fixed. Patched but never really fixed, the holes widened over the centuries. These holes are now huge, big enough that you can just about drive the entire modern world right through them. So, the entire modern world does drive right through them. This problem is never going to be solved by Catholic academics whose 'answer' to this is, "What holes?"

It is also not going to be solved by anyone who confuses the science of theology with what it studies, the New Covenant, the Eucharistic Event. That Covenant, that Event, does not alter in the least, when theological scientists make mistakes, or even when theological science grinds virtually to a halt for centuries, because of huge mistakes, never really fixed.

The long and the short of it is, American Catholics of today have every reason to be embarrassed -- by Catholic thought about the faith. American 'Catholic' universities are populated almost entirely by academics with huge holes in their thinking, nearly all of it done by "why bother?" Catholics, and some done by "what holes?" Catholics. That is plain embarrassing. It does not help us.

However, the embarrassing state of the Catholic academy does not necessarily prove that Catholics need to be embarrassed by the faith, by their grandmother's faith. It is probably not true that the Catholic academy was really in any better intellectual shape when grandmother was a girl. It is unclear whether that should make anyone feel better, or worse, about our plight. However, one thing is clear: the possibility that better questions will begin to be asked about the faith, the prospect that men will begin to make higher-quality mistakes than they do now when they think about the faith, is not going to materialize out of thin air. Any number of Catholic academics who begin their daily intellectual tasks by thanking God that they no longer have their grandmother's faith, added to any number of Catholic scholars who appear to believe that St. Thomas Aquinas established the Eucharist, wrote the Bible, and infallibly guided the deliberations of every Council, will ever equal even one Catholic thinker.

So, in the America of today, to be both Catholic, and a grown-up, seems impossible. The very term, "Catholic thought," scarcely rises to the status of an oxymoron. Most sophisticated Americans, even sophisticated American Catholics, just know that the Catholic faith of your grandmother was childish, by definition, and the very few American Catholic thinkers who dispute this, while they are correct to do so, continue to give reasons that are not going to become any more intellectually satisfying in the future than they are now.

Under such circumstances, someone making a very sophisticated argument bearing an *Imprimi Potest*, a *Nihil Obstat*, and an

Imprimatur, and who thinks like a child, who asks questions only a child would ask, perhaps deserves an audience. *Covenantal Theology*, then, really is a book for American Catholic children -- of all ages. The American Catholic adults currently paid to think about 'Catholic' things -- not only the vast number of 'shrunk-downs', but also the very few other American Catholic scholars who still believe it all, with all their hearts, just like your grandmother -- have, almost to a man, considered Fr. Keefe's book *indigestible*. If they 'understand' it at all, they think it contains things that they just can not swallow. But this book is not for them. Fr. Keefe's book is supposed to be for them.

Indeed, if *Covenantal Theology* is ever 'successful,' if it is ever seen to make higher-quality mistakes than its predecessors, in the end that will be known, not in some academic tribunal, but by the increased thirst for the sacraments developed in those people who read it or are influenced by it. Beyond the fact that this must be the measure of any work in Catholic theology, there is another reason for this. The second edition of Fr. Keefe's work crams two entire volumes into one, within a mere 784 pages of small print. It refers to thinkers from the ancient Greek philosopher, Parmenides, to the modern-day physicist, Stephen Hawking, copiously citing works classical, early, medieval, modern, quoting in Latin, French, German, and English, is knowledgeable about seemingly everything from transubstantiation to the Critical Legal Studies Movement, and is almost instinctively polysyllabic, careful, and learned. The point of all that learning and all that work? To testify, to any willing reader, that real grown-ups take the sacraments as seriously as your grandmother did.

To repeat one last time, Fr. Keefe's work is one of theological science. In substance, then, it is equivalent to a work by St. Thomas Aquinas, or to any work by any Catholic theologian. Its sole goal is to make higher-quality mistakes than had previously been possible. It is a work about the faith; it is in no way, shape, or form, the faith, nor does it intend to be. If you want the faith, go to Mass.

But Catholics have always liked their faith with large doses of understanding, however tentative and provisional those understandings must always be. So, if I took Fr. Keefe's big words out, and put in smaller words for "normal people," could you be enough of a child to think that, if you gave up large parts of what you already 'know,' you could be an American, a Catholic, and a grown-up, all at once, and still believe it all, with all your heart, share, exactly, one and the same faith with the first martyr, St. Stephen, with your patron saints, and with your grandmother?

Read this book. Maybe you'll find out that you can.

1 The Nature of Reality: What You'll Be Getting Into

My job is to write a guide to the thought of Fr. Keefe's work, *Covenantal Theology*, using words a normal person can understand. I will not be guiding you through his book, but through his thought. I will often be using my own examples, my own words, and my own framework, not his, certainly not because mine are better, but because my task, to give you just the flavor of his accomplishment, is different from his.

By giving you a hint of Fr. Keefe's thought, I hope to suggest to you that Catholicism is not intellectually embarrassing or childish, but is exceedingly grown-up. One does not in fact have to apologize for the faith of one's grandmother, one's great-grandmother, one's patron saint, and on and on, on the grounds that their faith had no grown-up basis.

On the other hand, this is not the book for you if what you actually want, deep down, are words that reassure you that your faith really is childish. Then it can safely be compartmentalized, switched on at times most convenient for you, and is infinitely malleable, always ready to meet your needs, exactly the way you pre-define those.

After all, people who regard their own faith as childish seem to have the best of both worlds. Whenever they want, they can indulge themselves with the comfort of religion, but it never has to interfere with 'real' life, since, pre-defined as childish, 'religion' doesn't have anything to do with what grown-ups do.

Let's begin.

According to Fr. Keefe, the sacrament of the Eucharist -- not a theory about the Eucharist but the liturgy of the Church itself -- by its very existence, is a refutation of some of fallen Man's basic ideas about who he is and how his life ought to be organized.

Chapters 2 and 3 try to give you an idea of what it is that the Eucharist is refuting, as Fr. Keefe sees it. Once Chapters 2 - 3 give you a glimmer of what *Covenantal Theology* is not, Chapter 4 can begin to tell you what it is.

So, your task in Chapters 2 - 3 is just to get through them. If there's something that doesn't quite register with you, just keep plowing along.

I'm merely trying to build up enough general background knowledge between us so I can begin to tell you what Fr. Keefe is actually doing in his book. Don't sweat the details.

But do read those chapters, for I will be referring to ideas in them throughout this book. When later on I say that we risk becoming "Ones in free motion," or that there is no Bigger Sentence than the Eucharist, you'll have an idea of what I'm talking about, because of Chapters 2 and 3.

By reading Chapters 2 and 3, you'll also begin to have a basic idea of a concept that is very important in Fr. Keefe's thought: what he calls "dehistoricized cosmology." A "dehistoricized" (time-less) "cosmology" (explanation for the cosmos) is what Fr. Keefe says that the Eucharist refutes. You therefore need to begin to have some sense of what time-less frameworks look like -- so you can eventually see how radically the Eucharist contradicts them all.

Also, you need an idea of how perennial, how 'natural,' it really is for fallen Man in this fallen world to find, and then to trap himself in, one of these time-less explanations for the cosmos.

For example, there are both very old and very new versions of many time-less frameworks. Indeed, dehistoricized cosmologies, time-less frameworks, are even more than a perennial temptation for Man. Outside of the Eucharist, they are Man's fate, for only the Eucharist can coherently 'tempt' Man in a different direction. By giving examples from different historical epochs, Chapters 2 and 3 therefore also try to give you at least a glimmer of the vast sweep, and depth, of this perennial turn of Man toward the time-less.

In Chapter 2, I draw you some pictures. The first thing you have to understand is that they are all different representations of the same basic paradigm, "dehistoricized cosmology." The first picture you will see is the most important for understanding Fr. Keefe's thought:

The Eucharist is over here,

< - - and here we are, standing
some place else, in the 'normal
universe,' looking at it, and trying to
understand it.

Don't forget: this picture is a representation of the *wrong* answer, according to Fr. Keefe. All the pictures you will see are representations of the same basic paradigm, "dehistoricized cosmology," and that paradigm has a deep problem.

In all the representations of the paradigm, there is a distance between one important thing and another. What the fact of this distance ends up meaning is either that only one of the two things can really exist (one thing has to swallow the other thing), or that there's an unbridgeable gap between them. Obviously, one important thing

swallowing another important thing is not good, but the alternative, the existence of an unbridgeable gap between them, is not good either. The 'distance' inherent in the paradigm amounts to saying that we live in a world that's crazy deep down in its heart of hearts, and I don't mean crazy in a good way. I mean crazy, as in insane, as in unbearable.

Would you like to live in a world in which (for example) Faith was -- when you get down to it -- fundamentally incompatible with Reason: you could have only one of the two, and would have to give up the other forever? What about free will and science -- are you prepared to say that only one of these two can really exist, or, if both do, that each is fundamentally incompatible with the other?

This is the kind of difficulty all representations of this paradigm eventually confront, and the efforts to 'solve' the problem aren't very pretty, as we will see.

Chapter 2 is the kitchen sink introduction to the paradigm and its insoluble problem. Chapter 3 uses that introduction to give you a rough idea of Plato's and Aristotle's versions of the same paradigm. Plato's and Aristotle's approaches are very important, because the two streams of Catholic theology, Augustinianism and Thomism, rely on them. St. Augustine relied on Plato's vocabulary, St. Thomas Aquinas mostly on Aristotle's.

The problem for Catholic theology, according to Fr. Keefe, is that both St. Augustine and St. Thomas not only adopted the philosophical vocabulary of Plato and Aristotle. They also generally accepted Plato's and Aristotle's paradigm -- the one under discussion here, dehistoricized cosmology, the time-less explanation for the cosmos. This was a very serious mistake, as we will see, because Fr. Keefe demonstrates that the paradigm is un-Catholic to its core.

The paradigm, in all its representations in Chapters 2 - 3, is our effort to tell ourselves what reality is like, and what we are like. Fr. Keefe says that it has been the consistent proclamation of the Church that only the Eucharist can do those two things. Thus the conflict, which could not be more central, more basic: the paradigm we can discover on our own, or the New Covenant.

The Eucharist, in other words, is not really childish. It is either the most serious Event in the universe, or it is just a joke -- unreal.

On the other hand, there is another way to pre-define Catholicism as childish. It is to assume that

- the activity of grown-up Catholicism must of course be identical to the activity of certified grown-ups, such as yourself.
- Catholicism's real intellectual foundations are whatever you, as a real grown-up, happen to possess for yourself.

- Catholicism indeed is whatever authentic grown-ups, such as yourself, happen to think it is.

This is the childish Catholicism of many Catholic members of the New Class,¹ those of us either directly producing knowledge, as academics, scientists, or engineers, or making direct and substantial use of it, in the manner of high-level bureaucrats, technicians, public-relations directors, attorneys, and so forth. The house organ of New Class American Catholicism (as Fr. Keefe as well as many others has noted) is of course the *National Catholic Reporter*, within whose pages is weekly presented the requirement of Catholicism to adjust itself to the presumed needs of the times. I know. Not so many years ago, I was an NCR Catholic myself.

As someone whose entire adult life has been spent on the fringes of the New Class world, being a New Class Catholic was in fact the reasonable choice for me. Therefore, one important detail needs emphasis here. My choice for New Class Catholicism was the reasonable choice. All readers of this book need to understand that New Class Catholicism is one current embodiment of an intellectual tradition that nearly every school Thomist for eight centuries, and St. Thomas himself (with a few highly unsystematic exceptions) has presented as the Thinking Man's Approach to Catholicism. New Class Catholicism is in fact a highly logical manifestation of the paradigm that I will shortly be drawing many pictures of:

The Eucharist is over here,

Thus the theological foundations of the "conservative" midwestern lay Catholic newspaper, *The Wanderer*, are at root identical to the theological foundations of the "progressive" midwestern lay Catholic newspaper, the *National Catholic Reporter*. The root intellectual defect in both is in fact the same, and fully "traditional," and indeed the existence of the defect within Catholic thought very substantially pre-dates even Aquinas.

To both those in the school of Aquinas, and therefore to the "conservative" *The Wanderer*, and to the "progressive" *National Catholic Reporter*, it is childish, "contrary to reason," simply unimaginable, to propose what Fr. Keefe does, *that there is no 'normal universe' outside of the Eucharist where we can stand to understand the Eucharist*.¹

1. Gouldner A (1976). *The future of intellectuals and the rise of the new class*. New York: Seabury.

< - - - and here we are, standing some place else, in the 'normal universe,' looking at it, and trying to understand it.

1. "The objective truth of human existence is given in the liturgical freedom of the Church's mediation of her faith, and only if we stand there may we understand. This is a hard saying, but it is ancient in the Church, and Catholic theology exists only in the service of its truth." *CT*, p. 652

The Wanderer resolves the underlying and self-proposed conundrum in terms of "obedience," which, though entirely unsatisfactory, is preferable to NCR's resolution of it in terms of "autonomy." *The Wanderer's* resolution amounts to the decision to remain faithful, even when that renders one's intellectual system incoherent, but New Class Catholicism's resolution of the very same conundrum is a decision to apologize for the faith of one's grandmother.

Thus (to anticipate a little bit) Fr. Keefe's 'resolution' of this very ancient conundrum (a conundrum whose liturgical and then philosophical articulation is pagan, and far predates even Catholicism itself) is to propose that the conundrum itself is the problem. The conundrum itself is pagan, and any Catholic theology -- however venerable -- which takes up the paradigm of the time-less explanation for the cosmos can only be pagan, never really Catholic, let alone really theology.

Catholics, and thus Catholic theology, must stand somewhere else than within this pagan paradigm even to begin to understand. If any man wishes to refuse the time-less consistently and coherently, the sole place to stand is by his reception of the sacraments, most of all the Eucharist. Thus, from now on, says Fr. Keefe, all Catholics must begin all their thinking with this: that we can understand the Eucharist solely by means of the Eucharist.

This probably sounds like absolute nonsense. Nevertheless, Fr. Keefe means what he says. His argument is nonsense, but only if the Eucharist itself is nonsense. His argument does amount to a radical intellectual condemnation, not only of New Class Catholicism, but also of all traditional Catholic thought, for in both systems of thought the statement also appears to be nothing but pious nonsense, at best.

From their own standpoints, then, there are very good reasons for virtually the entire current Catholic academy, whether New Class or traditional, either to ignore or to condemn Fr. Keefe's work, which must appear -- to them -- to be either obviously foolish: a childish refusal of 'grown-up' New Class thought, or blatantly scandalous: a bewildering rejection of traditional Catholic thought so fundamental it amounts to calumny, or even heresy.

However, if Fr. Keefe is right, it may not be too much to say that we have lost the sense of how wise Catholicism is, because, under the influence and with the encouragement not only of the 'modern' world but even of the most "traditional" Catholic thought, we have lost all sense of how completely, how appallingly, ridiculous Catholicism is.

Fr. Keefe's intellectual challenge to us is thus most radical, and most vigorous. Either the New Class grown-ups are right, and you

Eucharist < - - - us, over here

must apologize for your grandmother's faith, or the "what holes?" grown-ups are right, and you must resort to intellectual arguments that seem dried-up and silly not only to virtually all secular moderns but also even to the vast majority of Catholic thinkers today, or Catholicism is the only grown-up reality, in which case the only way to be genuinely grown-up is to become like a little child, joining in the Church's Eucharistic Sacrifice of Praise as One Flesh with Christ her Head, whose One Sacrifice, sacramentally re-presented in the same Eucharist, takes away the sins of the world.

2 The Nature of Reality (part 1)

Covenantal Theology proposes that if we really wish to stand somewhere and know the meaning of human existence and the nature of reality, the sole place to stand is around the altar, participating in the Eucharistic worship of the Church. To Fr. Keefe, this is no pious way of talking, but literally true.¹ This has the advantage of making the Eucharist the most serious Event in the universe, but it has the disadvantage that you must give up much of what you already 'know' to assert its truth. To see something of what he is saying, here is one basic assumption, made by nearly everyone, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, that simply can not be true, if it is literally true that "... the Eucharist makes the Church":²

The Eucharist is over here,

Here are three more ways of saying the same thing:

Here is the "supernatural" world,

Here is "Grace,"

The Time-less is over here,

A fifth way. Note that the change in 'spatial' orientation to vertical does not change the meaning:

Here is God,
|
|
and here is Man,
and here is 'the natural world.'

1. "The objective truth of human existence is given in the liturgical freedom of the Church's mediation of her faith, and only if we stand there may we understand. This is a hard saying, but it is ancient in the Church, and Catholic theology exists only in the service of its truth." *CT*, p. 652

2. Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994). English translation for the United States of America. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference. 1396.

< - - - and here we are, standing some place else, in the 'normal universe,' looking at it, and trying to understand it.

and here is the "purely natural" world of our experience.

and here is "Nature."

< - - - and here we are, standing in time, looking at it, and trying to understand it.

< - - - (What's in here, 'between'?)

The problem for all the different ways of representing the same assumption, then, is "What's in the 'space' between?" If God is genuinely distinct from Man, then how can there be any real contact between them? Exactly the same problem arises when the world gets divided into "Nature" and "Grace," into "pure nature" and the "supernatural," or into any two places, one in which everything except the Eucharist can make sense, and the other, the place where it's the Eucharist that makes sense.

This is a very, very serious problem. Here is another classic way of representing it:

One
|
|
Many Many Many Many Many

Despite how it may look, none of this is of merely 'academic' interest. This problem, in all its representations, really does affect how the meaning of life gets conceived of, and therefore, how human life is lived. This becomes obvious when we look at one method of 'solving' the One - Many way of representing this problem. Suppose we say that the Many are really just tiny parts of the One, so that it's really all One -- if we just look at it in the correct way. This 'solution' has proved to have perennial appeal. However, there are a few tiny problems with it:

many					
many	many			many	
many	many	many	many	many	many
many	many	many	many	many	many
many	many	many	many	many	many
	many	many	many	many	many

Here is God,
|
|
and here is Man,
and here is 'the natural world.'

Problem! If the One is really only One, there can't be anything else in it, including anything else that would cause it to make some things that are not itself, not-One. In other words, how could you really get Many out of a genuine One, a real First Thing? It seems that there has to be some being, or force, or place 'in-between' One and Many for the Many to exist, but how could that be?

All similar 'solutions' are (a partial list): Pantheisms or Totalitarianisms, or (at least) have no room either for real human freedom or even real human dignity, make genuine creativity impossible, and make everything -- not just men -- into totally replaceable atoms of a larger Design, which Design alone possesses real meaning. This 'solution' 'solves' the problem of the One and the Many by subsuming the Many into the One.

But now none of them has a genuine 'place.' Now Ben can freely move about, anywhere in the 'space,' but only because it doesn't matter, at all, where in the 'space' he is. By becoming 'free,' Ben has lost any special 'place' where he 'belongs.' This total loss of 'place' also destroys any intrinsic relationship Ann, Laya, Ben, and Tim can have to each other. Since it must never matter where Ben is in the 'space' (so that he can be 'free'), it must also never matter where he is in relation to any of the others.

This is we, in the "state of nature" portrayed by some philosophers. Each of us is 'free,' each of us has the right to move about the 'space' as he wishes. This does, however, mean that it can't intrinsically matter where our place is. This is necessarily so, because the new name for each of us in this formulation is not "many," but "the One." Each one of us is "the One" -- we are our own place, our own space. No One, no First Thing, by definition, can have an intrinsic, a necessary, relationship with anything else. We are each "the One." We are "free."

This reality is inherently atomistic. It consists of some number of intrinsically unrelated Ones, 'freely' moving about the 'space.' Paradoxically, we again lose our names. Each one of us still has the same name, but this time, the single name for every single one of us is not "many," but "the One." This particular re-naming is this account's version of "freedom."

Since there is no 'place' where Ben, or anyone else, is 'supposed' to be, Ben can move around in the 'space' wherever he wants. However, there is also no special reason why Ben can't move other beings around, too. They're not 'supposed' to be any particular place, either, so why can't Ben move them around if he wants? In this version of the world, there is no One to which appeal can be addressed, to prevent Ben from devising the following clever arrangement of beings in the 'space,' if he can get away with it:

many many many				
many	many		Tim	
many	many	many	many	many many
many Ann many		many many many	many	many
many	many	many		many many
many	many	many	many	many many
many many many		many many	many	Laya

This particular arrangement, or at least attempts at it, will no doubt be familiar to many readers. Some political theories are based on the belief that Ben will not be able to get away with this plan. Ann, Tim, and Laya will gang up on him, and prevent it.

	Ann		
			Tim
Laya		Ben	
	One		
One		One	One

This is a recipe for war-time coalitions only. Ann, Tim, and Laya do not change their 'natures' as "the One" just because they temporarily cooperated to defeat being 'Ben'd.' They have just as much motivation to 'Ann,' 'Tim' or 'Laya' Ben as he has to 'Ben' them. They also have just as much justification. Remember, it's no fair -- it's impossible -- to appeal to some Name, some One, that, by 'making' everyone have a particular place, ends these disputes. According to this 'solution,' there is no such One, and there can not be such a One, if human freedom is to exist. Ironically, then, the existence of 'freedom' requires that all disputes between Ones be resolved solely in terms of how much power each One has.

Thomas Hobbes, a seventeenth-century English philosopher, proposed a solution to the interminable warfare between Ones that amounts to another spelling exercise, except that, instead of spelling out "Ben," we all get together and voluntarily spell out "Leviathan,"¹ the Big Guy of our own mutual creation, who speaks softly but carries a whopping big stick, thereby scaring us all into further civility, giving each of us a certain amount of respite from warfare and from the Bens of the world. Hobbes's Big Guy was the King. In an earlier work, he said that the original Big Guy was democracy, but that would inevitably fail, necessitating the Real Big Guy, a powerful monarchy, to which we once-and-for-all surrender ourselves, in order to have a goodly amount of freedom to move about in the space, without perpetually having to fight off attempts to Ben, Laya, Ann, or Tim us.

Although it begins by finding a place for 'real' freedom, "inalienable" rights, by assuming that everyone has this freedom and these rights by virtue of being "the One," Hobbes's picture does not seem that different from the picture of "One" spelled out by all those "many's," (or even from the spelling-out of "Ben").

The correspondence results because Hobbes never abandoned the basic assumption within which his 'problem' was 'solved:' the rational necessity of his monarch. Leviathan is an inevitable, and therefore, a rational, working out of the basic principles governing Ones moving about 'freely' in 'space.' Hobbes wanted his parallel to Galileo's New Physics of bodies in motion to be exact; indeed, he wanted it to be not a parallel, but exactly the same case. We are not like Ones, independent bodies in motion, governed by rationally necessary Laws. That is, exactly, what we are, and solely that.

Yet perhaps Hobbes can be celebrated, because he made a higher-quality mistake than many of his predecessors. He realized that, in many traditional formulations, in which our name was "many," we had no "rights," no "freedom" of movement, but only a 'place.' By making us all Ones, he tried to solve this problem. Thus, given the dilemma

1. Hobbes T (1651). *Leviathan*, or the matter, forme and power of a commonwealth ecclesiasticall and civil. (The frontispiece to the original edition, designed by Hobbes himself, has a drawing of the Big Guy. If you look at the drawing closely, you can see that the Big Guy is indeed composed of jillions of little guys, little Ones.)

LEVIATHAN

(Ann, Ben, Laya, and Tim have each decided to be one of the jillions of tiny dots which, combined, spell out this Big Guy's name: LEVIATHAN).

which Hobbes's 'solution' was one manner of putting into focus, another representation of exactly the same basic assumption we continue to treat here is this:

Coherence (a place for everything, and everything in its place)

|
|
Freedom

<- - Again, what goes here?

or this -- more along the lines of Hobbes's model:

Freedom (Ones in 'free' motion)

|
|
Coherence (Leviathan)

<- - Same question.

To 'solve' the problem, of course, Hobbes snuck in an invisible extra layer, the "laws" governing the Ones in motion:

“Laws” governing Ones in motion

|
|
Freedom (Ones in 'free' motion)
|
|
Coherence (Leviathan)

<- - Again, how do you get from inevitable "laws" governing human behavior to "freedom"? Isn't "freedom" then simply an illusion?

This is no dead issue: merely as one out of many, many possible examples, cognitive scientist Mr. Steven Pinker¹ recently stated that, since human behavior can now be seen (and be seen more and more) to "fall out" of a few basic scientific laws, all rational (i.e., non-childish) people must acknowledge that "free will" appears to be an illusion. However much we may dislike this outcome, the existence of free will appears to be totally unnecessary to a rational account of human behavior, just as the idea that the earth is flat is totally unnecessary to an account of the physical universe. (Those who dispute this are welcome to do so, but they must do so in a grown-up way, by following the rules of science -- otherwise, they are simply being children, flat-earthers, quitting the game of being rational simply because they don't like what rational inquiry has discovered).

1. In Pinker S (1997). *How the mind works*. New York: Norton.

There is a tricky point here that needs a little time to sink in. The claim being made is not that free will seems impossible to a few godless modern scientists, but that scientists have discovered something real. In other words, the existence of free will is going to look more and more impossible, as science marches on. Mr. Pinker's assertion really is: as they have begun to already, scientists will, over time, more and more precisely be able to describe and to quantify the laws governing human behavior. In five hundred years, no one will find the existence of human freedom to be reasonable, just as no one now finds a flat earth to be reasonable. The case against both of them will simply be too decisively established.

Mr. Pinker and scientists like him do not at all dispute that it seems to us that we have free will, any more than they would dispute that the earth looks flat, if you look out your kitchen window. They don't even dispute that we might be very insistent that -- in both cases -- "it's just obvious" to us what the correct answer is, that our response to the claim might be: "but you can just look out the window and *see* that the earth is flat!"

Nonetheless, what things look like, at first glance, and what the case is, are two different things, as all rational people now accept regarding the shape of the earth -- and as they will increasingly accept regarding free will. Although there are still a few extremely primitive men, and some extremely childish ones, who continue to insist that the earth is flat, in five hundred years, men who believe in free will will have the same social, cultural, and intellectual status as flat-earthers.

Nonetheless, continues Mr. Pinker, he is not upset, nor need we be, for -- ta-dah! -- free will can still exist, if it is something that actually exists, but will forever appear to be an illusion to rational human minds.

This point is a bit tricky. Mr. Pinker is not, at the last minute, denying what he spends 500 pages proving: that scientists will continue, day by day, year by year, to uncover more and more evidence that free will is impossible. His version of "don't worry, be happy" amounts to finding a special way of looking at this fact, so that we can continue to believe in free will, anyway. Using this special way of looking, nobody need ever be disturbed by these findings.

However, something important escapes Mr. Pinker's notice, when, in the very last pages of his book, he turns to this cheerful reassurance. For what Mr. Pinker's 'reassurance' actually amounts to, is that we can still believe the truth that free will exists -- but only by assuming that human rational inquiry will inevitably lead us further and further away from the truth that free will exists.

Over time, rational scientific inquiry will lead us to conclude, more

and more irrefutably, that free will does not exist. If free will exists nonetheless, then we are forced to conclude that the harder we try to understand reality, the more firmly we will be deceived about the truth of the existence of free will. Either we are not free at all, or the best human thinking, our most rigorous attempts to be clear about what is true, will increasingly lead us straight toward what is not true.

The situation is thus identical to all the others:

"Free Will," over here,

and all rationality, everything we can ever learn, discover, or think about, over here.

Before further discussion, we should include one more classic representation of the same assumption:

Faith

|
|

Reason

We need to be aware that this last is identical to Mr. Pinker's solution, which amounts to:

Reason

|
|

Faith

We also need to be aware that Mr. Pinker's 'solution' is not limited to 'free will.' The formal scheme used allows us to insert absolutely anything into the 'place' reserved for "the thing that Reason shows us can not be true."

[Insert your favorite irrational belief here] < - - - -

and please place all rationality, everything we can ever learn, discover, or think about, over here.

Mr. Pinker's 'solution' thus amounts to total societal incoherence as the price paid for continuing to 'believe' in "free will." Once we invent a special class of 'reasons' *which are contrary to reason*, anything goes. For exactly the same 'reason' that we are allowed to continue to 'believe' in 'free will,' we must allow some one else to continue to 'believe' that the earth is flat, that the moon is made out of green cheese, that psychic crystal pyramids work -- or that we would all be happiest if we spelled out, "Ben" (this being Ben's favorite 'belief').

Thus, ironically, continuing to 'believe' in free will amounts to the admission that whoever has the most power will dictate what we 'believe,' or at least, what we will accept. If Ben has the 'belief' that he has the 'right' to use charm, hypnosis, advertising, the school system, social pressures, or any other force to convince the rest of us that we will, or even, that we should, be 'Ben'd,' then there is nothing except our own charm, etc. -- our own power -- to prevent that. We have no more 'right' to our 'belief' that we should not be 'Ben'd' than Ben does to his 'belief' that we should. It all comes down to, who is more "persuasive" -- which means, exactly, who has more power. If our "consent" can be "manufactured"¹ rather than directly forced, then so much the better.

We are, exactly, back to being Ones in motion, 'free' to occupy any 'place' in the space -- and thus with no 'right' to any particular 'place,' either. There is nothing at all 'academic' about the basic assumption under discussion in this chapter.

It should be made clear to scientists that, by this formal model, also not ruled out is the 'belief' that science and reason ought to be abandoned, or even actively destroyed -- since they lead us inevitably toward what is false, rather than toward what is true. If rational and scientific inquiry will increasingly lead us toward what is false, then perhaps they really should be abandoned. But, as has just been shown, in this set-up, all matters of 'belief' are reducible to matters of power -- and who has it. Science, and rationality itself, then, are in no way 'protected,' once 'belief' can be used to 'justify' something that our best efforts to be rational tell us can not possibly be true.

It also needs to be made clear that the choice for belief, in spite of reason is formally identical to the choice for reason, in spite of belief. Belief, in spite of reason: a rationally inquiring scientist who continues to 'believe' in the existence of free will (except when he personally is being a scientist) is expressing exactly the same 'logic' as Reason, in spite of belief: a believer who continues to accept the conclusions of rational inquiry and science (except when something 'scientific' contradicts his personal 'beliefs').

Furthermore, just as scientists need to remember that the particular 'solution' to the conundrum, one proposed not only by scientists like Mr. Pinker, but also, in its opposite but formally identical form, by religious fundamentalism, is no way to guarantee that scientific or otherwise rational inquiry will even continue to exist, believers need to remember that this is also no way of rescuing belief. In this model, rationality, science, free will, Catholicism, and psychic crystal pyramids -- all of them -- continue to exist only because someone who has enough power says that they may. All of them are reasonable, or

1. Herman ES, Chomsky N (1988).
Manufacturing consent: the political economy of
the mass media. New York: Pantheon Books.

IF TRUE, THEN FALSE
Reason and Science Free Will

OR

IF TRUE, THEN FALSE
Free Will Reason and Science

SO, save one, abandon the other:
Free Will Reason and Science

Reason - - - (personal exceptions to sheer
Reason) - - - -> 'Belief'

Belief - - - (personal exceptions to sheer
Belief) - - - -> 'Reason'

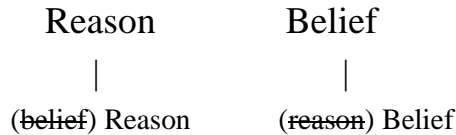
unreasonable, believable or not, solely as a consequence of who wins.

Once again, the situation is identical to all the ones before. Either there is an unbridgeable gap, this time between 'belief' and 'reason':

[Insert your favorite irrational belief here] < - - - -

and please place all rationality,
everything we can ever learn,
discover, or think about, over here.

or (in the end) 'reason' can exist, or 'belief' can exist, but not both:



Of course, in real life it is often easy enough to be logically inconsistent. There are plenty of real-life scientists who without great discomfort believe 'religious' things that they know are logically contradicted by the assumptions of their science. There are also plenty of believers who quite happily use every last bit of the fruits of modern science, up to the very inch where those fruits start to be inconvenient to their beliefs.

There is no question that such accommodations are possible, that they happen all the time, and that most people don't suffer all that much from making them, whichever side of the fence they happen to be on.

This situation is so 'normal' in real life that it is worth making a small digression here to discuss it a little. After all, if many, maybe even most, people can live fairly happily while holding ideas that even they admit seem to be contradictory, it becomes a little difficult for me to justify asking you to take the time to read a book like this one, which is about ideas about the Catholic faith, and making those ideas coherent!

Are ideas important at all? Why bother trying to get them right and making them coherent, if we are only rarely troubled, scarcely inconvenienced, when they are neither right nor coherent?

Actually, if we take *Covenantal Theology* seriously, there is no real answer to this problem, outside of the Eucharist. Again, that is meant literally -- another indication of how radical, how childish, a book it is.

You'll probably have to read many more chapters of this book to begin to understand how literally *Covenantal Theology* asks us to take the idea that there's no real answer to the problem outside of the Eucharist, but it is possible to see some of the difficulties even outside of the arguments *Covenantal Theology* presents. So, yes, experience sometimes shows that, over the long haul, ideas do matter, they do

affect us, and some people do suffer if they do not accord with the realities they claim to describe and predict. Both the rise and the fall of communism demonstrate this.

However, experience also shows that not everyone suffers if incorrect and incoherent ideas prosper. We ourselves may get off scot-free. Only other people may have to pay for our incoherence -- an incoherence which we personally may find extremely convenient, perhaps even essential.

This immediately puts the problem into the 'moral realm,' a place no one in these modern times can go, or even talk about, without being immediately contradicted by a hundred other people.

The 'grown-up' world really can't talk about moral issues, which are, according to it, "private," or "subjective." So, if being intellectually and scientifically coherent is actually a moral issue, then the 'grown-up' world is, in a way, committed to the idea that we shouldn't talk very much about the need to be coherent, at least in polite company.

In fact, such talk does often enough seem to lead to endless disagreements, perhaps especially strong ones within an institution purportedly devoted to ideas and coherence -- the modern university. For outside of the sciences, it is a simple fact of academic life that people even within the same academic department may disagree so strongly, even about the most fundamental intellectual points, that they've completely given up even discussing anything serious. They may have adjoining offices, and be a universe apart in every intellectual respect.

If you have no direct experience of what I've just said about the modern university, you are, of course, lucky. However, if you think I've exaggerated the case, you're simply misinformed: enormous intellectual incoherence really is a fact of life in many academic departments in modern universities. (If you have weak nerves, don't even try to imagine what the intellectual incoherence between academic departments in a modern university might look like.)

To complicate things further, our ability to live with fairly large amounts of incoherence is, on balance, a very good thing. It would probably be much worse for us if we were so hungry to be intellectually consistent that we all automatically obeyed somebody just because he claimed to have everything all figured out.

For example, our ability to live with incoherence is our first line of defense against Ben, when he argues that it is only "logical" for him to 'Ben' us. Our ability to simply ignore his 'proof' is a pretty good initial defense against him.

Thus, it is not so simple to make a grown-up, modern argument

even about the importance of coherence. Sometimes accepting incoherence is our first line of defense against totalitarianism. Sometimes it is just remarkably convenient. Other times it might be just a simple admission that we don't have everything all figured out. Further, there is often, or even usually, great disagreement about what really is "coherent." All this is such a steady feature of truly modern life that, ironically, we mostly ignore it, just to get through our day -- proving the point about our relative ease with massive incoherence.

We don't actually live as if our ideas absolutely had to be either right or coherent. Trying to live that way might even be dangerous. On the other hand, we do understand that throwing up our hands and saying, "Anything goes," is at least as dangerous a strategy.

The fact that it is actually very difficult for truly modern grown-ups to be grown-up about being truly modern grown-ups is not irrelevant to the argument of this book. When we realize that 'grown-ups' do not have even all the crucial things figured out, then what 'grown-ups' might think of the Eucharist becomes a little less decisive. We may be justified in taking another look at our grandmother's faith. The proposal of *Covenantal Theology*, that the font, not only of all coherence, but of all our reasons to seek coherence, is to be found solely in the Eucharist, may look slightly less childish.

Before discussing Plato and Aristotle's representations of the paradigm in the next chapter, one final way to represent the paradigm needs to be noted here. At times, thinkers -- especially more recent ones -- have claimed that the problems with the paradigm are solved by imagining that the representation occurs in time rather than in space, but that just isn't true. Nothing is improved, or even really changed, for example:

Belief	- - - - - >	Reason
Freedom	- - - - - >	Coherence
Many	- - - - - >	One

(what's 'in-between' here may erroneously get called, "Progress")

One way to understand why the problem of the 'in-between' is not suddenly solved by a temporal transposition is to realize that the visual representation of time allows us to 'cheat' in how we 'read' these drawings. When we make a drawing in which the same basic assumption under study, formerly represented as a spatial metaphor, now uses the visual to represent time:

Past - - - - - > Future

it certainly looks as if we could 'see' into the future! When we 'read' visual representations of the basic assumption discussed here *that are meant as temporal metaphors*, we need to see them differently, to overcome the misimpression generated by their visual representation, that we can actually 'see' into the Future, or even, 'see' clearly into the Past.

With such representations, we need to imagine that we are no longer outside the drawing, looking at it, but that we are a part of the drawing, at some 'place' on it -- perhaps *trapped on it* says it even more accurately. By doing this, the conceptual confusion is removed -- and the insoluble difficulty again becomes clear. In other words, when we look at such representations, we have to imagine that we are no longer 'out here' looking at the line, but that we are now trapped on it -- that we ourselves are one of the marks on the page. So, how can we, who are on the line -- and not 'outside' it, looking at it -- really, confidently know where we are on the line:

Past - - - *- - - - - > Future
 (*you are here?)

-- or even if there will be a line:

Past - - - *
 (*you are here)

Many times, temporal representations of the paradigm take advantage of the evident fact that we are, indeed, 'out here,' looking at marks on a paper -- while at the same time they implicitly ask us to imagine that we ourselves are one of those marks on the paper. We unknowingly fall into an inconsistency when we play along with this. We can't really have it both ways, and all 'arguments' that depend on our having it both ways don't actually prove anything.

Just because we can make a mark on a paper that says, "Future" doesn't mean that it, or any future, will necessarily exist. Although some widespread representations of the basic assumption along a temporal axis seem to assume that we 'watch' time outside time, 'left' to 'right':

The proper technique, agenda, etc. of 'Today' - - - - - > Inevitable Good Things, Forever!

or peer ('right' to 'left') from the 'inevitable' Future to its 'necessary' implications:

The proper technique, agenda, etc. of 'Today' <- - - - -

Inevitable Good Things, Forever!

we can not actually do either of these things. The 'place' where those "Inevitable Good Things, Forever!" reside is simply unavailable to us, when what we are is one of the marks on the page. Marks on the page can't 'travel' to other places, as our eyes can. These 'proofs' are -- at best -- not proofs, and at worst, they are downright deceptive.

Temporal representations of the basic assumption under discussion seem very popular these days. Nonetheless, the ancient Greek philosophers already understood that representations of the basic assumption along a temporal axis do not alter the basic situation, any more than left-right, rather than up-down, spatial representations do so.

You have now completed Chapter 2, the kitchen-sink introduction to a paradigm -- dehistoricized cosmology, a time-less explanation, framework, or recipe for the cosmos -- that is utterly refused by the Eucharist, according to Fr. Keefe. If you feel like you've just been through a long language immersion class, in which energetic instructors speak gibberish at you, except for brief moments during which it almost seems that you can follow what they're saying a little, unfortunately, that's probably about right. Chapter 2 was a 'don't worry, just jump in' chapter, and you really shouldn't worry if not every single word you read registered with you.

All your work is not for naught. I will be able to use some of the vocabulary you very graciously immersed yourself in just now, to lead you toward the ideas of a Catholic theologian who thinks like a child, but not childishly.

I want to leave you with one last thought: consider how I tried to hint at the vast scope and pervasiveness of the paradigm of dehistoricized cosmology. The representation of the paradigm in the problem of "The One and the Many" was familiar to the ancient Greeks, but the same paradigm is represented in another way in a book Mr. Steven Pinker wrote in 1997, as well as (in yet another way) in a book written by Thomas Hobbes in 1651.

I can only hint at the scope and pervasiveness of the paradigm, but I do want you to take the hint. As we will see in Chapter 3's brief discussion of sex and marriage, representations of the paradigm far pre-date even the birth of philosophy. Even more significantly for this book, dehistoricized cosmology is also the bedrock philosophical framework for the two great philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, whose language formed the bedrock philosophical vocabulary for Catholic theology.

3 The Nature of Reality: Plato and Aristotle

Fr. Keefe argues that whenever and wherever the paradigm of dehistoricized cosmology is accepted -- whether the acceptors are pagan, modern, or even Catholic -- that paradigm is always eventually going to reach out and bite us. It will always eventually lead even the bravest and the brightest among us to a fundamental pessimism about absolutely everything, including about Man himself. Indeed, one irony that acceptance of the paradigm inevitably incurs, is that it will always be our bravest and our brightest who will ultimately become the most pessimistic, for they are the ones who will seek, find, and face the paradigm's final implications with the greatest vigor and seriousness.

Plato was without doubt one of the foremost of those to see and to face the underlying pessimism that acceptance of the paradigm causes one to find, both at the heart of the universe, and in one's own heart. But Fr. Keefe presents the evidence that the liturgical representation of the paradigm far preceded Plato's philosophical representation of it. All the Great Wheel religions (for example, Hinduism, Buddhism), and the ecstasies of the Greeks, represent it as well, and resolve its pain in the only way possible: in flight, whether into the sporadic timelessness of ecstasy, or into the surcease of timeless nirvana. Philosophical/Scientific resolutions are identical in form, whether into the sporadic timelessness of The Proper Technique Repetitively Applied, or into the surcease of a timeless Theory of Everything.

For what the acceptance of dehistoricized cosmology always ultimately implies -- however well that is disguised by its acceptors -- is that there is no point to the universe, no point to man, because there is no point to time itself. Only the time-less has significance, but here the universe is, here we are, trapped in time. There is no way out, but to reject time itself.

Acceptors of the paradigm, particularly but not only if they are very brave and very bright, realize, then, that Hell is Time, that we therefore already are in Hell, with no way out, except [fill in the blank]. But the way out is just that, a way out, a flight to the time-less.

2500 years later, experts are still arguing about what Plato's writings mean. Plato is trying to find words for new thoughts, so his

Sporadic Time-lessness	Time-less Surcease
Religious	
Ecstasy	Nirvana
Philosophical/Scientific	
The Proper Technique, Repetitively Applied	A Theory of Everything

words are occasionally unclear, at times he may even have been uncertain in his own mind exactly what he was struggling to say, he may have changed his mind about certain matters in his later years, etc.

The present work, which is plainly titled *The Knucklehead's Guide*, means to present arguments to "normal people" in an intellectually respectable form, but in words they can understand. Neither Fr. Keefe nor anyone else can be held responsible for niceties not remarked on, or for subtleties massacred, in this book.

Here then, for the benefit of the "normal people" who are readers of this book, is the author's take on Plato's classic representation of the conundrum. The representation is a now-familiar one:

Forms (Time-less, Meaningful, Coherent, Intelligible)

|
|
|

< -- And buddy, there's absolutely nothing in here.

Matter (Ones in free motion)

These Ones, even to exist, have to have a kind of temporary coherence -- otherwise they would just be no-thing. Somehow, Plato reasoned, the Forms "fell," and the universe as we can find it appeared. In particular, we "fell" from our pre-existence in the time-less world of Forms, retaining the barest wisp of memory of that world from which we came. This memory, which can be heightened, particularly by the use of "dialectic," is both why we are aware of the Forms at all, and the source of our longing, our *eros*, for we want instinctively -- pre-instinctively, even -- to return to the Forms. (Here Plato must, and does, resort to myth to 'explain' this "fall".)

Thus the universe as we can find it is made up exclusively of Ones in free motion. However, that universe only exists because the Forms "fell," causing the existence of Ones in free motion by giving them the ability to coalesce temporarily and fragmentarily, into something partially intelligible, something like a Form.

Because we "fell" from the Forms, we retain the merest wisp of remembrance of them. Somehow, we know the Forms must be there -- but also, we can not articulate this, or even really defend it. Everything that we can find now -- including our very thoughts -- are Ones in motion. Our retention of that merest wisp of memory of the Forms is what causes us to long for coherence and to seek it, though we are always disappointed in our quest. But nothing of Ones in motion can hold a Form, so it would be a contradiction in terms to try to really articulate that wisp of memory. The very nature of the universe makes such articulation impossible.

So, all things that we can ever experience are like "shadows" of Forms. All we will ever find, because all that we can ever find, are Ones in free motion. They exist at all, and we can find them, only because they are somewhat Formed, "shadows" of Forms. However, these shadows of Forms are like shadows not only in being insubstantial, but also in being inherently unstable. We will only be able to find a fragmentary meaning in the universe as it appears to us, but even worse, even that fragmentary meaning will be a temporary meaning only.

Shadows are constantly changing, warping -- and disappearing. The meaning of the only universe we can ever know is the meaning of Ones in free motion -- and that meaning is constantly changing, warping -- and disappearing. Even further, Ones are so poor at being Formed that Forming them is about as successful as trying to make a sand castle on the beach -- without having any sea water to bind the grains together.

Ones actively resist being made even temporarily coherent, just as there is absolutely nothing in the nature of grains of sand -- existing by themselves -- that would ever get them into the shape of a sand castle. Not only is the only universe we can ever know a universe whose meaning is fragmentary and unstable, it is a universe whose meaning is inherently fragmentary and unstable, a universe that actively resists efforts to find the meaningful, the coherent, the intelligible, in it, a universe whose meaning sifts through our fingers, like grains of sand, every time we try to grasp it.

Indeed, "Matter" exists as active resistance to Form: "Matter" is defined as everything that 'wants' to remain Form-less.

Thus the very sentences we speak, the thoughts we have, are also not Forms, but -- at best -- only shadows of them. The process of giving our sentences a temporary, a provisional, a fragmentary resemblance to time-less Forms is called by Plato "dialectic."

Also, Numbers seem to be a time-less remnant of, or at least, the best shadow of, the world of the Forms, just because they seem so time-less, so immutable. Numbers like One, Two, Three, seem to be able to exist by themselves, apart from all else. Counting things, measuring them -- in short, turning them as best we can into the Numbers that are the plainest remnants, or at least the best shadows, of the Forms -- is "science," our closest approach to real knowledge of those things.

If we somehow hitch things to Numbers, the closest thing we have to Forms, that seems to anchor those things in the most solid reality possible for us. Nonetheless, even our best efforts to question and to know will still only result in likely accounts -- shadows of the solid

Forms

m a t
t e
r

Forms

s m r o F
F o r m s F o r m s
r F o m s s m r o F o r s m s m F o r

The classic pessimism is evident here: either an unbridgeable gap, even active antagonism, between Man and Woman -- or the subsumption of Woman into Man. The paradigm under discussion here is thus fundamentally pessimistic about marriage.

There are two modern representations, one that 'in justice' subsumes both Man and Woman into some more appealing One:

[Insert your favorite more reasonable category here]

|
|

"Man" and "Woman" are 'really' just implications of it.

or the other, in which both Man and Woman are Ones in free motion. This 'resolution,' while giving each of them 'freedom,' now immediately causes the questions inherent in all such 'resolutions':

Woman

Man

|
|

Woman

Ironically, this does not defeat the old paradigm. All that is changed is that now, both "Man" and "Woman" are 'woman' with regards to some even more 'Manly' category.

Man

Why would any joining between them be necessary at all? Wouldn't the meaning of all 'associations' between them be arbitrary? So -- just for instance -- what now prevents Ben from Ben'ing Ann, or Ann from Ann'ing Ben, except power?

The "philosophical" representations of the paradigm originally seem to have come from the sexual/liturgical representations of it. Nowadays it almost seems as if the sexual/liturgical representations of it come from the "philosophical" ones.

Remember though, that for Fr. Keefe, there is something very alike in all the representations of the paradigm, both ancient and modern, both sexual and philosophical. For him, they really are Man's efforts to draw different pictures of the same basic thing. Thus the Catholic sacrament of Matrimony could not be a starker rejection of the entire paradigm in either its classical or its modern variants, a fact that could not be more relevant to a book called Covenantal -- which is to say, nuptial, marital -- Theology.

-- End of Digression

The 'digression' above was therefore not a real digression, for it does highlight some of the problems with the paradigm. Once Man starts drawing pictures of this paradigm, they're all different pictures of the same thing. If, for example, Man draws a picture of an

unbridgeable gap between Man and Woman, the same unbridgeable gap then appears, not just in a sexual and marital context, but also in a "philosophical" one. The same unbridgeable gap then occurs between concepts such as Reason and Faith, Coherence and Freedom, and so forth.

Similarly, if the other basic representation is chosen, a necessary subsumption of the "lower" into the "higher," that does affect not only sex, but all meaning, including non-sexual meaning. The drawing on the right will remind you that the horrifying, pessimistic 'resolution' of the paradigm is then the total subsumption of the Many into One.

However, Plato made the other choice, so his problem was the other pessimism, which results from his representation of the paradigm in terms of an unbridgeable gap between Form and Matter. Once this representation is chosen, you get Ones in free motion.

A fundamental problem with Ones in free motion is that there is absolutely nothing that gives a genuine reason for them to be associated. Ones are Ones, just that -- there is (nor can there be, if they are really Ones) nothing inherently in Ones that requires any association between Ones, or that even suggests any association between Ones -- remember, even Plato, a real genius and a very tough thinker, resorted to myth to account for any hint of real meaning in the world (e.g., the myth of the "fall" of the Forms) and to myth and liturgy to resolve or at least displace the disappointment, the fundamental pessimism, of the picture.

Nor is this resort to myth and liturgy anything but deep intellectual consistency. For it is fundamental to Platonism, not only that our temporary, fragmentary grasp of the Forms always sifts through our fingers, but even more, that the reason we have any grasp at all of the Forms be forever beyond our ken. We have a pre-conceptual grasp of the Forms, but that 'intuitive' grasp is fundamentally unavailable to any analysis. There are no 'handholds,' no 'skyhooks,' no 'bootstraps,' by which we can lift our way to the Forms. The distance between us and them is absolute, impenetrable, ineradicable.

Thus (it seems to me) for Plato, myth and liturgy were not simple escapes from his intellectual framework. They were the only real completions of it available to us. The myths and liturgies Plato suggests to us are all that is left, after Reason itself reasons that it is incomplete, unsatisfied, and forever destined to remain so. But Plato's suggestions (at least, his own, if not those of others) are not inconsistent with his intellectual commitments, not a last-second denial of them.

They simply go where Reason itself reasons that it has no power to go on its own. But the place myth and liturgy go is to the time-less.

	many				
many	many			many	
many	many	many	many	many	many
many	many	many	many	many	many
many	many	many	many	many	many
	many		many	many	many

	One				
				One	
One				One	One

They run away from time, finding it in the end pointless, sand running through our fingers. In short, Reason concludes to an ineradicable and fundamental pessimism about time, a pessimism that myth and liturgy can but confirm, and perhaps assuage.

We are almost at the point where we can begin to see what *Covenantal Theology* is about -- and why it is a book solely for children, if children of all ages. Recall, though, that everything in this book is not philosophical, but illustrative. If you want actual arguments, read *Covenantal Theology* itself. What I need to do is to build up a rough picture of a paradigm that has had many representations, in order to contrast to that paradigm *Covenantal Theology's* own.

We're almost there, but first, it is time to ride roughshod over a second classic representation of the paradigm, given by Aristotle. His approach to the paradigm was fundamentally different from Plato's, and fundamentally more optimistic than his -- at first glance.

Aristotle said, what if we were not Ones? What if we were sentences instead? In other words, the universe is not made up of Ones in free motion, but of Implications, which is to say, sentences -- for sentences represent not Ones in motion, but a composite relation, consisting of a subject and a predicate:

All men	are mortal.
(subject)	(predicate)

Aristotle never actually said we were like sentences. However, what he said about sentences can be related to what he said about us. So, saying that everything, ourselves included, is like a sentence, is not a completely unfair way to ride roughshod over Aristotle.

Thus we can fairly note that, in sentences, the relation between subject and predicate is built in, not something extra added from the 'outside.' For Aristotle, sentences are a rejection, maybe even a refutation, of Ones in motion, which can not have any inherent relationship. Reality comes in sentences, so the relation of subject and predicate is built in to the nature of reality. This is a far more optimistic picture than Plato's.

Since reality comes in sentences, in subjects that are inherently related to predicates, then all sentences are themselves like little subjects and predicates, and have inherent relationships, relationships to each other that are built in, 'natural,' 'logical,' necessary:

	All men	are mortal.
Socrates is a	man.	
	Socrates	is mortal.

So, the top sentence: "All men are mortal," is like a Big sentence, which implies the two below it. As can be seen, "Socrates is mortal," because he is a (man), and therefore (is mortal), but this just means:

	All men	are mortal.
Socrates is a	(man)	(is mortal.)

So "All men are mortal" is like a Big sentence, that itself implies, of its very nature, littler sentences, such as, "Socrates is mortal."

If we look at the sentences in the opposite direction, from 'down' to 'up':

	All men	are mortal.
Socrates is a	(man.)	
	Socrates	is mortal.

<--- Induction: Start here and go up.

we see Aristotelian "induction." When we go 'up' in this way, we move toward the Big Sentence that our littler sentence is an implication of.

The Big Sentence "completes" or "perfects" the meaning of the littler sentence, just because, once you find the Big Sentence, you can see that the littler sentence is an implication of it.

So, the Big Sentences that littler sentences are the implications of could be called "perfections" -- completions -- of the littler sentences. You can see -- you can only see -- the real meaning; that is, the full meaning, of a littler sentence when you know its Perfection: the Big Sentence that it is an implication of.

Notice that the littler sentences themselves do not have a real, full, settled, necessary, logical meaning on their own. The "material singular" -- little sentences -- do not actually have meaning of their own, because they do not have meaning on their own. Their meaning really comes from being an implication of a Perfection, of a Big sentence. The meaning of the little sentence, "Socrates is mortal," is implicit in the Big sentence, "All men are mortal." The little sentence gets its meaning only by being an implication of its Perfection.

Here is another way of showing this. When you go 'up' (Induction), your job is not done -- the meaning is not fully clear -- until you can also go 'down' (Deduction) from your proposed Big sentence to your littler one. When you can show that your littler sentence is a necessary implication of your Bigger one, you've proved your case.

Notice that when we go 'up' toward the Big Sentence, (which is induction) our progress can not be as sure as when we start with the Big Sentence and go 'down' (deduction). Going from 'down' to 'up,' things can not be as clear.

Big sentence (Perfection)
(implies) |
|
littler sentence

Big sentence (Perfection)
(implies) |
|
this littler sentence
so this littler sentence is 'true'

When we start with the Big Sentence, "All men are mortal," and go 'down,' it is easy to see that the littler sentence, "Socrates is mortal" is a necessary implication of it. On the other hand, when we start with "Socrates is mortal," it is not necessarily clear what Big Sentence that is an implication of. This is the nature of induction, of going 'up' from littler sentences to Bigger ones. There are many ways to get lost, before we get to 'up.'

Nonetheless, in principle we can go 'up.' Thus Aristotelianism could not be a more decisive rejection of Platonism, in which we can never go 'up.' In Aristotelianism, we can go 'up,' but only because the Big Sentence that implies our littler ones does already exist. We just have to find it. We just have to find what's already there.

This idea is pretty important, so it's worth a second look. Aristotle does not say that we can just 'deduce' all of reality from some obvious Big Sentence. Normally, we have to go 'up' to a Bigger sentence from a littler one. When we try to go 'up' from a little sentence to a Big one, we might get lost. We might guess the wrong Big sentence. It might be hard, or it might be easy, to go 'up' to the Big sentence, and show that our littler sentence is a logical implication of it.

Nonetheless, in principle, we can go 'up' and do just that. If we try hard, if we're lucky -- whatever -- we can find the Big sentence that our littler sentence is the logical implication of. However, the only reason we can go 'up' at all, is that the Big sentence already exists.

If the Big sentence, the Perfection, did not already exist, and our job wasn't just to find it, then nothing would be inherently, intrinsically related -- related just naturally, on its own, before we started looking for the relation. The existence of the Perfection, of the Big sentence, takes care of the thing that makes the whole scheme go: the natural, inherent, necessary, logical relation between everything. That relation exists, because the Big sentence exists.

If the Big sentence did not exist, then everything, ourselves included, would be back to being Ones in motion, with no necessary, logical, inherent relation. Our search for real reasons, for a logical coherence to the universe that wouldn't be just fragmentary to begin with, and that wouldn't fall apart in our hands after awhile on top of that, would be forever fruitless. We would be back in Plato's world.

Within Aristotle's scheme, then, there has to be a Perfection that is the Perfection of all Perfections, the First Sentence, the Sentence of Sentences, the Implication that implies everything else. This is called the First Cause, the Unmoved Mover, the "agent intellect," the Thought Thinking Itself. Some today might -- no doubt modestly -- call it the Theory of Everything, and claim to have it nearly in view.

[Deduction. Going 'down,' the course is clear:]

"All men are mortal."

|

"Socrates is mortal."

(so therefore???)

|

"Socrates is mortal."

[Induction. But going 'up,' it's not.]

(Big sentence)

|

gives the logical reason for

|

little sentence

St. Thomas called it what he thought was its real name, the *Deus Unus*, the One God.

St. Thomas's naming thus is an absolutely fundamental mistake of Catholic theological science. For unfortunately, this is the scheme that Aristotle's resolution actually represents:

One (= First Cause, etc.)

many many many many

<-- As usual, *nothing* can go here: this is *the One*, remember, by definition absolute, unrelated to all else, needing nothing else, implying nothing else, as all Thomists, and St. Thomas himself, insist.

Oops. Therefore, Aristotle's scheme is not a real solution to the conundrum. In fact, it is self-contradictory, and it is so at its crucial point, its very first step, its very First Sentence. The First Sentence, by definition, is utterly complete within itself, and thus can have no relation or implication beyond itself.

It is logically necessary for the One, the First sentence, to have no inherent relation to anything but itself. For example, it has to be timeless, in order that time itself can be an implication of it. Unfortunately, it is also logically necessary in this scheme for all sentences to have an inherent relation. This is a blatant contradiction -- the two statements, both absolutely necessary to the scheme, can not both be true.

Aristotle's scheme actually fails even before it starts. The Perfection of Perfection that makes the whole scheme go can not be inherently related to anything else. By definition, it is perfect, complete, One, in itself.

But why this One, which makes everything else related, would *want* to be related to anything else is completely unanswerable -- worse, it is self-contradictory -- in this scheme.

In the end the Aristotelian scheme requires either that the gap between Form and Matter be really unbridgeable, as in Platonism, or it requires something that may look familiar to readers of this book:

	many				
many	many			many	
many	many	many	many	many	many
many	many	many	many	many	many many many
many	many	many	many	many	
many	many	many	many	many	many
	many	many	many	many	many

4 The Eucharistic Nature of Reality

It may be that we can at this point draw a few conclusions from what has been illustrated here, conclusions that are important to understanding *Covenantal Theology*. (It again needs to be emphasized that this book has the purpose of illustrating ideas, not proving them.)

First, (even if Aristotle's scheme fails) when we talk about giving a reason for something, we commonly mean that we have a smaller sentence, which we can show to be a necessary implication of a Bigger sentence. That doesn't mean that we always begin with the Bigger sentence -- induction rather than deduction is our most-used method -- but it does mean that we eventually find a Bigger sentence, and show that the littler sentence is a necessary implication of it. To be "reasonable" is in the end to be "logical," which means, to show that all your little sentences are necessary implications of Bigger ones.

Second, this means that the human quest for meaning comes down to the search for necessary reasons, for:

Truths that are true

In other words, whether Aristotle is wrong or right -- whether we've even heard of Aristotle -- our quest for meaning is trying to find the Big sentences that our little sentences are logical implications of. If a little sentence exists that is not a necessary implication of (some) Bigger one, then the little sentence is arbitrary, it is meaning-less.

In our modern times, we may acknowledge the existence of arbitrary little sentences, even count their number, and be comfortable assigning their existence to Chance instead of Cause. We still have not changed our definition of Cause. It's still defined in terms of Bigger sentences that have littler ones as their inevitable implications:

Cause

(Bigger sentence)

|

little sentence

Chance

(~~Bigger sentence~~)

little sentence

Third, our search for meaning is a search for Causes, for the Bigger sentences that necessarily imply littler ones.

All men are mortal.

|

Socrates is mortal.

Electrons exist.

|

TVs can exist.

because they can't NOT be true.

Fourth, there is the problem of just one of anything, "material singulars." We have two choices. A) "Material singulars" are Ones in motion, so that they have inherent meaning, but no relation to each other -- except arbitrary ones. B) They are little sentences that are necessary implications of Bigger ones.

Fifth, our search for meaning, for Causes, for necessary implications, appears to be a search that is incompatible with 'freedom.' If real Causes exist, then we have meaning, but only because we have a 'place' in a One, or a mini-One -- in which case, we are simply a logical implication of something more real than us, we are Caused -- so we have no actual freedom. Or, we have 'freedom,' but then we are Ones in free motion, and there is no point to us, no 'place' we 'belong,' so the 'freedom' we have is meaningless.

Sixth, real meaning has to be time-less. This is a necessary implication of the Aristotelian scheme. The Bigger Sentence has to exist already, if a littler sentence is to be a necessary implication of it. Ultimately, a time-less Really Big Sentence has to Cause everything in time, so that time itself can be a littler sentence of a Bigger one.

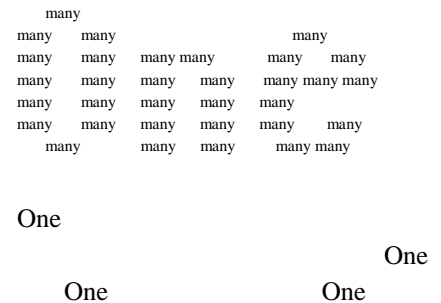
Or, if one adopts Plato's model, Ones in motion are already in the world of opinion, and real meaning once again has to be time-less, outside of that world. The only difference is that Plato thought the gap between the time-less and our world was unbridgeable, but Aristotle thought (maybe "hoped" is a more accurate word, considering the logical contortions he had to build in to his framework) that it could be bridged.

Sometimes moderns think that they do not flee to the time-less. This is false. Moderns are simply schizophrenic about their flight to the time-less. They place their 'faith' in some Technique (for example, the "scientific" method, the "historical-critical" method, etc.), and claim that if they just keep Applying The Technique, forever and ever, everything will turn out all right. This is still a flight to the time-less.

After all, as it says in Mutual Fund prospectuses: "prior results are no guarantee of future returns." Therefore, if a Technique is a logical necessity for "future returns," that can only be shown by showing that the Technique works in time that hasn't even happened yet. This demonstration must therefore always either be a Platonic acceptance that we live exclusively in the world of opinion (opinions, while always a shadow of the time-less Forms, which can yet be more or less 'solid' or time-less), or be an appeal to a time-less Big Sentence:

Here we are:

[Please insert your favorite Proper Technique,
Repetitively Applied.]



And here we are also?:

< - - - This Technique is an un-
erring path toward the Real.

If that illustration is seen to resemble certain other of the illustrations in this book, the reader is assured that the resemblance is fully intentional.

To summarize the conclusions:

1. **To be reasonable** is in the end to be logical, which means, to show that all your little sentences are necessary implications of Bigger ones.
2. **The quest for meaning** comes down to the search for necessary reasons, for Truths that are true, because they can't not be true.
3. **The search for meaning** is a search for Causes, which are the Bigger sentences that necessarily imply littler ones.
4. **Either there is no inherent meaning** in just one of anything, in the "material singular," including just one of us, or we are Ones in motion. We are either inherently meaningful but only arbitrarily related -- Ones in motion -- or we are inherently related but only meaningful by implication -- little sentences that are logical implications of Bigger ones.
5. **Meaning is in the end incompatible** with "freedom," since Cause, necessary implications, rules out "freedom" -- as does Chance, arbitrary implications.
6. **Real meaning** ultimately has to be time-less.

Here is the reason they are important to understanding *Covenantal Theology*:

According to Fr. Keefe, Catholic theology must refuse every one of them.

They all must be refused -- but not because they are illogical. To the contrary, they are eminently logical consequences of the paradigm being discussed in these chapters. If this is not understood, then the full weight of Fr. Keefe's meaning can not be known.

The paradigm represented and discussed in these chapters is precisely the paradigm of the logical consequence, of the time-less truth. This paradigm is what Fr. Keefe calls:

"dehistoricized cosmology"

A dehistoricized (time-less) cosmology (explanation for the cosmos) makes the universe inevitable, necessary (whether logically, or, for that matter, arbitrarily), by reference to some time-less truth prior to it.

Catholic theology must reject that paradigm totally, even before Catholic theology begins. Indeed, Catholic theology must reject it totally, in order to begin.

For what Fr. Keefe sees is that "dehistoricized cosmology," the paradigm of the logical consequence, of the necessary implication, is completely pagan, totally un-Catholic. Once the paradigm is accepted, the entire revelation given in the Christ is excluded from before the outset. The Catholic proclamation could not be more radically incompatible with it.

Among other things, this does mean that the *Deus Unus*, the name for God among all Thomists, is a pagan god. The *Deus Unus* is radically incompatible with the sacramental worship of the Church, radically incompatible with everything given us in Christ and handed on by the apostles.

It is the intellectual adoption of this completely pagan paradigm by Catholic theologians -- an adoption made with little reflection near the very beginnings of Catholic theology and continued with very little complaint since then -- which has led over the centuries to the state we now are in: the Catholic academy in utter disarray, and the rest of us seemingly with only two choices, "why bother?" Catholicism, and "what holes?" Catholicism.

Covenantal Theology is thus a radical book. It is thereby a book only for children -- of all ages. It asserts that Catholicism is radically incompatible with all dehistoricized cosmologies, with all attempts to explain the universe in terms of the time-less; which is to say, in terms of necessity, logical or otherwise.

Covenantal Theology says that nearly the whole of Catholic theology has appropriated a paradigm that will inevitably conclude to paganism, to a pagan god -- and to a completely un-Catholic pagan pessimism.

Fr. Keefe traces the history of this appropriation. In the early centuries of the Church it amounted to innocent borrowing from classical Greek philosophy, and did not actually affect Catholic theology pervasively, partly because the early Fathers weren't as systematic and 'logical' as theologians would later become.

In our modern age which has "discovered history," it might at first glance seem that we have freed ourselves from time-lessness. However, we should bring to mind Fr. Keefe's telling phrase: what the historian writes is not history. What we moderns have 'discovered' instead is some version of The Proper Technique, Repetitively Applied, or a scarcely disguised time-less agenda: Inevitable Good Things, Forever! We have not escaped the flight to the time-less -- to be modern is to add a layer of pretense and delusion on top of that flight.

Nonetheless, Fr. Keefe shows that the powerful heresies of the time, such as Arianism, can readily be seen as the choice of the pagan paradigm of time-less necessity in preference to the 'illogical' faith of the Church. However, while the magisterium did decisively protect the faith against Arianism and the other early heresies, Christians of the time by and large never really questioned the pagan paradigm which gave them some of their root intellectual categories.

In the eleventh century, Berengarius began to write about the Eucharist in ways that gravely disturbed his contemporaries. Fr. Keefe shows that Berengarius was -- if murkily -- insisting that the root intellectual categories of the paradigm of time-less necessity ought to be taken more seriously by theologians.

Berengarius was condemned by the magisterium of the time and, after many years of obstinacy, died at peace with the Church, but the question he raised did not go away. The biggest reason for this is that, in the years following, theologians began to try to answer the question Berengarius had raised on the intellectual ground he had chosen. To do that, they had to accept his main point. In other words, they began to try to 'defeat' Berengarius by trying to present a *better* dehistoricized cosmology than the one he had proposed.

They tried to 'defeat' him by taking his main point seriously -- that the Eucharist had to be logically necessary -- and that, says Fr. Keefe, was a huge -- a devastating -- intellectual mistake, because, from then on, more and more Catholic theologians, orthodox and heretical, more and more explicitly took the pagan paradigm of time-less necessity as their genuine intellectual foundation.

The result, as this played itself out over hundreds of years, is what we have today: the Catholic academy in utter disarray, "what holes?" and "why bother?" Catholic theology, and you having to apologize for your grandmother's faith.

That is not to say that the saints ever took the pagan paradigm of time-less, necessary truth seriously in their lives -- in their faith -- even when it formed their intellectual categories. Nor is it to say that Catholic theologians never sensed how radically the faith of the Church contradicted everything that everyone 'knew.' Occasionally, they did.

Tertullian saw it already, in Roman times: *you can't get to where I am, from where you begin*. His sarcastic, rhetorical statement of this, mis-quoted through the centuries as "credo quia impossibile" (I believe, because it is impossible), is not at all a stupid move to Psychic Crystal Pyramids, to irrationality, although it has been heard as such, by Catholics and anti-Catholics alike. Nor is it pious gibberish. It is a simple acknowledgement that the Eucharistic worship of the Church is

the sacramental representation of the New Covenant, which is a gratuitous truth, a complete surprise, and it is not, nor can it be, a time-less truth, a logical inevitability!

If you recall, in the Introduction, "On Children, Grandmothers, and Grown-ups," I said that *Covenantal Theology* had begun when Fr. Keefe asked the childish questions, What is nature? What is grace?

"Dehistoricized cosmology" is the paradigm of the time-less, necessary truth, of logical inevitability. However, if there's one thing grace isn't, it's "logically inevitable."

You can try to shoe-horn grace into a pagan paradigm of logical inevitability, but, try as you might, it just won't fit. On the other hand, you can't get much closer to the heart of the Catholic faith than grace.

Fr. Keefe is probably the first theologian in a really long time to face this obvious fact intellectually, as a theologian.

Catholics insist that grace is a gift from God. It's unmerited. Nothing in what we do, and nothing in our fallen world, 'forces' God to give grace. We can never make an argument to God that we deserve grace. Grace is just wholly outside the world of necessary implications and logical inevitabilities.

But all dehistoricized cosmologies divide all of reality into Cause and Chance, into the necessary and the arbitrary. Within them all, absolutely everything that is not necessary is meaningless. So, within them all, grace is either necessary (but then it's not really grace), or it's meaningless.

Fr. Keefe, after long thought, finally concluded the obvious: therefore, Catholic theologians have to ditch all dehistoricized cosmologies -- forever. They are -- every single one of them -- fundamentally incompatible with the Catholic faith.

Dehistoricized cosmologies are both ancient and modern, and pervasive, as Chapters 2 -- 3 tried to illustrate. Further, apart from the Eucharist, they're all we've got, as Chapter 5 will demonstrate. Nonetheless, when you take any of them seriously, you end up forever trying to keep yourself from making statements that are contrary to the faith. How would you like to be a Catholic theologian whose basic intellectual categories say that absolutely everything that exists is either necessary or meaningless, while you want to talk intellectually about grace? It's an impossible intellectual situation to be in, obviously.

This is why *Covenantal Theology* is such a radical book, and such an important one. It's also why it's been so indigestible to Catholic theologians. Who wants to hear that his basic intellectual categories may have to be junked?

Nonetheless, these basic intellectual categories, says Fr. Keefe, will have to be seriously re-converted to Catholicism if they are not simply to be junked. There really is no other option available to Catholic theology, if it wants to be what it says it wants to be, the asking of intellectual questions of higher and higher quality regarding the faith of the Church.

For of course, the Eucharist itself, the very heart of the Church, being grace, is also logically unnecessary, and also must logically disappear, in all dehistoricized cosmologies:

[Insert the Eucharist here] < - - - - -

and please place all rationality, everything that is implied or caused by something else, over here.

Covenantal Theology does more than show, intellectually, how impossible it has become for Catholic theologians to ask serious intellectual questions regarding the faith of the Church,

as long as they continue to stand 'outside' the Eucharist, within the 'truth' of some time-less necessity that rules out the meaningfulness of the Eucharist from before the outset.

Very importantly, Fr. Keefe further argues that his is not merely an 'intellectual' argument -- which therefore could be wrong or right. He shows that the Church has consistently proclaimed in its worship, since the very day blood and water flowed out of Christ's side, an absolute rejection of dehistoricized cosmology.

The Eucharist itself, being grace itself, is *gratuitous*.

Gratuitous not only in the sense of being unearned, but also in the sense of being totally unwarranted, and therefore the Eucharist is an absolute rejection of truth that is true because, by some prior intellectual structure or cosmology, it is found to be necessary, inevitable.

A little while ago, I said that Catholic theologians have found *Covenantal Theology* to be unreadable, because it asks them to re-convert their basic intellectual categories. That is only one reason Fr. Keefe's work is unreadable. The other is that Fr. Keefe asks Catholic theologians to re-convert their basic intellectual categories, not to change them.

He doesn't ask them to give up their present intellectual categories for another set of intellectual categories, even his own. He does not ask them to alter their intellectual categories to fit an idea of the Eucharist, one that's better. You see, this is simply to repeat the mistake that orthodox theologians made with Berengarius, nearly a thousand years ago.

Fr. Keefe asks Catholic theologians to re-convert their intellectual categories. He asks them to believe that the Eucharist itself freely gives the reality within which their intellectual categories will emerge and through which they can ask questions and therefore do their work.

This is a thought that is almost unthinkable in the present age, and it has always been a hard saying. It will probably take me many chapters of this book before you really understand just how serious Fr. Keefe is about this.

For Fr. Keefe, no idea, no theory, but the Eucharist itself, is a rejection of any claim that there is anything prior to the Eucharist, or anything that will explain it, condition it, or make it necessary, 'logically' or otherwise.

Thus the Eucharist itself is a total rejection of the paradigm discussed in these chapters:

The Eucharist is over here,

The paradigm has us standing in some 'place' prior to the Eucharist, within some structure of thought or framework of reality outside of the Eucharist's own radically historical, gratuitous truth, but, by the Eucharist itself, no such place exists, nor can it.

When we try to stand in such a 'place,' we can only 'understand' the Eucharist by making its gratuitous truth a necessity of our prior Bigger sentence -- for to 'understand' something within all dehistoricized cosmologies is, precisely, to make something an inevitable, a necessary, implication of a Bigger sentence.

But by the Eucharist itself, there is no Bigger sentence that the Eucharist is a necessary implication of.

Indeed, the Eucharist is not any kind of Big Sentence. It does not cause, or even explain, anything by necessary implications -- how could it, when the Eucharist itself is *gratuitous* truth?

Nor is the Eucharist a "cosmology" at all -- it is not a structure or a framework, explanatory or otherwise, but an Event. Neither is the Eucharist "dehistoricized" -- a flight to the time-less. By stubbornly, bluntly, remaining itself -- a sacrament: that is, an Event completely within time that is also not bound by time, the Eucharist rejects all time-lessness.¹

Covenantal Theology thus argues that the public worship of the Church has from its beginnings consistently stood in opposition to all dehistoricized cosmologies.

Fr. Keefe further argues that, despite this utterly consistent rejection of dehistoricized cosmology in the Church's worship,

< - - - and here we are, standing
some place else, in the 'normal
universe,' looking at it, and trying to
understand it.

Eucharist < - - - us, over here

1. It takes nearly the whole of *Covenantal Theology* to show how deep-rooted -- almost instinctual -- the impulse to flee to the time-less is within Catholic theology, despite the consistent magisterial rejections of any flight to the time-less as inconsistent with the liturgical freedom of the Church's worship. *CT* is one of the first works of Catholic theology to take "completely within time" as literal -- and therefore, as sacramental -- truth, lest the entire Good News (e.g., the Incarnation) be emptied of meaning, and words like "transcend" turn dehistoricized and cosmological. *CT* is the first work of Catholic theology to propose, by means of a comprehensive argument, that such Catholic sacramental realism, founded in the Eucharistic Event, the New Covenant itself, must be -- and can be -- the starting point of any genuinely Catholic theology.

dehistoricized cosmologies of various kinds have been accepted by Catholic theology as equivalent to Reason itself, and therefore, the intellectual structure of Catholic thought has so far been founded on a pagan paradigm that is in fact overturned and rejected, by name, as it were, in the New Covenant itself.

Thus, the fundamental structure -- not of Catholicism -- but of Catholic thought, has been consistently pagan, not Catholic, under the misapprehension that, while the world might be Catholic, Reason itself was not, but was instead "value-free," to use modern terminology.

Of course, since the Eucharist is a gratuitous truth, simply not open to necessitating or conditioning by any supposedly prior structure or framework, the inevitable failure of all efforts to make the Eucharist necessary by some dehistoricized cosmology will necessarily ultimately lead to the conclusion that the Eucharist is unnecessary and therefore, irrational.

The final resolution is thus forced, by the initial choice of the paradigm itself: the Eucharist ought to disappear -- in favor of something that can be made a necessity of the chosen dehistoricized cosmology.

Thus, by its own acceptance of some version of dehistoricized cosmology (which is inevitably the paradigm of time-less necessity, logical or otherwise), Catholic theology has unwittingly taken up the task of assigning the Eucharist to the necessary -- which is contradicted by the Eucharist itself -- or to the irrational, for no other choices present themselves within any dehistoricized cosmology.

Catholic thought has forgotten that *the Eucharist is a surprise*. It is always with complete surprise, utter astonishment, that we join with the angels and saints and sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

A surprise is something that could not have been predicted, but is nonetheless intelligible.

The notion of real surprise can not appear in any dehistoricized cosmology. Either the 'new' thing is unpredictable because it is unintelligible, or the dehistoricized cosmology needs refining, so that what is intelligible can be seen to be necessary. In either case, 'surprise' is made to disappear.

The Eucharist is free. It does not flee time, even for an

instant, yet it is not necessitated or conditioned by anything. This is impossible -- this is the surprise: a truly free Event which never flees time even for an instant, that is nonetheless inexhaustibly intelligible.

The radical historicity, the radical freedom, of the Eucharist, and its inexhaustible intelligibility, is central to all of *Covenantal Theology*, Fr. Keefe calls all of Catholic theology back to that free Eucharistic Event, and it is that free Eucharistic Event, and not some childish irrationality, which Tertullian invokes when he defends the rationality of Catholic sacramental worship, the rationality of the New Covenant:

Crucified is the Son of God; not shameful, because it is shameful.
And dead is the Son of God; it is trustworthy because it is absurd.
And He is raised from the tomb; it is certain, because it is impossible.¹

Tertullian, *De carne Christi* 5, 25-29. cf. *CT*, p. 607 n. 49.

"This is My Body, This is My Blood" are not words that can be understood by standing 'outside' of them. There is no Bigger sentence than those words. If they are true -- *since* they are true -- they are the font of all the true, real, smart, grown-up words that can ever be spoken.

They proclaim, by an effective sign -- a sacrament -
- that the nature of reality itself is a surprise.

We need to get this straight, or nothing about *Covenantal Theology* will ever make sense to us. "This is My Body, This is My Blood" are sacramental words; that is, they do not 'merely' tell us what the sacraments are like, or what the Church is like. They tell us what reality is like, what we are like. If our theories of reality can not be brought into correspondence with the nature of reality given us in the sacraments by Christ himself, so much the worse for our theories.

The Eucharist is not only a reality, it is the beginning of all reality, literally the font of all that is real -- and literally, the font of all that is reasonable. It is, quite literally, the most important thing in the universe (for one thing, because it really is in the universe, and not in some time-less realm).

A good theological scientist starts there. He stands within the Eucharist, within the full sacramental order given in and with the Church, the Bride of Christ her Head, to understand -- not just the Eucharist, not just the Church, but what reality is, and who we are. For all of that, and nothing less, is what sacraments are the effective sign of. *Covenantal Theology* asks nothing more of Catholic theology than that it take the sacraments seriously -- but nothing less.

Whether we believe that we ourselves are capable of "self-salvation," in the Lutheran theologian Paul Tillich's telling phrase, the Eucharist itself stands as a perennial -- a daily -- contradiction to that quest.

The Eucharist is the New Covenant, the living effective sign that reality is free; that is, reality is a surprise, a gift, grace, not necessitated or conditioned by anything whatever.

Yet this knowledge, that reality is a surprise, that it is free, is freely given in the sacraments. As freely given, we will never find that knowledge inevitable, necessary -- for then it would not be free. Instead, we would be forced, by inevitable 'logic,' iron necessity, to accept it. We would be forced to accept the freedom of the Eucharist!

Thus the Eucharist does not force us. Its free gift is so free that it gives us our own freedom: we can really decide, we can truly make a *moral* choice, because we will never be forced by any necessity, logical or otherwise, to choose the Eucharistic gift freely offered us.

Thus the Eucharist itself is the creation of free will and moral choice. No such 'free will' or 'moral choice' will ever be available to Man, except by this free gift, this complete surprise, given in the One Sacrifice.

A universe in which all is either arbitrary, or necessary, has no room for free will, and therefore no room for moral choice. Dehistoricized cosmology, of any sort, is a denial of freedom, and of the moral realm, from before the outset. Within any dehistoricized cosmology, 'responsibility' simply can not exist. What we do is either necessary, or it is arbitrary -- and there are no other alternatives.

It is worthy of note that the analysis of *Covenantal Theology* is thus a decisive refutation of all of traditional Catholic moral theology.

For within that theology, which founds itself intellectually on a dehistoricized cosmology, what is 'moral' is, in the end, logically necessary, or it is arbitrary, and is therefore commanded by obedience.

Fr. Keefe has, obviously, absolutely no problem with the moral teachings of the magisterium. What *Covenantal Theology* refutes is the approach that theological science has traditionally taken toward those

teachings. Acceptance of some dehistoricized cosmology was simply taken to be equivalent to the use of Reason itself.

However, within all dehistoricized cosmologies, no real freedom, therefore no real moral choice, and therefore no real responsibility, can exist, since their possibility is eliminated in advance by the very framework within which arguments are posed and developed.

It is therefore crucially important to return not only Catholic theology as a whole, but also, Catholic moral theology, to its only real foundation, which can never be any dehistoricized cosmology, but only the sacraments themselves, particularly the Eucharist.

And so it is particularly important to note that, while the Eucharist is free, anti-necessary, it is also not arbitrary or incoherent, but rather, it is completely intelligible.

Indeed, its intelligibility is literally inexhaustible, because it is a free Event in history, not bound by anything, not conditioned by anything -- not by the time-less, nor by time. We can understand it, and we will never get to the end of understanding it.

Thus the Eucharist is also the free gift of Catholic theology: the human science that can and does really understand the Eucharist intellectually (for there are other forms of understanding), though always provisionally, in the form of questions of higher and higher quality.

Through the Eucharist, Catholic theology then understands the entire sacramental order of reality -- notably including the moral order -- and will never get to the end of its understanding of it -- there will always be questions of ever higher quality to ask.

Because the Eucharist is, in part, the free gift of theological science to man, it is also the free gift of all of science to him as well, revealed in the worship of the Church by Christ himself to be the quest to understand and understand and understand, by means of questions of higher and higher quality, the utter and inexhaustible surprise given in the Creation that is good and very good.

As is probably obvious at this point, the thoughts in *Covenantal Theology* are not easy to grasp. *Covenantal Theology* really is a book for children -- the more you 'know,' the more you possess that will probably get in the way of understanding it. There is a lot we grown-ups have to give up in order to understand this very grown-up book.

However, you probably have already absorbed more than you realize. The next chapter is written in part to demonstrate that. For the

moment, beginning to understand what Fr. Keefe's argument is not, is a very good way to begin to understand what it is. Right now, then, concentrate on getting clearer what it is not! So:

What is the nature of reality?

It is Eucharistic

- **not** metaphorically, but as fact *ex opere operato* (not because of our intentions, desires, deeds, or memories, but in itself).

Reality is thus a free order

- **not** a necessary structure,

in time

- **not** the time-less

that is inexhaustibly meaning-full and intelligible

- **not** arbitrary.

Reality is sacramental through and through, and from its very beginning.

Thus, Nature is Grace

- and the "un-graced" "pure" Nature of the tradition, the time-less place where we stand to understand, is, literally, a pagan god, a nothing, at once defeated and rejected by the New Covenant itself.

Reality is Tri - une

- it is neither a totalitarian One nor unrelated Ones in motion.

Reality is thus covenantal -- nuptial, marital

- the surprise, in the One Sacrifice that is the font of all surprise, of completely free, anti-necessary, but irrevocable commitment, the surprise of free order, free relation, free intelligibility, which is grace, which is love.

Perhaps these statements remain mostly gibberish to you, if pious gibberish, despite all the work you did in reading these chapters. However, if the argument of *Covenantal Theology* really does require one to think like a child, but not childishly, at least it may be clearer to

you why it would take a two-volume work to show that.

That argument not only requires us to give up "common sense" (but, since the beginnings of quantum mechanics, good scientists have been willing to do that), it also requires us to give up -- or at least re-evaluate -- a very large measure of our "Catholic common sense" -- the intellectual instincts we have learned from Catholic theology, whether modern or traditional. It remains to be seen whether Catholic theological scientists will be willing to do that. That still leaves you free to do so.

So, here is what Fr. Keefe is saying: it all comes down to the Eucharist. If we stand to understand within any dehistoricized cosmology whatever, the Eucharist has no meaning. On the other hand, the Church has proclaimed every day since its very first day, that if Man stands within the Eucharist to understand, then everything has meaning. Further, Man can stand nowhere else, for "Through Him, with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, forever and ever."

In a certain sense the argument of *Covenantal Theology* is an argument that Catholic theology has forgotten how ridiculous Catholicism is. Really, of course, it is an argument that Catholic theology as an intellectual endeavor, a science, has only very sporadically been able to take Catholicism seriously -- and so, if over a long time, we have reached the unfortunate, and completely predictable, conclusion to this failure of intellectual and scientific method: Catholicism is not serious. Catholicism is ridiculous. Catholicism is not for grown-ups.

Unlike the weakness and foolishness of Catholic thought, which can step by step be made better, the weakness and foolishness of the New Covenant, mediated in and through the liturgical freedom of the Church, is neither temporary nor pretense, or the New Covenant itself, the Eucharist itself, is denied.

And thus, considering what in the end happened to St. Paul, that apostle of -- that martyr to -- the weakness of God's strength and the foolishness of God's wisdom, we may begin to wonder, but not about whether we are prepared to accept the weakness and foolishness of Catholicism.

We may begin to wonder if we are willing, as St. Paul was, to pay the price of accepting its weakness and foolishness.

All of a sudden, we may feel very grown-up -- and wish that we didn't.

The following is no proof of the argument of Fr. Keefe's work, which he is the first to say is only a work of science, a work of Catholic theology, and is not the faith. His work is thus merely an

effort to make higher-quality mistakes by asking higher-quality questions about that faith St. Augustine called "ever ancient, ever new." Nonetheless, it may be important to recall that this is not the first time that Catholicism has appeared to be ridiculous to grown-ups:

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.¹

1. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 RSV

How to Use Chapters 5 - 7

The four chapters you have just read are probably the most difficult in this book. If you got through those, you can probably get through anything, at least anything in this book.

Of course, the reason those first four chapters are so difficult is precisely that they are the first four. I wasn't kidding when I told you that you would literally be learning a new language in this book.

Especially considering how hard you have already worked, it is probably a good idea for me to remind you why you are learning a new language in the first place: that new language -- Fr. Keefe's language -- makes it much, much easier to think new thoughts.

Chapters 5 - 7 begin the process of introducing you to the kinds of new thoughts that are available to people who learn the rudiments of the new language outlined in *Covenantal Theology*.

However, don't get the idea that reading Chapters 5 - 7 is going to be a walk in the park. It's a virtual certainty that you have only a rudimentary grasp of Fr. Keefe's new language at this point, and in a few pages I'll be asking you to deploy that somewhat shaky understanding to think some really gigantic new thoughts.

As I said, Fr. Keefe thinks like a child, but not childishly. People able to do that commonly develop language that is highly useful toward the thinking of gigantic new thoughts.

Being able to think gigantic new thoughts is, of course, not always immediately 'useful' to most people. That's not only because most people quite rightly avoid gigantic new thoughts where possible, but also because 'normal people,' no less than academics, vehemently dislike giving up what they already 'know.' Nonetheless, being able to give up large portions of what you already 'know' really does seem to be one requirement for understanding Fr. Keefe's work.

So, as your understanding of Fr. Keefe's words increases, your resistance to his ideas might actually increase also. The more you understand just what he is saying, the crazier you may think he is.

Fr. Keefe's ideas may in fact be crazy. However, if this book is successful, one of the things it will at least suggest to you is that, although Fr. Keefe's ideas are crazy, your own current ideas (what you already 'know') may actually be even crazier than his are. If science is

the process of asking better questions, making higher-quality mistakes, then -- at best -- all this book can really 'prove' is that Fr. Keefe makes better mistakes than you.

For all its learning and scope, then, *Covenantal Theology* is a remarkably unpretentious book, because it is a book that thoroughly believes that it is constantly making mistakes, and seeks only to make better ones than had previously been possible.

However, if I were forced to choose one word that generally describes the modern university, 'unpretentious' wouldn't be it. Chapter 6 uses some of Fr. Keefe's language to discuss some present day Catholic academics whose current intellectual commitments virtually require them not only to say and do silly things, but also to assume a very 'serious' and 'grown-up' demeanor as they do so.

People can be of mixed minds about academics and what they do. Some people think that scientists and other academics do things that are automatically irrelevant to daily life. Other people appear to believe that scientists and other academics automatically do serious and important work.

Both of these ideas are wrong, of course. Many academics take themselves very seriously, but actually spend their time doing things that are just silly, if you think about it even for five seconds. Perhaps unbeknownst to you, the very large majority of 'professional' Catholic academics in our finest Catholic universities are, as we speak, doing amazingly silly things, and considering every one of those things to be incredibly serious and important. Chapter 6 is about them.

Chapter 5, on the other hand, is deadly serious. It is intended to be shocking and confrontational. There is little chance at this point that you understand just how new-but-old Fr. Keefe's ideas are. Catholic theology's present old-but-old ideas are familiar but wrong. Encountering Mr. Marvin Minsky's truly serious and truly modern challenge to "freedom of the human will" may help you realize this.

Mr. Minsky gives a very eloquent modern representation of the paradigm discussed in Chapters 1 - 4. Lots of other serious modern people think Mr. Minsky's thoughts -- just not as well as he does. Read what he says carefully -- and prepare to be shocked.

For what Fr. Keefe might say to Mr. Minsky (if they ever met) is not at all what present day Catholic theologians would say. In fact, present day Catholic theologians can not answer Mr. Minsky in any intellectually respectable way. My point in Chapter 5 is to show you that Fr. Keefe is right: present day Catholic theology can give no coherent response to the ideas of people like Mr. Minsky, but Catholicism itself always has and always will give the only response a Catholic can give.

Also be warned: what Fr. Keefe might say to Mr. Minsky, if they ever met, is very probably also not what you yourself might secretly hope Fr. Keefe would say. You will probably not like Chapter 5 at first, because it almost certainly will not tell you what you wish to hear.

The kind of Man -- the kind of universe -- that Man can discover on his own is a Man and a universe in serious trouble, and there's no way out. Further, what Man discovers is in fact The Real World. There simply isn't a 'better' world 'out there' which makes that Real World untroubling. There really is no way out.

Although that brute reality is plainly re-presented to us at every Mass, Catholic theology as an intellectual system with fundamentally pagan intellectual commitments has been intellectually unable to face it for a long time. On the other hand, the saints, all along and every day, have lovingly and whole-heartedly embraced that same brute reality with their very lives -- if not always with their intellectual theological categories. It's time to make our theological words correspond better both to their lives, and to the Eucharist.

So, Chapters 5 and 6 may be hard to read, especially if it's your ox being gored in one of them. Don't say you weren't warned. *Covenantal Theology* makes a fundamental critique of current Catholic theology in all its variants. You almost certainly don't yet understand just how fundamental its critique is. Like it or not, reading Chapters 5 and 6 will 'help' you understand just that (if 'help' is the right word for better understanding ideas you may decide you want no part of).

BRIEF DIGRESSION

Mr. Minsky's version of dehistoricized cosmology looks like this:

[CAUSE] [FREE WILL] [CHANCE]

Here's a progressive visual transformation of his picture, so you can see that his picture really is the same as the others. First, we visually separate out the 'FREE WILL' box:

[FREE WILL]

[CAUSE] [CHANCE]

Second, we rotate the whole picture to the left, and get:

[Here is 'FREE WILL' over here] < - - - - - [CAUSE]
[CHANCE] both over here

Chapter 7, "Regarding Our Story So Far," is just that: a summation and elaboration of the ideas covered so far. It's a chapter which assumes that you've absorbed a great deal of the vocabulary and thoughts already presented. I know that is asking a lot. Read it, cut yourself some slack, and go on to Chapter 8.

But do try to notice the three main ideas in Chapter 7, because I will be using them often in the remainder of the book. The first is a single word, "vanity." It turns out that Ecclesiastes knew exactly what Mr. Minsky is saying -- and agreed with it. If we can't take Mr. Minsky seriously, we had better take Ecclesiastes seriously, because until we do, we are going to be apologizing for our grandmother's faith.

The second big idea in Chapter 7 is really a reminder: Christ's life, death, and resurrection aren't an 'example' of some time-less truth. There simply isn't anything prior to the New Covenant, to his acts in time as 'One Flesh' with his Bride. This is an idea that is solidly familiar to Catholics by faith, but it is an idea that can not be made intelligible, let alone systematically coherent, within any time-less framework. Accordingly, present day Catholic theology, locating itself within various time-less frameworks, has a lot of intellectual work to do -- something that Chapters 8 - 12 will be pointing out in more detail.

However, the really big 'idea' in Chapter 7 is not an idea, but a reality, the Eucharistic 'order' of history: 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' life. Fr. Keefe reminds us that this 'order' is the New Covenant by which we are free. He also reminds us that the Eucharist is, "one and the same," the New Covenant. The Eucharist is, exactly, the living re-presentation in sacramental sign of the New Covenant, or our faith is in vain. The Eucharistic Event is the One Sacrifice that establishes the Eucharistic 'order' of history. The sacramental names of that same 'order' are: Offertory, Consecration, Communion.

These next three chapters may make for difficult reading, but perhaps not for the same reasons that the first four do. For although it may be hard to come to understand what Fr. Keefe is driving at, it may be harder still to face what he is saying, once it is understood. The world simply doesn't add up in the way we often assume that it does. We don't have and will never find a 'something' to depend on -- some time-less theory or plan that will make it all better. We do have a Someone to depend on, who, in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith, continues to act in history, as its crucified and risen Lord.

5 *One Modern Pessimism*

This chapter and the one following it exist to show that the ideas in *Covenantal Theology* are powerful and useful, in ways that current Catholic theology can not be. We begin with long quotes from a very modern book.¹ Read what Mr. Marvin Minsky has to say to you (on the remainder of this page) very carefully:

1. [Minsky M (1986). *The society of mind*. New York: Simon and Schuster, pp. 306-7. Mr. Minsky is a famous MIT-based cognitive scientist, and *The Society of Mind* is a famous book. Emphases are original.]

We each believe that we possess an Ego, Self, or Final Center of Control, from which we choose what we shall do at every fork in the road of time. . . . Whence comes this sense of being in control? According to the modern scientific view, there is simply no room at all for "freedom of the human will." Everything that happens in our universe is either completely determined by what's already happened in the past or else depends, in part, on random chance. Everything, including that which happens in our brains, depends on these and only these:

A set of fixed, deterministic laws.

A purely random set of accidents.

. . . We like to give names to what we do not know, and instead of wondering how we work we simply talk of being "free." Perhaps it would be more honest to say, "My decision was determined by internal forces I do not understand." But no one likes to feel compelled by something else. Why don't we like to feel compelled? Because we're largely made up of systems designed to learn to achieve their goals. But in order to achieve any long-range goals, effective difference-engines must also learn to resist whatever other processes attempt to make them change those goals. . . . So, though it's futile to resist, we continue to regard both Cause and Chance as intrusions on our freedom of choice.

. . . To save our belief in the freedom of will from the fateful grasps of Cause and Chance, people simply postulate an empty, third alternative. We imagine that somewhere in each person's mind, there lies a Spirit, Will, or Soul, so well-concealed that it can elude the reach of any law -- or lawless accident.

[CAUSE]

[FREE WILL]

[CHANCE]

I've drawn the box for Will so small because we're always taking things out of it -- and scarcely ever putting things in! This is because whenever we find some scrap of order in the world, we have to attribute it to Cause -- and whenever things seem to obey no laws at all, we attribute that to Chance. . . . Does this mean that we must embrace the modern scientific view and put aside the ancient myth of voluntary choice? No. We can't do that: too much of what we think and do revolves around those old beliefs. Consider how our social lives depend upon the notion of responsibility and how little that idea would mean without our belief that personal actions are voluntary. . . . But if we suspected that such choices were not made freely . . . we might become impelled to wreck the precious value-schemes that underlie our personalities or become depressed about the futility of a predestination tempered only by uncertainty. Such thoughts must be suppressed. No matter that the physical world provides no room for freedom of will . . . We're virtually forced to maintain that belief, even though we know it's false -- except, of course, when we're inspired to find the flaws in all our beliefs, whatever may be the consequence to cheerfulness and mental peace.

So, according to Mr. Minsky:

- a. When we do science, it shows us decisively that we are lying to ourselves about the existence of free will.
 - b. However, we must lie to ourselves about the existence of free will,
 - c. so that we do not despair, or kill ourselves or each other,
-
- a. So that we can do more science, which will show us even more decisively that we are lying to ourselves about the existence of free will.
 - b. However, we must lie to ourselves about the existence of free will,
 - c. so that we do not despair, or kill ourselves or each other,
-
- a. So that we can do more science, which will show us even more decisively that we are lying to ourselves about the existence of free will.
 - b. However,(and so on, forever)

¹This must be part of what it means to be fallen: when Man is at his best, when he is as bright and as brave as he will ever get, he sees his choices reduce to two: total paralysis and despair, or lying to himself about reality in order just to get through the day.

However, it is crucially important for readers of this book to understand that the non-existence of free will is indeed what Man logically concludes when he is at his bravest and brightest. A mere dismissal of Mr. Minsky's analysis is in the end a denial of all that is brave and bright in Man.

It is -- at best -- an appeal to "what holes?" or "why bother?" Catholicism.

At worst, it is the Galileo mistake -- a 'religious' refusal to permit scientists to reach the correct conclusion.

Readers of this book might by this point understand that the progressive disappearance of Mr. Minsky's middle box is pre-ordained within any dehistoricized cosmology. In fact, no scientific argument at all is necessary to get Mr. Minsky's middle box to vanish. Once the world is divided into the necessary and the arbitrary, into Cause and Chance, no third alternative exists, as Mr. Minsky not only says but also demonstrates very eloquently. Whatever does not belong either to Cause or to Chance -- "freedom of will" or anything else -- must vanish.

Secondly, since Catholic theology both modern and traditional accepts some form of time-less truth, some 'place' outside the Eucharist one stands to understand -- in other words, since it also accepts some

1. Fr. Keefe does not quote Mr. Minsky, nor analyze his book. This is another of my own examples. I think it a classic and yet highly modern, very sophisticated, representation of "dehistoricized cosmology." However, be warned: in a little while I am going to use this example to take you to places I am almost certain you do not want to go.

[Cause] □ [Chance]

form of dehistoricized cosmology, Catholic theology as presently constituted has nothing at all to say that could contradict Mr. Minsky.

This is why the childish thoughts of *Covenantal Theology* may be so critically important, for by relying on its own higher-quality mistakes, Catholics may be able to answer Mr. Minsky, in the only way that Catholics will ever really have available: by appeal to the Eucharist, the New Covenant.

As you probably have already noticed, Fr. Keefe's thought is extremely difficult -- and not simply because he uses so many big words. This chapter exists, so that you might also notice that, even if his thought is difficult, it is also powerful and helpful -- in ways that are simply not available to the current Catholic academy, whether dissenting or faithful.

So, compare Mr. Minsky's eloquent, insightful, and logical words with the paradigm presented in these chapters. Does Mr. Minsky not elegantly divide the world into Cause and Chance, into the necessary and the arbitrary? Does he not conclude to a fundamental pessimism?

To this fundamental pessimism, ironically most available to Man precisely when he is at his brightest and bravest (for nothing much is available to the stupid and cowardly), *Covenantal Theology* gives the same answer that it always does:

the sole answer to the pessimism that Man perennially discovers is the crucified Lord of history, the New Covenant in the One Sacrifice, sacramentally represented in the Church's free, public, liturgical mediation of Her faith.

All else reduces Man either to a chaos or a necessity -- or asks him to spend his life lying about what he nevertheless knows to be true.

Since Catholic theology itself, whether modern or traditional, accepts a dehistoricized cosmology as its own intellectual foundation, it can not oppose Mr. Minsky's argument in any intellectually principled way.

So, it opposes it in unprincipled ways. In this manner Catholic theology is reduced either to simply looking stupid -- primitive religionists unable even to stammer in the face of science -- or to looking smugly stupid -- primitive religionists who say they are devoted to "reason," but who are so blandly out of touch with modern science that they not only ignore any scientific conclusions that are inconvenient to 'belief,' they are proud that they do so.

Mr. Minsky's vanishing middle box is therefore not an example of

"godless modern science." It is an example -- an all too vivid one -- of the intellectual bankruptcy of Catholic theology. Mr. Minsky, who is not a Catholic, has, in effect, done some of the work Catholic theology should have been doing -- discovering that Catholic theology has made major scientific mistakes, so much so that its intellectual foundations have largely disintegrated.

To remain intellectually respectable within its own intellectual commitments, what present-day Catholic theology should do, of course, is abjectly accept Mr. Minsky's conclusions -- for they are the logical conclusions of any dehistoricized cosmology, whether 'scientific' or 'theological.'

What Catholic theology instead does with Mr. Minsky's questions is give answers that make us embarrassed to be Catholic. Catholic theology simply denies the given, or ignores it:

There just "has to be" free will -- so, it exists. Q.E.D.

Ironically, the very acceptance of "has to be" -- a necessary reason -- as the foundation for the argument actually proves Mr. Minsky's point instead. For what a truly modern man like Mr. Minsky argues is precisely that 'free will' doesn't have to be. 'Free will,' says Mr. Minsky, is not necessary to explain anything.

Thus what really clinches Mr. Minsky's argument is an argument he doesn't make, and perhaps doesn't see: you don't need a familiarity with the intricacies of modern cognitive science to assign 'free will' to Cause or Chance. Since absolutely everything gets assigned to Cause or Chance in any dehistoricized cosmology, all you need to assign 'free will' to Cause or Chance is any dehistoricized cosmology whatever.

All you need are:

"obligations antecedent to choice, rules that bind us whether we like it or not"¹

1. McNerny R. (1998) Opposition to the death penalty. Catholic Dossier 4(5), p. 6.

which happens to be (and I am not making this up) the definition of "natural law," according to one highly-regarded present-day Thomist.

"What holes?" Catholics to this day happily claim that 'free will' exists because freedom itself is necessitated by "rules that bind us whether we like it or not"! As I said, I am not making this up.

We have choice because we are bound whether we like it or not?

This is the conclusion of 800 years of 'scientific' work by Thomists? Even more, isn't this exactly Mr. Minsky's message: that we are bound,

whether we like it or not?

This is plain embarrassing.

On the other hand, "what holes?" Catholics -- if their bland consignment of 'freedom' to necessity can be stomached -- at least can arrive at a consistent definition of "responsibility," and very importantly, what "responsibility" entails as a practical matter.

That puts them two up on "why bother?" Catholics, who, if even two or three of them are gathered together, can not seem to do either thing.

This is beyond embarrassing.

Thus the awe-inspiring pessimism of Mr. Minsky's boxes a) does not make that pessimism less logical, and b) does not prove the rational superiority of either current flavor of Catholic theology. Indeed, in their similar -- though hardly identical -- incoherence, both current flavors of Catholic theology corroborate Mr. Minsky's final conclusions, which perhaps could not be more pessimistic:

* Man is naturally impelled to seek reasons and to resist control. However, these same drives enable Man to become intelligent enough to understand that only Cause and Chance exist. Anything that is Cause means that Man's impulse to resist control is futile, and anything that is Chance means that Man's impulse to seek reasons is futile. Thus Man realizes that his own natural and irresistible impulses to seek reasons and to resist control have brought him to the understanding that it is futile to seek reasons and to resist control.

* However, Man's impulses to seek reasons and resist control are really irresistible -- he would stop being Man if he didn't have these. Thus the real truth, that everything, including Man, is solely the result of Cause and Chance, and therefore that Man can not be free, and thus can not be responsible, is too much for Man to face, let alone to bear, because of Man's very nature, because of the very way he is built.

* If Man ever did face the real truth about himself and the universe, he might (perhaps must) rebel against his fate, and destroy others and himself -- even though this rebellion itself must be futile, being itself the result of Cause and Chance.

* Reason must therefore rationally conclude that it should become irrational, just to make it possible for Man to get through the day.

Yet, perhaps even these do not fully plumb the pessimism, for two further implications might be drawn from the above conclusions:

- * Any creature as intelligent as Man must reach similar conclusions.
- * The universe must therefore either be a place that eats its own young, destroying any creature intelligent enough to seek and to learn its fate and brave enough to face it, or it must be a place in which the only intelligent creatures that can long survive are devils. For devils are highly intelligent creatures who over time accumulate power and control -- as they themselves know full well -- pointlessly, for no reason whatsoever.

Question. What do you call a place:

you can not leave
coherent enough to exist but perverse enough that its truth is
literally unbearable to you
in which lying, even lying to yourself, not only can but must pass
for ultimate truth
a place so perverse that by its very nature it destroys those who
seek and really face its truth
and instead favors and supports, as the most potentially successful
creatures in it, either idiots or devils

According to Man, not when he is being a happy idiot, but when he is at his brightest and his bravest, when he sincerely seeks reasons and courageously continues to face the truths that emerge from his investigations, whatever the cost to himself, you call that place The Real World.

I hope you have understood this grim picture more substantially than you would been able to do without knowing and applying some of the ideas in Fr. Keefe's book. If that's so, you'd better congratulate yourself now, because now I'm going places that I think *Covenantal Theology* really does go, and I am almost certain you're not going to like it.

I have to go there anyway, because I think you will not really understand how fundamental a criticism *Covenantal Theology* makes until I take you to those places where I am almost certain you don't want to go. Let me cushion the blow a bit by revealing to you a secret that Tertullian thought was "trustworthy because it is absurd" -- an absurdity we no longer seem to recognize:

Jesus Christ the Son of God died.

Perhaps quite unlike ourselves, Tertullian was not saying that this only seems absurd, that we pretend that it is absurd for the sake of

argument. Tertullian did not have a problem with something that we apparently do: facing the fact that *when you're dead, you're dead*. Finis, that's it. Period.

In the end then, if we -- even for an instant -- believe that "Jesus Christ the Son of God died" is a statement that only seems absurd, is a statement that we only pretend is absurd for the sake of argument, that amounts to believing that He only seemed to die, that He only pretended to die. And that belief, of course, could not have been more decisively refused by the Church's magisterial proclamation from very early times as gravest heresy.

Yet it seems that we are no longer shocked that "Dead is the Son of God." We no longer even seem able to take it seriously. But there is no more decisive way to completely and totally be part of the world of the necessary and the arbitrary, the world of Cause and Chance, *than to be dead*.

I am afraid that this still does not shock us. Our flight to the time-less, ratified by more than a millennia of Catholic theology, is so instinctive that we just 'skip over' that part. The thought of it offends not just the Reason of the Greeks. It offends our Reason as well. And so, to begin to get you to understand how fundamentally *Covenantal Theology* refutes our flight to the time-less and turns us toward the Eucharist as the sole "medicine of immortality," I feel it necessary to genuinely shock you with another true sentence:

*Jesus Christ the Son of God had no free will.*¹

It seems more than a little ironic that devout Catholics who register no sense of shock and outrage at the statement that Jesus Christ the Son of God died, almost to a man might sputter with shock and outrage at this one, which is, after all, quite a bit milder. I think this is a little hint of just how far Catholic thought has taken us from the plain public worship of the Church.

It's an even bet that, despite the fact that I practically gave it away by talking about Jesus Christ being "completely and totally . . . part of the world of the necessary and the arbitrary, the world of Cause and Chance," you probably still weren't ready for it.

We just talked about how anyone who enters that world can not have free will.

Mr. Minsky's world *is* The Real World, the grown-up world, the world of "pure nature." It is our world. When we are at our brightest and bravest we realize that the world we really live in is the world of death, the fallen world, the world of Cause and Chance, the world in which time itself is Hell, and that our only way out is in flight, to the world of the time-less -- which, unfortunately, we also realize is the

1. Since this may be so shocking, I need to be very clear. First, Fr. Keefe says nothing about 'free will,' but he says repeatedly that the fallen world is the world of irresponsibility -- lack of free will (as Mr. Minsky also sees). Thus, it is as true to say that Jesus Christ had no free will as it is to say that He died. Both are completely, utterly true. So leave poor Mr. Minsky alone -- he's right. Thus, Jesus Christ, "true Man," fully participated in Man's total lack of free will. Jesus Christ has free will -- but not because he shares in our supposed glory, our 'free will.' His acts are fully responsible, he has free will, because "Truly this man was the Son of God." [Mark 15:39 RSV] "In Christ," we have free will. We have a share in His free will, not the other way around. Christ's One Sacrifice, the New Covenant, the Eucharist, is crucial to Man's very existence as Man -- and it is a complete surprise. That is all Catholics may say in response to this -- and all they need say.

world of Mr. Minsky's ever-shrinking middle box.

It is a virtual certainty that you have been reading along, watching the ideas of *Covenantal Theology* react against hoary 'truths,' reading about Mr. Minsky's vanishing middle box, and thinking all along that sooner or later I was going to get to the part where I explain the way out of Mr. Minsky's Real World.

This is why I think *Covenantal Theology* is such an important work, because it 're - turns' us to the only response that Catholics can have to Mr. Minsky.

That world, our world, The Real World, is the very one into which the Son of God "emptied himself," "taking the form of" -- what? Yes, that's right: the form of a slave.¹

For as Fr. Keefe shows at length so eloquently and creatively, the Eucharist itself is the decisive demonstration that Mr. Minsky's middle box is not real. The time-less does not exist. There is no way out of the world of Cause and Chance. There is only a way 'in' to that world. That way 'in' is the One Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, sacramentally represented in the liturgical freedom of the Church's mediation of her faith.²

The Eucharist, by quietly but stubbornly remaining in time, is our *anamnesis* (a reminder which makes real what it reminds us of) that, while there is no time-less place -- so we can scarcely flee to one -- nevertheless, there is a "Eucharistic order of history." (Recall that the full title of Fr. Keefe's work is *Covenantal Theology: the Eucharistic Order of History*).

The New Covenant, the Eucharist, is therefore "radically historical," in Fr. Keefe's phrase -- and he means radically. There is not even one drop of time-lessness in the Blood of the Lord. Any flight to the time-less -- and there have been numerous Christian and Catholic such flights, also -- is contradicted by the quiet, stubborn 'time-fullness' of the Eucharist itself.

Here it is very important to realize that Mr. Minsky states that Man must flee to the time-less of his very nature. Mr. Minsky's middle box can get smaller, but it can not vanish, lest Man destroy himself and everything else. Thus the One Sacrifice, the Eucharist, not The Real World as Man can find it, is the complete rejection of the time-less.

This also means that any rejection of Catholic sacramental realism -- however devout, however 'Christian' -- is a rejection -- even if it is an inadvertent rejection -- of the whole of the revelation given in Christ, because it is -- and it is this inevitably -- a flight to dehistoricized cosmology, a flight to the time-less. Unless the Eucharist means exactly what the Catholic Church proclaims it to mean, there is no way 'in' to time -- and all is lost.

1. Philippians 2:7 NAB

2. The fullness of Jesus's entry into the futility of 'flesh' is here emphasized: he did not 'pretend.' Nevertheless, he was free: "... I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father." [John 10:17-18 RSV] As Mr. Minsky notes, the concept of 'responsibility' can not exist without freedom. Nonetheless, Jesus found no 'free will' in our slavery. Our acts in time can be responsible and thus free -- but only because his acts in time were and are. The possibility of our freedom is created in and through his freedom, on his free responsible acts in time. No time-less 'place' can give us our free will, nor will any other acts in time but his, for he and he alone is the Lamb of God, the unblemished, the perfect, *the responsible* sacrifice, by whose blood we are free. Jesus Christ freely and fully sacrificed himself, including his freedom. His One Sacrifice, re-presented in the Eucharist, is the creation of our true freedom; 'flesh' apart from his actual, historical, living Sacrifice bravely and correctly concludes not to its freedom and responsibility, but to its slavery and irresponsibility, as Mr. Minsky shows. No 'deduction' from fallen 'nature' will ever discover 'free will,' the possibility of responsible existence. As has been pointed out here [also cf. Chapter 7], however inconvenient it is to Catholic theology's intellectual assumptions, this is not merely the increasingly substantiated conclusion of 'godless modern science.' The conclusion is inescapable as soon as the world is divided into Cause and Chance -- a time-less division that is Man's only available choice apart from the Eucharistic 'order' of history.

For if Christ does not save us now, as a sacramental Event in our time, then only time-less structures can save us -- and they can not:

If "in Christ" there isn't a way 'in' to time, that is,

If in the Eucharist the Son of Mary and the Son of God, the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith," "one and the same,"¹ is not present,

if thus His One Sacrifice is not sacramentally re - presented in the 'time-full'² and never time-less worship of the Church

if thus it is not as present reality His full "emptying" into the Cause and Chance of our time, *ex opere operato*, not by our 'remembrance' of a time-less structure but, as complete surprise completely intelligible, as an actual event now: "This is My Body, This is My Blood,"

then not only is our faith "in vain,"³

but also the whole world "groans,"⁴ and will groan unceasingly, until finally it -- as we -- can flee into nothingness --

because there is no way out of time.

Mr. Minsky is right: if Man 'discovers' that there is a way out of time, he is simply lying to himself, trying to avoid the pain of being completely enslaved in Cause and Chance. As Fr. Keefe understands, the freedom of even one of our acts in time is abjectly and totally dependent, not on any 'middle box,' not on any time-less framework or 'place,' but on the reality of the Christ's free sacramental *acts*, in our time.

Man may not be able to bear the news, but if he can, it will become ever more clear to him that 'free will' is available to Man -- to the universe -- absolutely nowhere else outside the Eucharistic One Sacrifice. The perennial question will remain, is it available to Man there, in and through the worship of the Church? This is the quiet speck of grit over which the whole world will stumble in every age: "But who do you say that I am?"^{5, 6}

Although we have not come very far in our exploration of Fr. Keefe's work, we may have come far enough to give the answer to the question with which this book began: is Catholicism childish?

Our answer can only be Tertullian's:

It is impossible. It is not childish.

1. cf. e.g., Council of Chalcedon

2. 'time-full' is my own term, not Fr. Keefe's, but the word gets his point across.

3. cf. 1 Corinthians 15:14 RSV

4. cf. Romans 8:22-3 RSV

5. Mark 8:29 RSV

6. It may here be important to notice that the Penitential Rite of the Mass has a sweetness not always remarked. When "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" we are asked to "call to mind our sins," we are given in that name the great gift that, contrary to what we can discover on our own, it matters what we do. For no one irresponsible -- no one who lacks free will -- can sin. Thus, the first fruit of mercy is judgment. For to be subject to judgment in Christ is to be given the gift of free will in Christ. Not in any time-less place, but fully in time, in the 'time-full' Event of the Eucharist, we learn -- first, to our joyful relief, and only secondly, to our horror -- that it matters what we do.

6 *One Modern Silliness: New Class Catholicism and the 'Critical Distance'*

New Class Catholicism is the system of thought and practice adopted, largely produced, and mediated by Catholic members of the New Class. The New Class is the class that now runs much of the world (or at least thinks that it does), the class that both produces the world's knowledge and makes the most use of that knowledge (as technicians, bureaucrats, etc.). New Class Catholicism is what most people consider to be the 'grown-up' Catholicism of our day. However, New Class Catholicism does not work as an intellectual and scientific system, and it can not work as that, even by its own standards. Nonetheless, as a political or persuasive system, it appears to be working quite nicely.

To examine New Class Catholicism, the preferred Catholicism of most of the Catholic 'grown-ups' of the New Class, is thus to come close to the heart of the modern claim that you ought to apologize for your grandmother's faith.¹ Fr. Keefe's deep theological insight cuts New Class Catholicism dead at one stroke, but so quickly and deeply dead that it may twitch about by reflex for a very long time, with few of us the wiser, since we can not look so readily as Fr. Keefe into the very heart and soul of the thing. Some extra-Keefian analysis, therefore, may make the reality plainer.

The fundamental intellectual project of New Class Catholicism is the establishment of a 'critical distance' from Catholicism. Tellingly, this is the very same intellectual project taken for granted within traditional Catholic thought:

The Eucharist is over here,

It is perhaps easier to see that both the most 'grown-up' New Class Catholics and the most "traditional" Catholics have the same basic intellectual foundations for their thought, if we look at this variant:

1. As will be seen, it is quite important that a modern like Mr. Minsky does not want us to apologize for our grandmother's faith, but instead wishes us to put our faith into his middle box, and make it disappear entirely.

< - - and here we are, standing some place else, in the 'normal universe,' looking at it, and trying to understand it.

The proclamations of the magisterium are over here,

< - - - and here we are, over here, establishing a 'critical distance,' and trying to understand them.

The sacramental authority of the magisterium flows from the sacrament of Holy Orders. In principle, then, the idea that Christ himself protects the sacraments through the sacraments, including through the sacramental orders of the Holy Father and the bishops that are united with him, is no more or less hard to swallow than the root sacramental sign of Catholicism: "This is My Body, This is My Blood." Indeed, Fr. Keefe shows at length that New Class Catholicism doesn't -- can't -- take any of the sacraments seriously. A 'critical distance' is -- must be -- established, not only from Holy Orders, but also from Penance, Baptism, Matrimony, and, most especially, from the Eucharist, the heart of the Church. The establishment of the 'critical distance' is the logical thing -- the 'grown-up' thing -- to do, and so it is done.

One of the hardest things Catholics will have to do in order to understand and to correct (in other words, to convert, to evangelize) New Class Catholicism, is to accept the intellectual incoherence of traditional Catholic thought. New Class Catholics really are -- literally -- our brothers and sisters in the faith, even intellectually. Their thought is directly related to traditional Catholic thought, as fully and deeply related as brother is related to brother, sister to sister. New Class Catholics are simply more consistently applying the inherent logic of an intellectual paradigm fully accepted within traditional Catholic thought. Indeed, within traditional Catholic thought that intellectual paradigm is more than fully accepted, it is central, as the following representation shows:

[GRACE]

NATURE

or, in other words:

[The special class of things (the Trinity, the Eucharist, etc.) that can be known only by divine revelation, over here]

< - - - and everything we can ever learn, discover, or think about, over here.

Faithful Catholics may not be able to evangelize even their own brothers and sisters, New Class Catholics, let alone the modern world, until they understand that this most traditional 'solution' to the conundrum being discussed here is formally identical to what happens when the thoroughly secular scientist Mr. Steven Pinker's 'solution'

(which was discussed and pictured in Chapter 2) is carried to its own logical conclusion:

[Insert your favorite irrational belief here]

Need we be reminded that the price paid for the "Don't worry, be happy" school of 'belief' is total societal incoherence? Once something that is contrary to reason is accepted, *anything* goes: psychic crystal pyramids, the moon being made out of green cheese, science, anti-science, Ben's efforts to 'Ben' us -- and, oh yes, we 'logically' ought to allow the Eucharist and the Trinity into this mix, as distastefully irrational as those last two seem.

As Fr. Keefe shows so carefully, New Class Catholicism's 'critical distance' comes only indirectly from the 'modern,' the 'grown-up' world. It really comes from us, from Catholic theologians' own thoughts about Catholicism. Regarding the Eucharist, the 'critical distance' is found, murkily but there, already in the thought of Berengarius, in the eleventh century,¹ but the root paradigm behind it existed, in different manifestations, in all the heresies the early Fathers fought against and the earliest councils condemned.²

This Fr. Keefe shows, but he also shows something even more important: the 'critical distance' also exists in the thought of Doctors of the Church, including St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.³ Yet, until this possibility is accepted, New Class Catholicism can not be converted to Catholicism, and the only intellectual recourse available to most thinking Catholics will remain apologizing for the faith of your grandmother, or at least feeling that you should.

Practically no one in the secular modern world considers the intellectual structure of traditional Catholic thought to be worth even a moment's notice. Even more tellingly, only a tiny number of current Catholic academics find the intellectual structure of traditional Catholic thought to be persuasive. If there is one lesson to be learned from the years following the Second Vatican Council, it is that. This may be a hint that there is something wrong with that intellectual structure.

There are Catholics today who believe that St. Thomas Aquinas or St. Augustine never made any fundamental theological mistakes. There are also some Catholics today who believe not only that they did not make any fundamental theological mistakes, but also, that they could not have. In other words, that it is flat out impossible for St. Thomas

< - - and please place all rationality, everything we can ever learn, discover, or think about, over here.

1. *CT*, particularly Chapter VI.

2. *CT*, *passim*.

3. The recognition of this, and the reconversion of both Augustinianism and Thomism, so that both refuse the 'critical distance' fundamentally, as a matter of their basic procedures, is one way of describing *CT*'s major project. "Reconversion" is apt. *CT* shows that what is constitutional for both Augustinianism and Thomism: what they begin with in order to begin as Catholic theology, has deep flaws, which have caught up with both. Neither can really continue as Catholic theologies in the full sense until their reconstitution is a reconversion to inquiry as more fundamentally Catholic; which is to say, Eucharistic, covenantal, historical, scientific, and less fundamentally pagan; which is to say, dehistoricized, time-less, cosmological, tautological.

Aquinas or St. Augustine to have made any really fundamental theological mistakes.

In either view, the fundamental intellectual structure of traditional Catholic thought is fine, just the way it is. New Class Catholicism, therefore, becomes simply one more anti-Catholic perversion of genuine clear Catholic thinking -- probably straight out of that foul anti-Catholic nest, the Enlightenment -- requiring only the perennial solution, Right Reason, or, if necessary, Obedience to Proper Authority, to be eliminated.

This solution to the current difficulties within the Church could actually work. It has in the past. But it may not work this time. Secondly, if there really is something deeply wrong -- not with the faith, but with the intellectual structure of Catholic thought about that faith -- then the problem will not go away, even if New Class Catholics finally "obey," or are "defeated."

The following needs to be stated plainly. If it is impossible for saints to make theological mistakes, even terrible theological mistakes, then theology is not a science, it is a sacrament. So, every Catholic needs to keep in mind that, since even the *Summa theologiae* is not one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic church, then theology is not a sacrament of the Catholic Church, but the science that studies the sacraments of the Catholic church. That means that St. Thomas's theological theories, or even the basic intellectual framework within which he states his theories, does not have, has never had, and will never have any sacramental status. If another theological scientist eventually finds some flaws in them, we should be happy, not sad.

The discovery of a flaw in a great scientist's thinking does not alter his greatness in the slightest -- since the even higher-quality mistakes of future science are only possible by standing on the shoulders of his own, extremely high-quality, mistakes. Secondly, mistakes in thinking are always bad for us, they are usually extremely difficult to uncover, and we should therefore always be happy when a theological scientist finds one, and especially happy if he has a 'solution' to the mistake -- a 'solution' in science meaning an idea that enables us to make higher-quality mistakes than we had been doing.

The problem posed by New Class Catholicism, then, is a completely logical -- not an illogical -- extension of intellectual assumptions that the greatest saints, the greatest traditional Catholic theologians, made also. At some point, the inherent logic of the intellectual framework thus assumed leads to seemingly irresolvable conflicts between

[One]

and the Many

["Grace"]

and "Nature"

["Faith"]

and "Reason"

[the sacramental reality of Christ's presence given in
and through the Church's worship]

and everything that seems
reasonable to us

This creates a few problems for Catholics! The problems were always 'resolved' successfully by the saints, but at the expense of their intellectual commitments, which they simply abandoned, if they thought (or it was pointed out to them) that continuing to commit to them caused their thinking to turn away from the sacramental realities they were trying to understand more deeply. However, that in no way fixes the intellectual incoherence, which remains.

It is plain embarrassing to have a centuries-old, quasi-'official' explanation for the truths of the Catholic faith that is formally identical to an explanation that can be used to 'explain' absolutely anything which otherwise makes no sense:

[The special class of things (the Trinity, the Eucharist,
etc.) that can be known only by divine revelation, over
here]

< - - and everything we can ever
learn, discover, or think about, over
here.

[Insert your favorite irrational belief here]

< - - and please place all
rationality, everything we can ever
learn, discover, or think about, over
here.

Nonetheless, this embarrassing correspondence does serve to expose the intellectual incoherence and scientific vacuity of New Class Catholicism, which takes as its project the adoption of a 'modern' intellectual and scientific framework, in order to create the proper 'critical distance' from Catholicism. For example, Fr. Berard L. Marthaler, O.F.M. Conv., professor, Department of Religion and Religious Education, Catholic University of America, a highly influential New Class Catholic,¹ has written this about "borrowings" made by his field, catechetics:

1. For proof of this, see Wrenn MJ, Whitehead KD (1996). Flawed expectations. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Borrowing from anthropology, sociology, and psychology, [the catechetical movement] has come to have a better understanding of how individuals and groups appropriate symbols to establish a sense of identity and a world of meaning and value.¹

1. Marthaler BL. introduction in Warren M, ed. (1983). Sourcebook for modern catechetics. Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications. p. 19.

There is one minor problem with New Class Catholicism's "borrowing." Truly modern scientific men don't say that Catholicism is *partly* absurd. Look at one fully 'modern' representation of the paradigm we have been examining:

[Insert your favorite irrational belief here]

< - - - and please place all rationality, everything we can ever learn, discover, or think about, over here.

Here is what genuinely modern men think:

[Insert *all* of your Catholicism here]

< - - - and please place all rationality, everything we can ever learn, discover, or think about, over here.

Therefore, from within fully modern intellectual and scientific commitments, while there is every warrant to *study* a Catholic theologian or a Catholic religious educator -- such as Fr. Marthaler -- as "anthropology, sociology, and psychology" might study any strange phenomenon, there is never any intellectual or scientific warrant to *be* a Catholic theologian or a Catholic religious educator.

Within fully modern intellectual and scientific commitments, there is absolutely no rational basis for anyone to be Catholic, let alone to be a 'professional' Catholic. So, from within the fundamental intellectual commitments made by New Class Catholic academics such as Fr. Marthaler, no intellectual or scientific justification exists for him to remain employed. Within his own intellectual and scientific commitments, Fr. Marthaler's entire 'professional' life as a "Catholic religious educator" has no intellectual or scientific content whatever. Fr. Marthaler can not provide an intellectually consistent explanation, even to himself, of why anyone should pay him to do what he does.

This is the 'grown-up' Catholicism of our day, the Catholicism of the New Class. As can easily be seen, New Class Catholicism is not very 'grown-up' at all -- in fact, it is childish and hypocritical. It really is "why bother?" Catholicism. The irony is, this can easily be seen, not only by faithful Catholics, but also by truly 'modern' secular people.

The project of New Class Catholicism, the establishment of a 'modern' 'critical distance' from Catholicism, a "belief system" that fully modern people think is completely unwarranted in the first place, can have no scientific or intellectual content, and thus can never be successful, by its own standards. What is the proper 'critical distance' from the belief that the moon is made out of green cheese? Since the moon is not made out of green cheese, the only proper 'critical distance' from this belief is an infinite distance.

Thus the cries for "academic freedom" within the New Class Catholic academy are incongruous. They are, solely, cries for a 'critical distance' from Catholicism, which everyone truly modern thinks is provably unreal, ridiculous, and potentially dangerous in the first place. What would the "academic freedom" to make a "serious" inquiry into the moon being made out of green cheese look like? It wouldn't look like anything at all. No serious modern person would pay anyone even a nickel to "inquire" about something so obviously stupid. The prospect of scores of 'academic' departments all over the country, employing hundreds of "professors" earnestly editing journals, writing books, and teaching classes devoted to such idiocy, would be beyond absurd.

If there were large numbers of primitive people who believed that the moon was made out of green cheese, there would be every modern intellectual and scientific warrant to study them and their beliefs, employing "anthropology, sociology, psychology," or any other science, to do so. However, while there is every intellectual or scientific warrant for modern academic departments to study the phenomenon of Green-Cheese-icism, in which large numbers of people believe something completely ridiculous and absurdly anti-scientific, there will never be any modern intellectual or scientific warrant for the existence of an 'academic' department of Green-Cheese-ology. This is a crucial distinction, and, when it is made, all Departments of New Class Catholic Theology or of Religious Education become intellectually and scientifically untenable at a single stroke.

As mentioned, not only Catholics who see no reason to apologize for the faith of their grandmothers, but also fully 'modern' secular people, understand the project of New Class Catholicism to be inherently ridiculous, to be "why bother?" Catholicism. There is no 'critical distance,' and the project of finding one will never be successful -- not because Oppressive Church Authorities Will Not Permit It, but because the project itself is just monumentally silly, hopelessly incoherent even by its own standards:

[Stand with your favorite irrational belief over here]

(But are you over here?)

< - - - and also, stand over here,
"borrowing" modern scientific
understandings to establish a
'critical distance' from it.
(or over here?)

The question just below the now-familiar formulation is the one New Class Catholics can not answer, even for themselves. The question -- and particularly, the fact that New Class Catholics themselves can give no coherent answer to it -- defines "why bother?" Catholicism.

And so, of course, the project of New Class Catholicism reduces to Catholicism as one of Mr. Minsky's vanishing middle boxes:

[Cause] [Catholicism] [Chance]

It is even easier to see the self-defeating character of the project of New Class Catholicism if we peer a little deeper into the "Catholicism" box in the middle:

[Cause] [Catholic professors of "theology" and "religious education"] [Chance]

If New Class Catholicism ever stopped "borrowing" and actually became what it says it wishes to be, truly modern, it would commit suicide. The project amounts, not only to the progressive evacuation of any actual content to Catholicism, but also to the progressive evacuation of any actual content to the jobs of 'professional' New Class Catholics. By its own intellectual and scientific commitments, New Class Catholicism will never have anything intellectually or scientifically serious to do -- except go out of business.

The distinction that is fudged by New Class Catholicism, but which is in fact crystal clear, is this. New Class Catholics may indeed do academically "serious" things, but the only academically "serious" things they may do, by their own standards, they do as "anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists," and nothing they will ever do as "Catholic theologians" or "Catholic religious educators," by their own intellectual and scientific commitments, will ever be intellectually or scientifically serious. As an intellectual or scientific project, New Class Catholicism, by its own standards, is inevitably, and will always be, a complete waste of time.

Yet New Class Catholicism is in fact highly 'successful' -- in terms of its power and influence, particularly within the current Catholic academy. Not only do New Class Catholics run nearly all the

departments of theology and religious education in Catholic universities both in the United States and in Europe nowadays, they also seem to be quite enthusiastic about doing so.

The argument that New Class Catholicism has no possible intellectual or scientific project, by its own standards, is meant to be decisive. New Class Catholicism lacks, even by its own standards, anything intellectually or scientifically real to do. It is therefore doing an awful lot of work, and for nothing, even by its own standards, even if it hides this from itself. The question therefore arises, is all that work simply for nothing, or does New Class Catholicism accomplish something, by its own standards, but in other realms besides the intellectual and the scientific?

Here is one guess -- it is only a guess. I have established that New Class Catholicism has no real intellectual or scientific project, and I am now guessing that it might yet be doing something "serious," at least by its own standards, but in some other realm. To understand my guess as to what "serious" project New Class Catholicism might actually be involved in, we need to understand, much better than New Class Catholics do, what modern sciences such as "anthropology, sociology, and psychology" are really telling us.

We begin by noticing that a truly modern¹ framework finds nothing at all challenging in "Man's Perennial Need for Religion." The need of most men to 'believe' in something may perhaps irritate 19th-century science, but is completely untroubling to late 20th-century scientific paradigms. For modern scientists, the need to 'believe' is probably genetically based, the product of adaptive selection, evolution. It is therefore nothing we can deny, or, by and large, talk ourselves out of -- even if we are scientists. But that does not make a real object of 'belief' necessary, or even possible. All it means is that we are as likely to avoid 'believing' as moths are likely to avoid circling a light bulb.

Moths may circle light bulbs because it was evolutionarily adaptive for them to keep a strong light, such as that of the moon, "over one shoulder." That would orient them in space at night. And what happens to the flight of a moth, trying to keep a light bulb source "over one shoulder?" Circling about the light bulb, of course. The behavior, genetically programmed, unavoidable, and adaptive in certain circumstances, proves to be maladaptive in a 'modern' environment -- though the behavior is no less unavoidable for all that.

This would roughly be the modern scientific understanding of "Man's Perennial Need for Religion." We are moths, with an evolved tendency that was formerly adaptive, now foolishly but unavoidably compelled by that same tendency to circle a light bulb. The fact that a lot of 'modern' men still circle a lot of light bulbs does not prove that

1. Simply being alive now, or even being some sort of scientist now, is not a sufficient proof that you have "modern scientific ideas" about the matters I am discussing here. I am discussing them in terms of the findings of the sciences Fr. Marthaler says that the Catholic catechetical movement has "borrowed" from. By and large, a physicist's theory about how he himself thinks is as likely to be modern and scientific as the one proposed by the taxi-cab driver taking him to the airport. We all have home-made theories of how we and other people think. If the person with the home-made theory happens to know a lot of physics, does that make his idea "modern and scientific"?

The truly scientific answer must be no. The physicist's theory has no special status. His theory will have to be compared to the theories of other people. These comparisons of theories are called "experiments," but obviously, the "experiments" are done only to help make the comparison-making easier to get right. Doing comparisons of theories about how men think, and keeping records of the comparisons, so that we don't just keep making the same comparisons over and over, is one of the principal projects of "modern cognitive science," which is both a branch and an extension of psychology, one of the sciences Fr. Marthaler says the Catholic catechetical movement has "borrowed" from. It is only fair, then, to deal with New Class Catholicism on the basis of the real implications of what it has "borrowed."

even one of us is doing something reasonable. The existence of the behavior does not prove that the behavior has a point. 'Beliefs' may be irresistible even to 'modern' men, helping them to "appropriate symbols to establish a sense of identity and a world of meaning and value." 'Beliefs' may still help us get out of bed in the morning, and still help us keep from killing each other (although there is much opinion to the contrary on that point). However, as the scientist Mr. Minsky understands a great deal more clearly than the 'science-borrower' Fr. Marthaler, although 'belief' may be unavoidable, that does not make it any less pointless.

If moths had 'beliefs,' would that make their gods real? Indeed, moths 'believe' -- meaning, they behave as if they 'believe' -- that it is a good thing to circle light bulbs, when in fact, it probably does them no good, and may even do them harm. 'Modern' men 'believe' because their ancestors were people who 'believed.' Their 'belief' got them out of bed in the morning a little more willingly, influenced them to have more babies and take care of them a little better, and persuaded them to kill each other a little less often (and perhaps to kill non-'believers' a little more often) than their rivals in the evolutionary jungle. 'Modern' men 'believe' for the same reason that they walk upright and have bilateral symmetry: it just happened that way.

From a fully modern scientific perspective, then, there need be no rational content to any 'religion,' past, present, or future, in order to explain the existence of religions, or their perennial appeal. Indeed, the point can be put more strongly: since all religions can be completely explained without any need to propose that any of them have any rational content, we must logically accept the simplest explanation, that none of them have any rational content -- that none of them are real.

This is what "modern science" really says about religion, Catholicism included. Catholicism has no rational content. It is not real. Its only meaning is its usefulness, as judged by standards outside of itself. The individual decides how well it eases the "personal" need to 'believe.' Society judges its ability to be helpful to societal goals. Experts quantify these personal and social benefits.

We are Caused to 'believe,' and that was adaptive because it aided our survival: we got out of bed in the morning. We killed each other a little less. Chance provides us with some specific content for that genetically programmed Caused belief. However, that never meant that what was 'believed' was real. There is no rational content to 'religion.' The proposed project of New Class Catholicism is to find the 'scientific' 'critical distance' from something that has no scientific reality to begin with.

However, in this, the genuinely modern perspective on 'religion,' is to be found one possible 'real' purpose of New Class Catholicism. True moderns understand that 'belief,' though it never has a real object, is unavoidable for the mass of men -- including intellectuals and scientists. Because of the way adaptive selection has cobbled Man together, men are going to be compelled to keep at least some of Mr. Minsky's vanishing middle boxes around, for the foreseeable future. Indeed, the more scientific we become, the more we will understand that Man is an animal who simply will do certain things, such as have 'beliefs,' whether they have any point, whether they are beneficial or destructive. The vanishing middle box will not vanish completely, because Man for the foreseeable future will find himself driven by irresistible evolved urges to abandon the scientific, the rational, and the true for nothing more than Man's particular mess of evolutionary pottage:

[Cause] ['beliefs'] [Chance]

In the truly modern view, the middle box, however ridiculous, is inevitable, because Man is Man. However, it may be possible to manage the middle box, so that it does not balloon to undue proportions. If the middle box can not be eliminated, perhaps its size can be managed, lest it overwhelm or completely subvert Man's halting attempts to be rational. In other words, it may be possible to manage the 'religions' that are the cultural manifestations of the genetically-programmed (but empty) need to 'believe' in a manner that is least bothersome to the New Class, and which as far as possible causes the 'religions' to do whatever the New Class thinks 'religions' ought to do.

Therefore, a possible 'real' project for New Class Catholicism would be to keep the middle box that is "Catholicism" to a size as small as possible. In other words, one possible "serious" project for New Class Catholicism is to manage Catholicism in a manner that is least bothersome to the New Class, and which as far as possible causes Catholicism to do whatever the New Class thinks "Catholicism" ought to do:

[Cause] [Catholicism] [Chance]

Lacking, even by its own standards, anything intellectually or scientifically real to do, New Class Catholicism may find its reason to get out of bed in the morning in the political and persuasive task of properly managing Catholicism, first and foremost on behalf of New Class Catholics and on behalf of the New Class as a whole. This may

indeed be the 'real,' or one of the 'real,' projects of New Class Catholicism, since a fair amount of New Class Catholic rhetoric becomes sensible in its light. Only one example need be given here. The example is startling, not because it is untypical, but because it is completely typical of the daily pronouncements of scores of sitting Catholic professors in current American Catholic universities, regularly publishing in nearly all American Catholic presses.

Dr. Jane Regan is a faculty member at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, the holder of a doctoral degree in catechetics from the Catholic University of America. She made the following remark with reference to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The *Catechism* to which Dr. Regan refers, we need to remember, was written directly by bishops of the Catholic Church, in extensive consultation with all the Catholic bishops of the world, and was approved by and promulgated by the Holy Father himself:

We will re-think and re-explore regions that the writers of the *Catechism* think are settled. As we continue to live out of and reflect upon the theology that underpins and flows from the Second Vatican Council, we must continue to return to the *Catechism* to change it, clarify it, make it more readable, and more usable for the next generation. Eventually... we will have to come up with a new text.¹

1. Regan JE et al. (1994). Exploring the catechism. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, conclusion.

From the perspective of 'modern' men with nineteenth-century ideas (such as members of Skeptical Societies), of course, there is no intellectual or scientific reason even to read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, let alone to re-write it. From their perspective, not reading, not re-writing, but burning, might be something rational to do with the *Catechism*. Nonetheless, modern men with fully modern ideas acknowledge the existence of pointless thoughts and activities (such as 'beliefs' and 'religions') that most men -- including themselves -- quite often find irresistibly compelling.

The nineteenth-century 'modern' task (and more than a few people alive now are 'modern' only in the nineteenth-century sense) was taken to be stamping out 'belief,' through argument, scientific demonstration, or perhaps even by force in "extreme cases." Burning the *Catechism*, not re-writing it, would be the sensible thing to do.

On the other hand, the New Class agenda in this regard, genuinely more sophisticated than the one similarly taken up by nineteenth-century 'moderns,' accepts the inevitability of the compulsion to 'believe' silly things, and makes efforts to channel this truly irresistible but still pointless energy in directions the New Class considers to be

more appropriate, or at least, less bothersome.

Therefore, one possible reason to re-write the *Catechism* may be political, persuasive, ideological: in this way the *Catechism's* re-writers can "appropriate" its "symbols" in order "to establish a sense of identity and a world of meaning and value" -- an identity and a world that will be supportive of, or at least untroubling to, the New Class. If the middle box, "Catholicism," can not entirely vanish (since Man is inevitably childish to some extent), at least it can be made no threat to the grown-up world:

[Cause] [Catholicism] [Chance]

There is a name for subversive management of this kind, and it isn't complimentary. Of course, besides 'believe,' one thing men seem to do irresistibly is to name things. A variant of naming, name-calling, also appears to be another irresistible compulsion. New Class Catholicism has called traditional Catholicism some very dirty names: obscurantist, fundamentalist, authoritarian, racist, sexist, to name only a few. Yet New Class Catholicism can, at the very least, provably be called intellectually and scientifically vacuous -- and by its own standards. Further, there may be some other, very dirty, names that may possibly describe it: accommodationist, collaborationist, traitor, Vichy, heretic. It is worthwhile to discuss the names in this particular name-calling, because it brings out an important distinction.

Keeping to one side the provable charge here made against New Class Catholicism, of complete intellectual and scientific inanity, even if both sets of sweeping charges were equally true, the one set made by New Class Catholics, the other set levelled against them:

leveled by New Class Catholics:

"obscurantist"

"fundamentalist"

etc., these are not two sides of the same coin, two pots calling each other black. There is no formal parallelism. One representation of the paradigm we have been examining has particular point here:

["Faith"]

leveled against:

"accommodationist"

"collaborationist"

"Reason"

Traditional Catholicism, despite its best efforts to be "Reasonable," in the end is always willing to abandon its intellectual commitments, to tolerate even jaw-dropping intellectual incoherence, in order to choose "Faith," the sacramental reality of the New Covenant mediated in and through the worship of the Church, and thus, at least from within its own commitments, it can deny wholeheartedly all charges of (for example) obscurantism and exclusivity, because of its worship in Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Light.

On the other hand, New Class Catholicism, whatever its efforts to be "Faithful," in the end always decides for "Reason;" that is, it allies itself with the knowledge produced by and mediated in and through the New Class,¹ and thus, far from denying that it accommodates itself to and collaborates with the New Class, it must proudly take its accommodation and collaboration as its own fundamental commitment.

Thus not only traditionalist Catholics but also the secular New Class might be able to see the Catholic New Class as a Vichy government, as the managers of Catholicism on behalf of the secular New Class. The secular New Class certainly deals with the Catholic New Class exactly as in the manner of the Vichy: it is worthy of note solely in terms of its reliability and public relations value, and is otherwise ignored as inconsequential. Is it too much of a stretch to find, behind the repeated warnings of New Class Catholics about the dire consequences that will inevitably result if "the Church does not change," the warning of the secular New Class that, unless our New Class Catholic managers can get us Catholics under better control, our beloved, if ultimately pointless, 'religion' may have to be eased out of 'modern' life entirely?

There is thus a big difference in the names that traditional Catholicism and New Class Catholicism might be called. Within traditional Catholicism's own commitments, the names called are unfair and untrue. Within New Class Catholicism, the names called appear to be consistent with its fundamental commitments.

Be that as it may, not only the fundamental silliness of New Class Catholicism, but also how easily, how 'logically,' it spread since the Second Vatican Council, has to be put directly at the door of traditional Catholic thought. New Class Catholicism's growth is not due simply to the failures of a politically maladept Catholic episcopate, nor simply to Sinister Outside (or even Inside) Forces. New Class Catholicism is, genuinely, a more 'logical' traditional Catholic thought. (It is less faithful than traditional Catholic thought, but it is more 'logical'.)

New Class Catholic biblical exegesis, for example, takes a dehistoricized cosmology as its fundamental assumption. For New

1. The idea that knowledge is not 'out there' (in a time-less 'place') but is *produced* in time is a notion traditional Catholics abhor and New Class Catholics largely hide even from themselves as politically inconvenient - both once again accepting (if from opposite directions) the completely pagan idea that, apart from the time-less, the only reality is power.

Class biblical scholars, even the Catholic ones, the Bible no longer exists solely as it is read in the heart of the Catholic Church, from within her liturgy, from within the sacramental economy whose heart is the Eucharist. Rather, dehistoricized cosmology is taken for granted as the hallmark of “professional” exegesis. Some Thing called “The Bible” is “there,” and we are “over here,” establishing the proper ‘critical distance’ from it, trying to understand it.

However this is fudged, the acceptance of the paradigm immediately and irrevocably disintegrates the living presence of Christ with his Catholic Church in and through the Sacred Scriptures. The Jesus who actually lived and died and offered himself is no longer actually the Word of God, One Flesh with his Bridal Church -- that is only a metaphor.

“The Christ of Faith” is over here

New Class biblical exegesis begins with the assumption that it is the separation between the “Jesus of history” and the “Christ of Faith” that is real. But no matter; the New Class has preserved the ‘critical distance.’ After all, within all dehistoricized cosmology, the only alternative to some kind of ‘distance’ is a subsumption of the Many into the One, and the New Class is not (at present) very interested in being subsumed.

The Bible is over here,

But the key point is that New Class Catholic exegesis and theology is merely making a more rigorous, a more “logical” application of the paradigm of dehistoricized cosmology. It is not inventing out of whole cloth something foreign to traditional Catholic theology. It was, and remains, not only theologically relevant, but also politically relevant, that New Class Catholicism is simply applying, more vigorously and consistently than traditional Catholic thought, traditional Catholic thought's own paradigm:

The Eucharist is over here,

The “Jesus of History” is over here

< - - - and here we are, standing some place else, in the 'normal universe,' looking at it, and trying to understand it.

< - - - and here we are, standing some place else, in the 'normal universe,' looking at it, and trying to understand it.

7 *Regarding Our Story So Far*

A dehistoricized cosmology, the time-less 'critical distance,' is inherent in both current Augustinianism and current Thomism as intellectual and scientific methods. The faithfulness and loyalty of present-day Augustinians and Thomists arises out of a last-minute abandonment of the basic intellectual methodologies of each in favor of the consistent faith of the Church. Although the abandonment is praiseworthy considering the alternative, it really solves nothing from an intellectual and scientific standpoint.

Moreover, traditional Catholic theology's own acceptance of the 'critical distance' ironically continues to provide fundamental intellectual sustenance to Catholic 'dissent'. Modern 'dissenting' Catholic theology in many ways arises merely from the refusal to abandon its intellectual, philosophical, and scientific foundation - - some form of dehistoricized 'critical distance' -- at the last minute, in favor of the worship and profession of the Church.

In Chapter V of *Covenantal Theology*, Fr. Keefe shows in detail that the intellectual and philosophical system, form, premises, and method of St. Thomas Aquinas's own discussion of the Eucharist relies on a dehistoricized cosmology. He shows, again in professional theological detail, how St. Thomas's account of the Eucharist contradicts its own premises, and that it does so at the deepest and most fundamental levels, and thus can not possibly be adequate to its subject. Fr. Keefe proves that St. Thomas, using the terms of the dehistoricized cosmology that St. Thomas himself had chosen, can give no intellectually coherent account of the Eucharist, the very heart of the Catholic Church. In the end, either St. Thomas's chosen dehistoricized cosmology is absurd, or the Eucharist is absurd.

So in effect, Fr. Keefe is wondering, if even St. Thomas Aquinas can't make a dehistoricized cosmology fit the Eucharist, then perhaps Catholic theologians should be wondering whether any dehistoricized cosmology of any kind could ever be compatible with the worship of the Church.

But it is just this question that seems so invisible, so unaskable, so unthinkable, to both traditional and New Class Catholic theologians of the present era. Traditional Catholic theologians, when they are not simply pointing out instances in which New Class Catholic theologians are abjectly abandoning the worship and profession of the Church (which they should do, but that is after all a very low-level kind of theological project), still use the premises of some chosen dehistoricized cosmology to 'prove' the incoherence of the chosen dehistoricized cosmology of some New Class Catholic theologian, or they use their own chosen dehistoricized cosmology to develop a theology of their own.

In the end, both traditional and New Class Catholic theologians are still fighting, among themselves as well as against the other, about who has the 'correct' dehistoricized cosmology, and at what exact point one should abandon it in order to remain faithful. (Remember, Fr. Keefe has proved that even St. Thomas had to abandon his system of dehistoricized cosmology at a certain point, in order to remain faithful).

Fr. Keefe's entire project, his question to the Church, when it is noticed at all, is customarily met, at best, with a blank stare. Scarcely anybody can even imagine how Catholic theology could proceed, if it did not found itself on some sort of dehistoricized cosmology. Fr. Keefe's contention, that Catholic theologians have been trying very hard for at least seven centuries to found the intellectual, philosophical, and scientific system

and method of Catholic theology on some kind of dehistoricized cosmology without any success, almost can not be noticed, by anyone.

But now that (for example) modern Catholic biblical exegetes in great universities in effect draw pictures of "The Bible" over in one place, and us in another, and then refuse, as a matter of 'principle' and 'logic', to abandon that picture at the last minute in favor of the worship of the Church, and enthusiastically teach their Catholic students to do the same, perhaps a little more is needed from faithful Catholic theology than the representation to those same students of the 'correct' dehistoricized cosmology (almost always, one thought to be compatible with St. Thomas Aquinas's chosen version).

If the response of 'what holes?' Catholics is that it could not possibly be that even St. Thomas himself failed to make even the Eucharist, the very heart of the Church, intellectually coherent using a dehistoricized cosmology, then traditional, faithful Catholic thought will continue to play a very limited role in the evangelization of the modern world. The modern world has its own dehistoricized cosmologies, which it likes better.

Even worse, a discussion about which is the 'correct' dehistoricized cosmology diverts attention from Jesus's question: "But who do you say that I am?" [Mark 8:29 RSV] Finally, if *Covenantal Theology* is correct, then all dehistoricized cosmologies, not just those embraced by New Class Catholics, are fundamentally incompatible with the worship and profession of the Catholic Church, and thus the effort to find the 'correct' one can contribute to evangelization only peripherally, only because God is able to use absolutely any creature, however flawed, to draw us toward him.

For the same reason, traditional Catholic thought no less than New Class Catholic thought can not make any consistent use of the real intellectual and scientific accomplishments of our age. At the ultimate driven solely by the need to refuse Mr. Minsky's vanishing middle box, "what holes?" Catholicism divides modern science's accomplishments into the convenient and the inconvenient, by doing so managing to assume a fundamentally anti-scientific stance even toward that science which it does find convenient.

The deeper point is that we need not be scientists to reach Mr. Minsky's conclusions. Man obviously has been able to conclude that he ought to be absolutely pessimistic about his fate without accepting or even understanding any portion of modern science.

Long before the advent of modern science, more than one serious thinker had concluded that although clearly Man feels happy as well as sad, is healthy as well as sick, makes friends as well as enemies, these are all "vanity" [cf. Ecclesiastes] -- the happiness no less than the sadness, though obviously the happiness feels better. The wheel turns, we live and die, someone else lives and dies before and after us, and for the brave and the wise in many ages there is nothing more to be said than that this is but the working out of what is necessary and what is arbitrary. It was not the modern scientist Mr. Minsky who said:

Everything before them is vanity, since one fate comes to all, to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As is the good man, so is the sinner; and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that one fate comes to all; also the hearts of men are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. [Ecclesiastes 9:2-3 RSV]

Ecclesiastes already knew, so long ago, what Mr. Minsky also concludes: in the Real World in which Man's actions are completely and unavoidably determined either by fate or by chance, then "as is the good man, so is the sinner" -- it simply doesn't matter what we do, however much we think it should. The absence

of true responsibility and of free will from the Real World is no more than a consequence of its total immersion in the necessary and the arbitrary.

The work done in *Covenantal Theology* is subtle in this regard. First, it demonstrates that this pessimism is the inevitable result of the acceptance of any dehistoricized cosmology. Once the world is divided into Cause and Chance, into the necessary and the arbitrary, pessimism is inevitable.

This anguished pessimism can only be assuaged by a flight to the time-less. Mr. Minsky and Ecclesiastes are unusual only in that their pessimism is relatively undisguised. They both try as hard as they can to avoid this flight to the time-less. Therefore, the pessimism that underlies all dehistoricized cosmologies is more evident in them. By their unusually blunt and eloquent words, we realize more clearly than is typical that we are in fact prisoners of the necessary and the arbitrary.

However, *Covenantal Theology* also shows that, ironically, the very division of the world into the necessary and the arbitrary is already a flight to the time-less, is already a dehistoricized cosmology. This initial flight to the time-less leads to the pessimism which prompts even further flight. Once things are 'true' because they are necessary, logically or otherwise, and therefore once all that is not necessary is meaningless, then not only all freedom and all responsibility disappear, but also all creativity, novelty, and surprise. None of these can exist, for all reality depends on some time-less realm in which all implications already exist, in which no question that has a meaningful answer can be asked whose answer is in principle not already known.

According to many scientists of both the nineteenth, the twentieth century, and now the twenty-first century, this indeed is the project of science: to get to the point at which no question that has an intelligible answer can be asked whose answer is in principle not already known. The project of science is taken to be, exactly, the development of the Theory of Everything, which, once completed, would of course make all further science pointless, precisely because it would be unnecessary.

However, *Covenantal Theology* notes that something like a Theory of Everything is not so much a special project of 'modern science' as it is but the acknowledgement of the implications of any dehistoricized cosmology whatever. The pessimism of them all really is pervasive. It's not just that all dehistoricized cosmologies eliminate even the thought of real freedom and responsibility and instead give us Mr. Minsky's and Ecclesiastes's Real World, enslaved in Cause and Chance. That Real World, given in all dehistoricized cosmologies, with no room for real freedom and responsibility, has no room for real creativity, novelty, and surprise, either. This is a major insight.

For this then establishes why it is that not only New Class Catholic thought but also traditional Catholic thought has been unable to defeat the modern pessimism and to evangelize the modern world by preaching the Good News to it: whatever the personal faithfulness of their adherents, both current manifestations of Catholic thought intellectually and scientifically completely accept a world ruled by Cause and Chance -- and therefore by the implications of their chosen intellectual and scientific method, both rule out the Good News intellectually and scientifically from before the outset. Tortuous and unsatisfying rationales that attempt to patch over the fundamental intellectual and scientific incoherence in the presentation of Catholicism become inevitable. St. Thomas may have been the greatest mind to attempt this project, but he has not been the last, and all who have attempted it, says Fr. Keefe, have failed.

For grace -- 'time-full' complete surprise completely intelligible -- is ruled out in advance within all dehistoricized cosmologies, first because, in them all, the only intelligible things that can exist are intelligible because they are necessary, Caused (and ultimately the Causing must be time-less), and second because, in them all, any un-Caused thing must be arbitrary and thus meaningless.

Grace, by definition intelligible without being predictable even in principle, thus becomes fundamentally incoherent within the intellectual and scientific framework chosen by both New Class and traditional Catholicism. Creation *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing") does also. For as Fr. Keefe points out, "out of nothing" also means out of no necessity. The idea of a thing whose existence is not at least an implication of what is already here is obviously absurd within an intellectual framework in which the only things that can exist must have their existence by being at least an implication of what is already here. Within that framework, creation *ex nihilo* is automatically excluded.

Grace and creation *ex nihilo* are of course absolutely central to Catholic teaching, and yet both of them are absurd within the fundamental intellectual and scientific framework of both New Class and traditional Catholic thought.

Therefore, *Covenantal Theology* is able to refute a notion that has begun to have popularity within current traditional Catholic thought: that everything was sound within Catholic theology, until the Enlightenment perversion of Right Reason. This is why I call traditional Catholic thought "what holes?" Catholicism: despite the paucity of its influence not only in the secular but even in the Catholic world, it is simply unable to recognize its own extremely serious flaws.

Of course, *Covenantal Theology* refutes this fashionable idea (even traditionalists have fashions) simply by showing that, by its own unthinking adherence, nearly from its beginnings, to dehistoricized cosmology, as a matter of historical fact Catholic thought itself conveyed that very paradigm of dehistoricized cosmology to the Enlightenment -- and thus Catholic thought itself has been the fundamental, if not the proximate, conveyor of dehistoricized cosmology to modern man.

The difficulties Catholic thought has in the modern world must therefore squarely be laid at Catholic thought's own doorstep. No sinister outside force causes its troubles. These are the result of Catholic thought's own inadequate intellectual and scientific commitments. (This of course is not to say that the faith of the Church is going to become less of a hard saying if Catholic thought becomes more intellectually and scientifically coherent. Man will ever be free to reject the Good News.)

Once the problem of the existence of 'free will' is set up in terms of the paradigm of dehistoricized cosmology, 'free will' automatically belongs in Mr. Minsky's middle box. Thus Catholic thought as presently constituted will never be able to refute free will's placement there, in Mr. Minsky's middle box, because it accepts the same paradigm of dehistoricized cosmology. Catholic intellectual and scientific respectability will continue to vanish along with that middle box, for Catholics will continue to be forced to 'refute' a truth which Ecclesiastes never doubted and which Mr. Minsky and all rational scientific people will more and more establish: that within 'flesh,' which is all the world that Man can ever find in isolation from the New Covenant, 'free will' does not, and can not, exist.

Therefore, it is almost funny that the evangelization of the modern world, so long sought and so seemingly impossible, can begin with such a simple step. The first step is simply to accept Mr. Minsky's conclusions, which, after all, only amount to what all Catholics must accept:

Jesus Christ the Son of God died.

It is only within an acceptance of a dehistoricized cosmology, a time-less explanation for the universe, an intellectual framework in which Catholic thought must end up assigning not only free will but also Catholicism itself to Mr. Minsky's middle box, that it is not possible to see this. The very day that Catholic thought accepted the notion that it could stand in some time-less place to understand the Eucharist, was the

day that Catholic thought committed itself to the project of assigning all of Catholicism to the vanishing middle box of the time-less and the non-existent.

This project obviously must be refused. To undergo a reconversion to the sacraments, and to refuse all time-less theories, Catholic theology has to refuse Mr. Minsky's middle box as a matter of its basic principles. In this it merely puts itself into better correspondence with the actual and continual sacramental practice of the Church, which is always 'time-full,' historical, covenantal.

This refusal of the middle box of course does entail the perennial Catholic proclamation that Jesus Christ died, in a world of death, which lacks free will. Yet that world is also a world of life, which possesses free will -- but only because "He is risen."

Thus there is a 'time-full' and not a time-less order to reality:

a "Eucharistic order of history,"

as Fr. Keefe calls it. The order is:

sarx (the 'world' or the 'flesh'),
mia sarx (the One Flesh, Christ with His Bride, the Church),
pneuma (life in the Son sent by the Father to give the Spirit).

The world as we find it is, exactly, the fallen world, *sarx*. However, that 'world,' that 'flesh,' has *not* been destroyed or negated by the Christ: "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." [John 3:17 RSV] Thus Christ did not come to condemn the 'flesh,' in which it is clear that we have no free will, but to save it.

The full 'order' of reality is maintained, and fulfilled, by the Son's sending by the Father to give the Spirit. This also is the truth given at every Mass, in which the bread and wine are not condemned or destroyed, but rather are "transubstantiated," becoming the Body and Blood of the Lord. For that same 'order' of 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' and 'life' is given in the Eucharistic liturgy: Offertory, Consecration, Communion. Mr. Minsky's Real World, "vanity" itself, is not condemned or destroyed or refused by the Son, but saved. Catholic thought can no longer afford to assume that there exists any time-less place in which Jesus Christ the Son of God only pretended to die.

To refuse all dehistoricized cosmology, and to return to a sacramental and covenantal understanding of the nature of reality, is to return to a Eucharistic 'order.' This Eucharistic 'order' is the sole reason time is meaningful and can therefore become 'history,' and not just a series of either completely determined or completely arbitrary events.

Ironically, then, this optimistic 'order' in which reality is "history": free, surprising, genuinely creative, and meaningful time, is available only after we no longer flee the abject pessimism that is the correct conclusion of 'flesh,' but follow Christ's example and are crucified in that 'flesh.' It is only thus that we do not flee the 'flesh,' but instead accept Christ's 'ordering' of it into

"history,"

which is

the Eucharistic 'order' of flesh, One Flesh, and life.

Only by so undergoing our own crucifixion into time, into 'flesh,' resisting the flesh's own urge to flee to the time-less, do we accept his Lordship as the Lord of history, and thereby find the sole ground not only for freedom and responsibility but also for novelty and creativity.

The discovery of Man's subjection is Man's to make in the fallen world of 'flesh.'

The discovery of Man's freedom in the Lord of History can only be made within the Eucharistic order of history.

That is, the discovery of Man's freedom can only be made within the 'order' given in the seven sacraments of Holy Mother Church, and preeminently in the Eucharist, in and by the Eucharistic discovery that "Jesus Christ is Lord" and is the true Bridegroom of his Bride, the Church, because he "emptied himself" into Man's subjection.

This joyful discovery, this complete surprise, is available in time, but in our fallen world which remains 'flesh,' it is fully available only sacramentally, in Eucharistic worship, within the Eucharistic 'order' itself. It is the effective sign of the discovery, the surprise, by which Man finds the strength and the sanity to sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

But this joyful discovery, this complete surprise, will scarcely register with Man until he concludes that he is imprisoned in Cause and Chance. Thus, far from being something for Catholic thought to 'refute,' Mr. Minsky's -- and Ecclesiastes's -- portrait of Man is a powerful resource for the evangelization of the modern world.

Buoyed by its science, the modern world half-believes itself engaged in, and fully capable of, the quest for self-salvation. However, its own science, as Mr. Minsky demonstrates, can in the end do no more than corroborate Ecclesiastes's conclusions -- which are conclusions scarcely convenient to the modern world, and which in fact could not be more pessimistic about Man's fate. For within Mr. Minsky's world, Man is not the master of anything at all, but only pretends that he is, and further, he survives in this universe of fundamental insanity, in which he must lie to himself just to get through the day, only by becoming a devil or an idiot.

So, the acceptance of the abjectly pessimistic conclusion that 'flesh' inevitably draws when it is at its best, is in fact the beginning of the acceptance of reality, and thus, is the beginning of all evangelization, in this time or in any other, but strikingly so in this time.

For as this book has shown, to take Mr. Minsky -- a true modern -- seriously is to conclude that time is Hell, that Man is in Hell, that the universe itself is insane, and that escape is only a flight into the nothingness of the time-less.

Only because Catholic thought has so thoroughly substituted its own flight to the time-less for the plain liturgical freedom of the Church's 'time-full' worship has it been unable to say the simple thing that might actually begin the evangelization of the modern world:

It is that very world of fate, the world of death and despair, from which there is no escape -- our world -- into which Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to give himself in "a holy and perfect sacrifice." [Eucharistic Prayer I]

In this way, the sacraments overturn the insanity ultimately commanded -- and not precisely falsely -- by Man's sanity, the sanity of 'flesh,' in a manner quite familiar to Tertullian. The Eucharist quietly asks us an extraordinary question:

is there a difference between impossible, and insane?

For Man's sanity finally concludes that we live only in the world of Cause and Chance, which is a world that must be insane. This realization is unbearable for Man, and he himself must depart from his Reason, lie to himself about the truth, even to bear it sporadically. According to what Man can conclude, he must flee to the time-less to bear the pain of his existence in time, even though he knows the time-less can not exist. This is insane, and yet it still seems to be necessary, inevitable.

Man can find nothing but Cause and Chance in 'flesh,' which is the fallen world, the only world he can ever find on his own. Ironically, Catholic thought has concluded to optimism instead, but only by fleeing to the time-less -- in other words, only by being less intellectually and scientifically honest than either Mr. Minsky or Ecclesiastes.

For the optimism which is native to Catholicism is 'time-full,' not time-less. Catholics are optimistic about time because Christ was raised up, and for no other reason. For Jesus Christ the Son of God was crucified, died, and was buried. It has been the failure to acknowledge this as a matter of the starting point of any conceivable Catholic intellectual and scientific method, and thus the failure to create an intellectual framework that corresponds to 'time-full,' covenantal, sacramental existence, that has created both "what holes?" and "why bother?" Catholicism.

Further, it is fundamental to the Church's liturgical mediation of her faith that Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, died in particular, and not in general. That is, he did not die and he is not raised as an example of a time-less 'truth' prior to him.

The centrality of this "scandal of particularity" to the faith of the Church has of course been known to the Church from its earliest days. In this way also the Church, in her free liturgical mediation of her faith, has absolutely refused the flight to the time-less, despite everything in the world which urged that flight.

Meanwhile, Catholic thought has chosen instead the path of time-less necessity. By this choice Catholic theologians have inevitably been reduced to the logical ignominy of attempting to demonstrate exactly how the 'time-full' particularity of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection is nevertheless the example of some prior time-less 'truth.'

For once Jesus died to teach us something, or to assert the truth of something, that something is both prior to the particularity of his death, and is what gives his death meaning.

We should carefully note the implication of this pre-existent 'truth' or 'cause' or 'message' that the death of the Son of God is supposed to be the example of.

When we accept it, we also accept that there is some part of Jesus Christ, Son of Mary and Son of God, the 'real' part, the part that gives the rest of him meaning, that only pretended to die.

These days, in New Class hands, this proposed prior 'truth,' the time-less necessity supposedly prior to his 'time-full' particularity which makes the death of Jesus Christ the Son of God only 'logical,' may be nothing more than some tired slogan. Jesus Christ the Son of God died -- in order to show us that everyone is the same, or that everyone is different, or that we ought to be nice to each other, or some other equally profound truth.

It really is fair to make fun of this type of thing, because the kindergarten versions of these ideas aren't essentially different from their advanced ones. In all cases, Christ's One Sacrifice is not the source of meaning for the world, but only serves as a good example of the time-less 'truth' that really gives the world meaning.

If the Son of God himself was crucified, died, and was buried merely to serve as a Very Good Example of some Sensitive Truth, one blanches to think what fate remains for the rest of us. Nonetheless, this inanity only verifies the fundamental silliness of the whole project of proposing such a prior 'truth,' whichever Catholic thought -- New Class or traditional -- proposes it. Let it be said clearly: "liberation" is no more an appalling, anti-scientific, and un-Catholic example of the subjection of the One Sacrifice to a time-less 'truth' prior to it than is the "*Deus Unus*."

The Church was asked this question from its earliest days: is Jesus Christ -- when it comes down to it -- a mythic figure? Is he an historical figure who, as the dictionary says, "serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon"?

That is, is he an example -- if The Very Finest Example -- of some 'real' time-less truth, that exists prior to him, which gives his death meaning, and to which he is therefore subject?

The Church always answered, no. The Church, while never denying the goodness of wisdom, never preached 'wisdom,' but Christ crucified.

This was a hard saying when it was first said, and it remains so today, famously within Catholic theology itself, as *Covenantal Theology* spends many pages demonstrating. But this failure of Catholic theological science to make that hard saying fundamental to its intellectual and scientific method has made it harder for the Church to evangelize the modern world.

Ironically, if Catholic theology refuses all dehistoricized cosmologies, however central these are to its present intellectual and scientific commitments, and if thus the 'time-full' sacraments, not any time-less theory, become the basis of Catholic thought, then the modern world is at once at risk of evangelization.

If Mr. Minsky's Real World, the world that Man finds when he does his very best to be bright and brave, is accepted and not refused by Catholic thought, then Catholic thought can also point out to Man that he does indeed live in Hell, and that Reason's basis, as Man can find it, can only be insanity, a flight to a non-existent time-less place, and not reality in time. But Reason can have no basis if its ultimate basis must be insanity and not reality. This leaves only the impossible as Reason's true ground, if Reason has a true ground at all -- and it may not.

But if Christ "emptied himself" into the fallen world, that very world of fate, time, and death, 'flesh,' which is the world of Cause and Chance, the Real World that really does enslave us, and from which we can not escape, if therefore Christ himself completely, without refuge, without any pretending, without any holding back, took the form "of a slave," and if therefore he is the Risen Lord of that very world of fate, time, and death in which we all must live and from which we never escape even for an instant, then he is the Lord of 'History.'

Which is to say, he is the Eucharistic Lord of fate, time, and death made meaningful out of nothing, as complete surprise completely intelligible.

Because he is the Lord of history, nothing of our own "slavery" in fate, time, and death is condemned or denied. Either to deny our "slavery" or to condemn it would not only be an insane attempt to flee to the time-less, but also an heretical attempt to call the Creation not Good, for the Creation, even though fallen, is still Good. Instead, by the One Sacrifice, fate, time, and death themselves are fulfilled, made 'time-full.' This is not the false possibility of the flight to insanity, to the time-less. It is the true possibility of the journey to the impossible, of one's crucifixion into sanity.

At the very moment Man hears of this impossible possibility, proclaimed and made actual in the Church's worship, Man is -- never driven, for that would deny the freedom of the New Covenant -- but -- perhaps the right word is tempted -- to hear the Good News.

If the 'natural law' is the law of *sarx*, the law that Man can find on his own, then a man other than St. Thomas Aquinas understood it best. The 'natural' law is precisely the law of 'flesh,' the law of slavery, which shows us with its iron hand that even our 'freedom' reduces to a necessity. As the modern day Thomist quoted in Chapter 5 so aptly if unintentionally proved, in the 'natural' world of 'flesh' there are "obligations antecedent to choice, rules that bind us whether we like it or not." And Man is not in any way -- for Christ was not -- separate from the world of 'flesh,' the world of bread and wine, but completely continuous with that world, without remainder. Our Lord did not 'pretend' to die. There was no 'better,' remote, untouched part of Our Lord that was spared death. To say otherwise would be gravest heresy.

Ecclesiastes said that he'd been a king, he'd been a wise man, he'd been rich, and that these all definitely felt better than their alternatives, but that they are all still "vanity," because no man -- no creature -- escapes the world of Cause and Chance, of fate and time and death, not even for an instant. Of the two, Ecclesiastes and Aquinas, Ecclesiastes had the clearer understanding of the 'natural law,' the unrelenting law of the slavery of all flesh apart from the Eucharist. But within that Eucharist, 'flesh' is never denied, it is not destroyed, it is not subsumed, it does not flee time, it does not become time-less. Without ever fleeing time, it receives its dignity, its unity, its meaning, its freedom, in the Blood of the Lamb. As the professions of the Church say, it is "transubstantiated."

Man lives in the fallen world, the world of "vanity," the world of Cause and Chance, of fate and time and death, and can not escape, not even for an instant. In such a world the very words "Good News" twist into meaninglessness even before they are formed. Thus, when Man is at his brightest and bravest, he discovers that neither he, nor any other creature in the universe, can speak glad tidings to him. Man discovers that he is utterly without power to speak the words of Good News to himself, not because he is weak, certainly not because he is humble, but because the nature of the universe itself will not allow any such words. The words twist in his throat even as he utters them.

And so, Fr. Keefe quite childishly concludes, since no time-less words exist at all, and since bodies moving in time toward dissolution and death is all we've got, if words of Good News can be spoken at all, they can only be spoken as a complete surprise, as a gift, as grace, within what bodies do, within a certain 'order' of bodies fully in time called Eucharistic, sacramental, covenantal, nuptial.

Thus the Liturgy is the font of all real words that can be spoken on the earth, and that 'place' toward which all other words yearn, because only in the Liturgy do the words of 'flesh' no longer strangle Man in his own throat when he tries to become sane, when he tries to remain conscious and yet in time, when he tries to stop lying to himself that he can flee to the time-less.

When Man's words of 'flesh' can finally be what they really are, bread and wine within the Eucharistic order of history, then and only then can Man become sane, and free.

The Eucharist itself -- not the 'idea' of the Eucharist, the Eucharist, fully in time, itself -- gives us the words in time by which we understand it in time, as grace, as gift, as complete surprise completely intelligible, not as time-less structure or framework, but as an 'order,' an Event, of bodies in time in which nothing of bodies, and nothing in time or of time, is either rejected or subsumed, but is rather fulfilled, made 'time-full': Offertory, Consecration, Communion -- *sarx*, *mia sarx*, *pneuma*: 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' life.

The reality that the Eucharist is both the sign of and creates is that completely surprising and yet completely intelligible 'time-full' reality about which it is always possible to ask questions of ever higher quality, by so doing making ever higher-quality mistakes.

By definition, then, *Covenantal Theology* is not "Catholic theology," a Catholic Theory of Everything, the sort of insane flight to the time-less that is refused and rendered powerless by the union of Christ with his Bride, the Church, the New Covenant, itself. *Covenantal Theology*, as with every other work of Catholic theological science, is just one more attempt to make higher-quality mistakes in the questions it asks regarding that New Covenant.

Furthermore, the present general state of Catholic theological science is so degraded that even the proposal to take seriously the idea that the liturgy, the sacraments themselves, gives us the words by which we stand to understand, must occupy two volumes and 784 pages of small print.

Fr. Keefe's achievement would have been remarkable if he had merely been able to ask the questions only a child could ask. For by being able to do this, he does us all great service.

He 're-turns' Catholic theological science to its mission as a science asking questions of a reality in time, the New Covenant.

He also turns Catholic theological science away from what it now takes its mission to be, the 'logical' working-out of some time-less explanation for the cosmos, whether the time-lessness of 'natural' law or of 'liberation' or of 'technique,' which can only logically conclude to scientific incoherence, psychological despair, and a flight from the 'time-full' reality given in and through the worship of the Church.

Finally, Fr. Keefe 're-turns' us all to the Eucharist as the sole "medicine of immortality," to the sacraments as -- not the only -- but the sole complete reality of Christ's presence in 'flesh,' in our 'now,' in our time.

The Church's free ('time-full,' historical, graced, surprising, unconditioned, anti-necessary) liturgical mediation of her faith is the sole 'place' in 'flesh' wherein Man can fully and reliably appropriate his sanity. Man can find an unvarnished and complete refusal of the time-less solely within the Eucharistic 'order' of bodies in time.

For the Eucharist is the one historical Event within which Man can, for one more day, decisively "in Christ" refuse the time-less himself, remaining a body in time, but, for one more day, nevertheless remaining sane, remaining, without fleeing, in that time, that 'flesh,' into which the Savior "emptied himself." In the sacramental re-presentation of the New Covenant, Man may, for one more day, fully reject irresponsibility, insanity, and nothingness for the Eucharistic order of history: 'flesh,' 'One flesh,' life.

By Man's own appropriation of the Church's sacrifice of praise joined covenantally to the One Sacrifice of Christ Her Head, Man, a body in time, appropriates reality as bodies in time in a free -- that is, an inexhaustibly meaningful but neither necessary nor subsuming -- Eucharistic, covenantal, nuptial, marital, sacramental, 'time-full' 'order.'

These alone are sizable contributions to a "faith seeking understanding." But what should one say regarding a work that not only asks the questions only a child could ask, but begins the task of answering them? For after having cleared the path, Fr. Keefe then asks the question which his childish questioning has made intelligible: What words does the Eucharist speak to us, when we refuse the time-less, and, by our 'time-full' participation in the worship of the Church, we stand to understand?

The next chapters try to illustrate a few of Fr. Keefe's tentative answers to that question. In the course of doing so, they may make more clear the meaning of words such as "covenantal," "free," "historical," and "order," which are crucial to an understanding of Fr. Keefe's work.

How to Use the Rest of This Book

If you have read this far, certain aspects of Fr. Keefe's argument may be beginning to sink in, but it is also likely that a little more 'immersion' will help your understanding. The next five chapters, Chapters 8 - 12, try to provide you with a few more opportunities to see, in context, what Fr. Keefe's ideas are about.

The two chapters after that, 13 and 14, are a little different. The last chapter in this book, Chapter 14, is simply a direct quote from *Covenantal Theology*. In fact, it's the very last paragraph in that book (not counting the Notes and the Appendix). It's a good summary of the whole work -- and it might be a good eventual test: was the rest of this book clear enough so that some of the meaning of that last paragraph from *Covenantal Theology* now actually registers with you?

The second-last chapter in this book, Chapter 13, is different from all the rest. In Chapters 1 - 12, I try to illustrate Fr. Keefe's thoughts, though I often use my own examples to do so. Chapter 13 conveys my own ideas, about *Covenantal Theology*'s immediate practical relevance.

The chapters that begin right after this page, Chapters 8 - 12, essentially give examples of how to use words like "covenantal," "free," "historical," "order," and "scientific" in complete sentences.

Although in Chapters 8 - 12 I may have done a perfectly awful job of using those words in sentences, I do use them in sentences, and it is possible that, until you see them in actual use, you won't fully grasp just how splendidly ridiculous a meaning they do have within Fr. Keefe's thought. So: dip your thumb in -- maybe you'll pull out a plum. Maybe you're curious to know why there can't be any 'Before' the Fall, or to see how *Humanae Vitae* might be developed by Catholic theologians able to use the powerful vocabulary provided them by *Covenantal Theology*. Or maybe you'd just like to know why St. Therese has plenty to do in Heaven.

8 *St. Paul Had Plenty To Do On Earth, St. Therese Has Plenty To Do In Heaven*

The Catholic faith, the sole object of Catholic theology, consists of a free Event, and a free response to that Event.¹ It is hard to imagine a blunter refusal of the view that the Catholic faith is a set of time-less propositions, to be assented to out of the command of both logic and obedience. Nor is this declaration support for any contention, however venerable, that the object of Catholic theology is "Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition." For in that formula, the sacraments themselves -- let alone a free response to them -- are not even mentioned.

This is no mere quibbling. The study of "Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition" from a time-less place is the project of New Class Catholicism no less than traditional Catholicism. Thus the real difficulty with the venerable formulation is not merely that it justifies what so often happened within Catholic theology:

Here is the Catholic Faith, over here

The real difficulty is the assumption so 'obvious' it is rarely even articulated:

Both the sacraments and "Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition" are over here

1. "The Catholic faith is a free intellectual response to a free revelatory Event; neither the Event nor the response can be subsumed to any necessity whatever, whether in God or in man, nor can we furnish any antecedent account of the prior possibility of the Event or of the response: both are given *ex nihilo sui et subjecti*, and in their free unity they constitute the a priori of all theology." *CT*, p. 119.

< - - and over here is the Catholic Faith also, the words we say about it,

words which we can clarify by making them:

propositions commanded by logic or (if one is not sufficiently 'logical') by obedience.

< - - and here we are, standing some place else, in the 'normal universe,' looking at them, and trying to understand them.

Thus to hundreds of years of Catholic theology, *Covenantal Theology* speaks bluntly, like a child: the free Event of the New Covenant, sacramentally re-presented in the Church's worship, and the free response to that event, is the sole object of Catholic theology.

The word "Event" is of critical importance: the New Covenant is 'time-full' through and through. It is "radically historical." The fact that the Risen Lord bears the marks of his Passion, so that Thomas can be told, "Put your finger here, and see my hands, and put out your hand, and place it in my side,"¹ is simply absurd within any dehistoricized cosmology, including all Catholic versions.²

No vision of 'Catholicism' as a set of time-less propositions -- or, alternatively, as a time-less "eschatological principle," whether of The Proper Technique, Repetitively Applied, or of Inevitable Good Things, Forever -- can even in theory have any room for the thorough, the "radical" (from the root), historicity of the New Covenant, in which the Risen Lord remains scarred by his Passion. The very idea that the Risen Lord would bear the marks of any change or 'imperfection' at all, let alone those of his physical life, let alone those of his total subjection in that life, is simply absurd for all 'Catholic theologies' within whom the Lord himself must be subject to some time-less principle.

Since also it is ancient in the Church that from those wounds, the Eucharist flowed, we have in the Lord's radical acceptance of time and 'flesh' not only the radical historicity of the sacraments, but also the radical historicity of the sacramental 'order' as a whole.

That sacramental 'order' of course includes magisterial definitions of Catholic doctrine. However, if the entire sacramental 'order' is "radically historical," then that has implications for some of our ideas about magisterial definitions of Catholic doctrine, also. For instance, the "development of doctrine" is the idea that Catholic doctrine can 'develop' [change], while never once -- even a little bit -- contradicting Catholic doctrine as your grandmother believed it. This concept is very difficult to understand, unless Catholic doctrine comes from an historical place, not a time-less one.

Here's the problem. The "development of doctrine" is itself a defined doctrine of the Catholic Church. For example, *Dei Verbum*, the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, speaks of Tradition as developing. This fact can lead immediately to some very pretty difficulties. For instance, is the certain truth that:

doctrine can "develop" without ever contradicting previous doctrine

1. John 20:27 RSV

2. Though we commonly take "historical" to mean, 'something that actually happens in time,' this is not what Fr. Keefe means when he uses the word. He means: 'something that actually happens in time which is free and responsible.' As both Ecclesiastes and Mr. Minsky see, the fact that we only sporadically and reluctantly grasp the fact of our total enslavement in Cause and Chance doesn't make that enslavement any less real, or less total. A succession of events is not 'history.' 'History,' *time that matters*, simply isn't available in the fallen Real World that fallen Man can find on his own. The Eucharist, and the other sacraments with it, are the only acts in time that are perfectly historical, perfectly free and responsible acts in time, for they are literally the Eucharistic Event, the re-presentation of the New Covenant in the historical One Sacrifice. Fr. Keefe insists that history is a *theological* category -- now you know why. The only real history is salvation history -- real acts in time in free covenantal union with *sacramental* acts in time, for the Church's sacramental worship constitutes the only acts in time that can be "radically" historical, historical with no flight to the time-less at all. There is no way 'out' of time, but only a way 'in' to 'time-full' existence by the free union of our acts in time with his, in and through the Church's historical free liturgical mediation of her faith, in which her historical Body is 'One Flesh' with her Head. This is not to say that only Christ with his Bride may make history. The intrinsically covenantal, nuptial character of the Eucharistic Event does mean that both St. Paul and St. Therese have plenty to do, as we shall see.

itself founded on

a doctrine which of necessity can't "develop," because otherwise its own truth wouldn't be certain?

Of course, the doctrine of the "development of doctrine" only becomes a theological 'problem' if 'truth' can only really live in a time-less place:

here Doctrine is, in the time-less place where it is safe, because it never changes.

but here is Doctrine also, over here, in time, 'developing.'

As has been illustrated in this book, it is very difficult to get the genie back in the bottle, once the flight to the time-less has been made. Within Catholic theology that founds itself intellectually on some dehistoricized cosmology, elaborate 'explanations' of the "development of doctrine" become inevitable, which are all rendered moot by pointing out this simple fact: the Risen Lord himself bears the marks of "development."

If the Risen Lord doesn't exist, of course, then doctrine -- 'developing' or not -- doesn't exist either. So, within the vocabulary provided by *Covenantal Theology*, the "development of doctrine" is a statement that the Risen Lord's immanence in history, his union with his Bride, the Church, is a free Event, not a time-less structure. Thus, it is possible to restate the "development of doctrine" in far more inclusive and radical terms:

The Eucharistic Event, the New Covenant, gives the sacramental 'order' within which Catholic Doctrine does whatever it wants to.¹

The New Covenant is immanent in history as a free Event, which as free is not bound, conditioned, or necessitated in any way. The New Covenant does not depend on some time-less explanation of the cosmos prior to itself. It is up to us to get our theories to correspond to the free reality given in and through the Christ -- not the other way around. Any other course makes the Risen Lord himself subject to our fine little theories. Catholic theology does not have the option of making the New Covenant subject in any way, even to some purported 'logical' necessity. As Fr. Keefe says, the object of Catholic theology is the New Covenant, a free Event -- and he does mean, "free."

1. Within the Eucharist order of *history*, an act is both free, and irrevocable -- like a marriage vow. Only within dehistoricized cosmology does being genuinely free mean being irresponsible. Once the Lord has taken an historical act, he absolutely takes it seriously. He absolutely takes responsibility for it. Yet his historical acts are free, not bound or even conditioned by any necessity. No 'theory' or 'account' gives their meaning or establishes their coherence. The New Covenant, founded in his *historical* One Sacrifice, is both living, and irrevocable.

Alone among 'flesh,' the Church, "conceived without sin" and 'One Flesh' with her Lord, is able to take the 'time-fullness' of his historical acts completely seriously, while, in and through her free liturgical mediation of her faith, her history may be created in and through his history. This is the 'development of doctrine.'

The doctrine of the "development of doctrine" is in the end nothing more than a restatement of the Church's faith in Her Lord, who is joined to her irrevocably as 'One Flesh,' not as a time-less conqueror, but as her Risen Lord, who continues to bear the marks of the One Sacrifice that she freely mediates in our time in and through her own Sacrifice of Praise.

In the end it doesn't matter whether our theories say that Catholic doctrine can't change, or that Catholic doctrine should change exactly in the way that the New Class thinks convenient. Practically, of course, there is a huge difference between the two. But -- as this book has tried to show -- no theory can condition, let alone necessitate, the New Covenant in any way, and attempts to do so, however well-intentioned, are profound scientific mistakes, with very unfortunate consequences over the long term.

The Risen Lord, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, "one and the same," is complete surprise completely intelligible. He will be 'predictable' only if the New Covenant is not a 'time-full' Event, but is instead the working-out of a time-less Design prior even to him.¹ Otherwise, he is free, not even in principle bound by necessity, which is the power of *sarx*, 'flesh.' He will therefore surprise us.

For he is the Risen Lord who is the Lord of history. He is not the Lord over history, who in Victory refuses time, and condemns and destroys it. Rather, he empties himself into time, so completely that He bears the marks of his Passion even as Risen, even as bound by time in no way whatever. As that Lord and no other He is present to us now, in our now, his One Sacrifice fully re-presented in the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith.

The Event-character of the New Covenant, its "radical historicity," is fundamental to it, as is its radical freedom. The free response in history to that radically historical Event has its own radical freedom, as we will now see.

The object of Catholic theology is a free Event, 'time-full' relations not even in principle necessary, conditioned, or predictable by some time-less Design or logic prior to them, and a free response to that Event. Catholic theology's object is of its essence 'time-full' and not dehistoricized. The fact that the Risen Lord still bears the marks of his Passion (thus even as Risen and Ascended he remains concretely in time, as the Lord of history) has another very simple implication that has mostly been missed -- or even refused -- because of the very long predominance of dehistoricized cosmology within Catholic theology.

For what "beatific vision" has been proposed in which the saints are in Heaven with a Risen Lord who bears the marks of his Passion? Such a Heaven can not have such a Lord unless it too is a place where

1. Both the Event-character and the priority of the New Covenant are fundamental to everything, but we're definitely not used to thinking in that way. We often assume that certain ideas or 'principles,' ones that are supposedly 'value-free' or 'obvious' -- perhaps something like 'Ockham's Razor' (very roughly: "pick the simplest explanation that meets the facts"), or perhaps, something like 'quality of life' -- are more than just convenient and partial rules-of-thumb, but instead have 'independent' existence in a time-less 'real' place. That immediately turns these concepts into dehistoricized cosmologies -- and then there's nothing left of them but the insane "vanity" that is 'flesh' apart from the Eucharistic 'order' of history. Fr. Keefe is insistent that we can not treat the priority of the Eucharistic Event even to our very thoughts as a bit of pious blather, to be discarded the instant we want to get 'practical' or act 'grown-up.' The New Covenant, being acts in time of persons (Christ with his Bride), is no 'idea' or 'structure' but a living Event, complete surprise completely intelligible, grace, the font of all life. Nothing is prior to those living acts in time. Fr. Keefe says, either take that with rigorous seriousness every step of your intellectual way -- or stop pretending that you're still doing Catholic theology. (See also Chapters 11 - 12).

time and 'flesh' is not refused, but rather fulfilled, made 'time-full' in Eucharistic 'order.'

If we leave out Sacred Scripture itself (notably the book of Revelation), and the firm conviction of the most recent Doctor of the Church, the Little Flower, for whom heaven was plainly a 'time-full' place in which the saints could work (and she meant work) with special effectiveness,¹ static, time-less visions of Heaven abound.

If the merits of refusing all dehistoricized cosmology have not been sufficiently illustrated prior to this point, consider how boring a place all dehistoricized cosmologies make Heaven itself. Within them all, Heaven becomes the place where -- at last! -- absolutely nothing new happens. Within all dehistoricized cosmology, this is considered the best possible 'place.'

The scientist goes to 'Heaven,' and can finally stop doing science, for now he can simply read the Genuine Theory of Everything -- over and over. The medical doctor goes to 'Heaven,' and finally has nothing to do -- over and over. The idea in popular consciousness, that when we go to Heaven, we get our harp, we get our white robe, and then we just hang out, day after day after day, is in fact not wrong about the time-less Heaven that all dehistoricized cosmologies find inevitable.

St. Therese is right, and all dehistoricized cosmology is wrong: in Heaven the saints have plenty of real work to do. Work would only be banished from Heaven if there were something wrong with it -- which really means, if there were something wrong with finitude itself, and with time itself. All dehistoricized cosmology accepts, as a matter of principle, that there is indeed something wrong with finitude and with time. In all of them, 'Heaven' obviously has to exclude both -- which of course, is the inevitable exclusion of work. In the 'Heaven' of all time-less cosmology, the final triumph of the necessary renders all further actions of bodies in time unnecessary and therefore pointless. Thus, there can be no work for anyone in Heaven to do.

St. Therese obviously disagrees. In Heaven the saints have plenty of real work to do. What is different is that, in their communion with the Risen Lord, they finally have a completely 'time-full' reality in which to do work. The fallen world, 'flesh,' perceives that it must flee to the time-less, just to make it through the day. In Heaven, 'flesh' is fully and freely related in the Eucharistic 'order' of 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' 'life,' so that it never feels compelled to flee to the time-less. In Heaven, which is *pneuma*, 'life' in the Risen Lord sent by the Father to give the Spirit, nothing of 'flesh' nor of the 'One Flesh' is refused or destroyed. The Crucified and Risen Lord himself, in his very person, as both crucified and risen, is the absolute guarantor of that.

1. "Until the end of the world I will spend my heaven doing good upon earth." [St. Therese of Lisieux, dying of tuberculosis at age 24, in 1897.]

We should be very glad of this, for in all dehistoricized and cosmological 'Heavens,' we are somehow supposed to enjoy an "eternal bliss" of being utterly useless. All these 'Heavens,' by making us utterly useless, thus are the total removal of our freedom, responsibility, creativity, individuality, and dignity. They are also the total removal of novelty: all these 'Heavens' are -- intentionally, by their fundamental principles, by their deepest yearnings, by everything that makes them what they are -- totally boring.

Following up on what St. Therese said her work would be in Heaven, or rather, what it would be even or especially in Heaven, we can say that the work of Christians is their free personal response to the free Event of the New Covenant; that is, it is their prayer, or rather it is their work as prayer, and their prayer as work.

Although Fr. Keefe doesn't use these exact words, it would not be unfair to his thought to distinguish the public work or prayer of the Church, the Event of her free liturgical mediation of her faith, from 'private' work or prayer, the ultra-personal free response of the Christian to that free public work or prayer.

Thus the traditional definition of prayer need only be expanded slightly to remove any suggestion that it is a 'time-less,' dehistoricized, anti-mediated activity, and to accept its reality as a free, historical, covenantal, mediated response to a "radically historical" covenantal Event:

Prayer is the lifting up of one's heart and mind to God *in and through the New Covenant*.

Work which is not the public work (the liturgy) of the Church is therefore "private," which of course does not suggest 'private' as non-relational, but 'private' as subordinate in the Eucharistic 'order' to the Church's public work (the sacramental re-presentation of the Event of the New Covenant), and 'private' as a free response to that public work. This non-public, but never anti-public, work is 'private' prayer.

The 'private' work of Christians, which we are here saying is at root only a different name for their 'private' prayer, is a "*quaerens*," a "searching," nor is that searching limited to the theological sphere:

The *quaerens* is not *per se* theological, for it is inseparable from the faith and may find concrete expression in any dimension of the Christian existence, of the Christian worship in truth, none of which can exhaust it, and all of which can mediate it.¹

1. CT, p. 120.

St. Anselm gave a classic definition of Catholic theology which is still quoted today: "fides *quaerens* intellectum": faith "searching" for understanding. Fr. Keefe says that all dimensions of the Christian existence are a *quaerens*, and that this is why Catholic theology is a 'private' work or prayer.

In other words, the work of a theologian has its meaning, its dignity, and its usefulness because it is a 'private' prayer or work. The work of a theologian has meaning and dignity for exactly the same reason as the work of the juggler in the old story does. This uneducated entertainer, "searching" to give something to Our Lady, and having nothing else to give, gave what he had, and juggled in front of her statue (which, to the amazement of scornful onlookers, came to life and smiled at him). No more dignity -- and no less -- attaches to the work, the prayer, of the theologian than to the work, the prayer, of Our Lady's juggler.

Thus all human activity -- both juggling and theology -- can be 'private' prayer or work, which is a "searching" to express or mediate the public work or prayer of the New Covenant. Furthermore, this 'private' work or prayer is inexhaustibly mediative and expressive. St. Therese has plenty to do in Heaven.

At this point it is worthwhile to examine a not-very-often remarked phrase that St. Paul once used. Within the theological world of *Covenantal Theology*, the phrase can be taken completely literally. If we can understand that, we will be well on the way toward understanding the words "covenantal" and "free" as Fr. Keefe means them -- and well on the way toward understanding the extraordinary fruitfulness of the thought of someone who is able to think like a child, but not childishly.

Here is the phrase:

". . . in my flesh *I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions* . . ." ¹

1. Colossians 1:24 RSV

There is very little doubt that only in a world with a Heaven like St. Therese's could St. Paul be taken seriously here. No worlds with Heavens that are 'Heaven' precisely because there is absolutely nothing left even for saints to do need apply.

The meaning of "covenantal" and "free" within *Covenantal Theology* is such that St. Paul's statement is literally true. It is not some sort of pious exaggeration. Only if there were something wrong with finitude, and therefore with time itself, so that time had to be 'perfected' (completed) by being annihilated, into the time-less, would St. Paul's remark present any difficulty.

So, here is another 'definition' of 'private' work or prayer that may help to convey more of the flavor of "covenantal" and "free":

Prayer is the lifting up of one's heart and mind to God in and through the New Covenant, and consists of Man's completely free and inexhaustibly fruitful "searching" to complete in his flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

You may yourself have heard the following pious formulation, which I heard fairly often in my youth:

"Pray as if everything depended on God;
Work as if everything depended on you."

Well, which is it? I sometimes wondered. Which "as if" is correct?

The idea of a completely free, unnecessitated, gifted, covenantal relationship was not available from the pulpits or from the catechisms and tracts when I was young.

If everything depended on God, then our work was
clearly unnecessary.

If everything depended on us, then
God clearly was unnecessary.

Thus the mantra-like "as if." It had the function of anesthetizing the mind, so that it no longer focused so plainly on a profound intellectual incoherence within the Catholic thought available to me as I was growing up. For the intellectual foundation of that thought is the same as the one that leads to Mr. Minsky's and Ecclesiastes's Real World. Just look at the picture! In it, clearly, either God belongs in Mr. Minsky's middle box, or Man does. As soon as only the necessary is meaningful, the incoherent "as if" also becomes necessary, just so Man can make it through the day.

There is no intellectual and scientific explanation of 'private' work or prayer without a complete re-turn of Catholic thought to Eucharistic, sacramental, covenantal reality. Try as we might, we can not make our work or prayer anything more than 'flesh,' completely continuous with bread and wine. This, of course, is exactly the point -- our complete continuity with the bread and wine which becomes the Body and Blood of the Lord.

However, our 'private' work or prayer is not something 'really' trivial that becomes meaningful by condescension -- Daddy putting the creations of the Kids on the refrigerator door. "In Christ," and therefore, still in the 'flesh,' we are "lifted up" such that in that 'flesh' we complete what is lacking in his afflictions. This can only be so if

his One Sacrifice, "once for all," fully redeemed time, but not by condemning, destroying, or refusing it -- as if something were wrong with it.

Thus, if 'private' work or prayer is understood covenantally, that work or prayer can not consist of a set of 'assignments' which God has on a list somewhere, which we then 'freely' fulfill.

We need to remember (to quote part of the passage this chapter began with) that Fr. Keefe says quite explicitly that "neither the Event nor the response can be subsumed to any necessity whatever, whether in God or in man."

To put this in a simple, homely fashion that nonetheless tries to be true to Fr. Keefe's thought:

'private' work or prayer has to be a complete surprise, even to God Himself, or it is not covenantal, not free.

A covenantal understanding of Man's freedom is thus consistent with St. Paul's extraordinary remark. Even though Man is subordinate to the Triune God, the freedom Man has in Christ is not a subordinate type of freedom. Although that statement might be vigorously disputed by centuries of Catholic theology, we do have some words in St. Paul that are not too easily explained in the absence of a thoroughly covenantal understanding: Man in the New Covenant can literally complete "what is lacking" in Christ's afflictions.

This "completion" quite obviously has to occur as creation *ex nihilo*. For how could Christ's afflictions be "lacking"? There is no reason for Christ's afflictions to be "lacking" in any way. In fact Christ's afflictions are not lacking in any way. This demands that St. Paul "complete" them out of a creation *ex nihilo*, which, as we mentioned in the previous chapter, also means "out of no necessity."

There is no reason for the Savior's afflictions to be "lacking." St. Paul's "completion" can not in any way be called for or even remotely predicted from the previous situation -- yet it is real.

In other words, it is complete surprise completely intelligible -- a genuine mediation of grace. Therefore, and retrospectively, since St. Paul's "completion" is real, Christ's afflictions are "lacking."

Although Fr. Keefe does not use St. Paul's statement as an example, the train of thought just above is consistent with Fr. Keefe's thought, which (again to requote part of the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter) is: "nor can we furnish any antecedent account of the prior possibility of the Event or of the response: both are given *ex nihilo sui et subjecti*" Note: the response too is given *ex nihilo*.

Once again we may begin to understand just how much *Covenantal Theology* is a book only for children, of all ages. It gives us all sorts of strange ideas about a Triune God who is so stupefyingly generous, so inherently a free relation of Persons, that He ends up "wasting" the sending of His Only Son to give the Spirit -- because in the inexhaustible free Covenantal Event created in and through that sending, puny little St. Paul "completes" it, and therefore, creates -- out of nothing -- something "lacking" in it: not "pretend" lacking, not hang-on-the-refrigerator-door lacking, but real lacking.

This is a God whose weakness and foolishness is absolutely beyond our comprehension, a weakness stronger than our strength, a foolishness wiser than our wisdom.

From within the ridiculous, child-like, new-but-ancient vocabulary that Fr. Keefe marshalls within *Covenantal Theology*, we have the words to say that the free, responsible, genuinely creative character of 'private' work or prayer is therefore created *ex nihilo* within the weakness and foolishness of the New Covenant itself.

The New Covenant is itself an Event, the One Sacrifice, and a free response, for the New Covenant is created in the marriage of Mary, the Second Eve, with the Second Adam, Christ her Head.

In that Covenant, Mary is subordinate to Christ, yet her freedom is not subordinate to His.

Her power is subordinate to Christ's, yet her creativity is not subordinate to His: she is, after all, His Mother.

The public work or prayer is the sacramental re-presentation of the New Covenant in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith. Fr. Keefe would teach us that reality itself flows from this public work, the Eucharistic Event. There is no place to stand to understand the Eucharist but the Eucharist, for the simple reason that the Eucharistic Event is the sole font of all reality. Furthermore, reality is thus of its essence covenantal, nuptial, a relation of persons. Thus it is utterly free, and inexhaustibly creative, interesting, and surprising. In a word, then: Nature is Grace.

That is, the Eucharistic 'order' of history: 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' and 'life,' was not only given at the Creation, its giving was the Creation. Jesus Christ the Lord truly is "Alpha and Omega," present "in the beginning." Nature *is* the Eucharistic 'order' of history: Nature *is* Grace. The 'Nature' assumed by both traditional and New Class Catholic theology is *sarx* merely, which can only be Mr. Minsky's (and Ecclesiastes') Real World, a world formally, systematically, methodologically detached from the acts in time of the Lord of History with his Bride, and thus a world utterly enslaved, futile, and insane -- utterly fallen, and nothing more.

The next two chapters will illustrate this idea a little further, but here note two things. First, unless Nature is Grace; that is, unless "Nature" means the Eucharistic 'order' of *history*, then the paradigm of dehistoricized cosmology becomes inevitable:

Grace

The Eucharist is over here,

Second, if and only if reality is covenantal as just described, if and only if Nature Is Grace, then and only then, 'private' work or prayer can have meaning. The 'Nature' available within any dehistoricized cosmology whatever, including any accepted by any Catholic theologian, whatever his renown or his personal holiness, is an absolute horror. 'Flesh' apart from the Eucharistic 'order' of history is insane, a no-thing. That 'Nature' kills its own young, and strangles the very idea of Man before it can even be uttered. In that 'Nature,' Man must become an idiot or a devil, just to make it through the day.

As both Ecclesiastes and Mr. Minsky see, the very idea of Man within 'flesh' having free, responsible work to do, is so absurd, that it becomes Mr. Minsky's vanishing middle box: it is so absurd that the very thought of free, responsible existence is not even really formulable within 'flesh.' In the end, all that 'flesh' can say on any subject is the single word, "vanity."

Yet, since Nature is Grace in the public work or prayer, the Eucharistic Event, which is the free sacramental re-presentation, "one and the same," of the New Covenant founded on the One Sacrifice, then 'private' work or prayer has more meaning than we can ever get to the end of discovering. God is not just generous -- he is crazy generous, ridiculous generous. *That* is our faith, nothing less. Solely because of God's utterly stupefying weakness, purely because of his absurdly inexhaustible foolishness, St. Paul had plenty to do on Earth, and St. Therese -- and St. Paul, and all the saints -- have plenty to do in Heaven.

< - - - Nature

< - - - and here we are, standing some place else, in the 'normal universe,' looking at it, and trying to understand it.

9 *Nature Is Grace*

Catholic reflection on the sacrament of Matrimony seems to be one of the very few areas within current Catholic 'traditional' thought in which hints of a covenantal theology appear and in which the time-less is at least partially if perhaps not quite refused -- however little this refusal may impinge in any systematic way on the rest of that thought.

There is little question that this at least partial refusal of the time-less among loyal Catholic theologians regarding the sacrament of Matrimony, and their turn toward categories and language in this area that is at least implicitly more sacramental in focus, and therefore is more covenantal and 'time-full,' comes as a direct result of the encouragement and leadership of John Paul II himself.

So, if I use some of the vocabulary of *Covenantal Theology* to discuss some themes within both recent magisterial proclamation and recent loyal Catholic thought regarding Matrimony, that may help to further illustrate some of what Fr. Keefe means by words such as "covenantal" and "free response," and their relationship to that other completely childish thought, "Nature is Grace."

For example, one can readily understand the Church's refusal (notably in Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*) of the New Class "principle of totality" within moral thought in terms of Christ's complete refusal of the time-less, his complete "emptying" into 'flesh.'

This 'principle of totality' states that a particular act -- usually but not necessarily a sexual act -- can never be judged just by itself "in isolation," but can only be evaluated by the "totality" -- of the relationship, etc.

In *Humanae Vitae* the Holy Father brought up this 'principle' by name, and plainly rejected its conclusions and its manner of argumentation by the conclusions and manner of argumentation of the encyclical itself.

Within the vocabulary of *Covenantal Theology*, the 'principle of totality' is quite readily seen as a dehistoricized cosmology. For instance, some of the 'totality' of an on-going marriage only exists in time that hasn't even happened yet. You can't get more time-less than that.

Of course, the idea that the meaningfulness of individual acts must be judged at least partly in terms of this non-existent time that hasn't even happened yet also means that time that has already happened is not meaningful in itself. It too obviously must get its meaning from a time-less 'totality.' So here is the 'equation':

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{time that hasn't even happened yet} \\ + \text{ inherently meaningless time} \\ \hline = \text{Meaningfulness ???} \end{array}$$

Plainly, this 'equation' is just a surrogate for the particular favorite time-less theory that is the real 'justification' and 'evaluation' of the particular act in the particular time.

and here we are also, over here, in the 'totality' by
which we understand and evaluate it- - ->

Of course, as has been argued here, traditional Catholic theology for centuries has been dominated by its own intellectual refusal of 'flesh' and the adoption of its own forms of dehistoricized cosmology. Catholic theology for centuries has rejected as impossible the home-made truth -- Mr. Minsky's truth, Ecclesiastes' truth -- that 'flesh' arrives at when it is very brave and very bright: *what bodies do is all we've got*.¹

This truth was rejected based on the theory that what bodies do was meaningless unless it was justified and made necessary from some time-less place. If this sounds identical in form to the intellectual principles of the dissenting theologians who proposed the 'principle of totality,' you win a gold star.

Traditional Catholic moral theology, following the faith of the Church, asserted the meaningfulness of individual acts in time. However, it is intellectually incoherent for traditional Catholic thought to do this. Certainly, some of the New Class acceptance of the 'principle of totality' has arisen because it is so wonderfully convenient to the justification of contraception, and other actions that might otherwise have to be refused, but there is also a root intellectual reason for its acceptance, which is that no dehistoricized cosmology can find meaning in individual, particular acts in time. Although Fr. Keefe does not use *Humanae Vitae* as an example in his book, as I am doing in this one, he does establish, in the most conclusive way, the general principle I am stating here, which is worth repeating: no dehistoricized cosmology can find meaning in individual, particular acts in time.

Our individual (sexual) act is over here

1. Traditional Catholic theologians to this day imagine that to say that *what bodies do is all we've got* is automatically to say that all of reality is horrifyingly meaningless. After all, real meaning just has to come from some time-less 'place' safely apart from what mere bodies do -- both Plato and Aristotle knew that. Of course, one of Fr. Keefe's main points is that there may be a tiny difference between the dehistoricized thought of Plato and Aristotle and the 'time-full' acts of the Lord of history.

In the most charitable reading of the origin of the 'principle of totality,' dissenting theologians -- by the way, themselves fully aware of, because fully trained in, the intellectual framework of traditional Catholic thought -- believed themselves to be refusing the idea that *what bodies do is all we've got*, when they rejected the idea that an individual (sexual) act had an 'obvious' or 'logical' or 'natural' inherent moral meaning.

These individual acts would not *necessarily* be good unless they were made necessary by some 'totality' prior to them. Unless these bodies in time, these individual acts, were subsumed into some Bigger sentence, they would be Ones in free motion, and thus meaningless.

Thus, in the most charitable view, the 'principle of totality' was invoked in order to *save* the meaningfulness of individual human (sexual) acts.

The dissenters saw plainly what the traditionalists still refuse to see: simply asserting, over and over, the 'natural' inherent moral meaning of some individual act, is not the same thing as rendering that assertion intelligible within any dehistoricized cosmology. In fact, as Fr. Keefe spends so much time showing, the assertion can not possibly be made systematically intelligible within any dehistoricized cosmology, "loyal" or not.

New Class Catholic thought can often correctly be seen as a more 'logical,' though less faithful, traditional Catholic thought. If traditional Catholic thought were less faithful and more intellectually coherent, it would have no choice but to accept the 'principle of totality' itself. This is meant to be a shocking statement -- shocking, because it is literally true. Only by momentarily abandoning traditional Catholic thought's intellectual foundation -- dehistoricized cosmology -- are faithful Catholic theologians able to reject the "principle of totality." This is an argument that New Class Catholic thought will forever be able to make against traditional Catholic thought -- because it is correct.

The problem of how to find the meaningfulness of individual, particular acts in time can not be resolved within either traditional or New Class Catholic thought. It is a false problem, generated by the prior choice of some time-less framework (dehistoricized cosmology) within which individual human acts are to be 'understood.' Intellectually, both theologies simply assume that *what bodies do* is meaningless unless it can be a little sentence that is part of a Bigger sentence. Neither would accept the idea that *what bodies do* is all

we've got. For both, it's only 'reasonable' that the meaning of *what bodies do* comes from a time-less 'place.' (And the fudging that traditional Catholic thought does here is just that -- fudging.)

However, if human reality can not be time-less, not even for an instant, and we thus remain complete slaves to 'flesh' all our lives, without respite, then what bodies do is all we've got. Yet in the Eucharistic 'order' of history this does mean that what bodies do is all we've got -- and of momentous, not to say, sacramental, covenantal, importance.

Outside of the New Covenant, there is no inherent meaning to specific acts. 'Flesh' outside of the Eucharistic 'order' of 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' 'life,' can -- honestly and sincerely -- draw no other conclusion than this: specific acts are either Cause or Chance, period. One body doing something with another body at a particular time has meaning if and only if "This is My Body, This is My Blood" is the re-presentation of the One Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, "one and the same." Period.

The acceptance of the Church's teachings on contraception, reiterated in *Humanae Vitae* and also by John Paul II in many places -- if a time-less reality is refused -- can readily be seen as the complete joyful acceptance of the time-full, sacramental, and covenantal nature of reality.

What bodies do is all we've got -- and therefore, since Nature (real Nature, the Nature of the Eucharistic 'order' of history) is Grace, what bodies do is of earth-shattering importance and breathtaking dignity.

On the other hand, since what bodies do is all we've got, if Nature is not Grace in the Eucharistic 'order' of history, then what a Christian couple does, in bed or elsewhere, has a meaning far below that which any 'principle of totality' can discover, below even the trivial, well below even the pathetic.

If Nature is not Grace, then what a Christian couple does has the meaning of pure 'flesh,' of nothingness, of the insane, it is Cause and Chance without remainder. What they do can have meaning, but only if what they do was actually Caused by forces outside of their control - - despite any "middle box" they might invent to keep this truth from themselves. So, everything they do that is meaningful, they do because they have no real choice in the matter. They can take no credit for it, assume no responsibility, because -- whatever impression they entertain -- they were bound whether they liked it or not. Further, everything they do that is not Caused is arbitrary, the result of a random set of accidents, and thus meaningless.

Either way, they have no responsibility for their actions and thus

no freedom of will. "Vanity" is the total meaning of their acts, for they, and all their acts, are 'flesh' -- unless bread and wine can be Offered, Consecrated, and received in Communion.

So, we need never fear the total physicality of 'flesh,' its total finitude, its total immersion in time -- unless we need to be concerned about the similar status of bread and wine.

The fact that, within the vocabulary of *Covenantal Theology*, the Catholic optimism regarding 'flesh' can be readily articulated within the vocabulary given within the Eucharistic Event itself, is perhaps some evidence that *Covenantal Theology* makes mistakes of much higher quality than either New Class or traditional Catholic thought when it "searches" to understand the reality of that free Event and the free response to it.

Not only is it impossible to articulate the meaningfulness and intelligibility of human sexual acts by standing outside the Eucharist (for example, within some time-less theory, whether of 'natural' law or of 'totality'), it does indeed seem possible to "stand to understand" these acts within the Eucharist itself. This is a kind of experimental support for re-turning all Catholic theology to the Eucharist.

Let us explore what we have just said a little more. Any Catholic theologian who re-turned his intellectual and scientific method to the Eucharist in the manner that *Covenantal Theology* proposes would "stand to understand" within the Eucharistic Event itself. He would assume the precedence of the Eucharistic Event to all of reality as a matter of fundamental intellectual and scientific method.

But remember: the Eucharistic Event is the sacramental representation of the New Covenant, "one and the same" -- that's basic Catholicism. But if the New Covenant is prior to all reality, then obviously, there wasn't any 'nature' before the New Covenant. Because of the reliance of Catholic theology on dehistoricized cosmology, Catholics have often intellectually assumed that there just 'has to be' some 'place' prior to the New Covenant.

I hope your instincts are getting better. As soon as you make that assumption, you opt for the existence of a time-less 'place' prior to the Lord of history himself. You inevitably place yourself into the thoroughly pessimistic world of 'flesh' alone -- and begin the process of trying to stuff the 'time-full' free liturgical mediation of the faith of the Church into Mr. Minsky's middle box.

Maybe you needed a reminder of that, but you probably only

needed a reminder. This shows that all your hard work up to this point is paying off: Fr. Keefe's crazy ideas are actually starting to register with you.

The priority of the Eucharist to all reality is a point that will be taken up again at the end of the next chapter, but for now, let's take a look at some implications of this that are relevant to this chapter.

There isn't any 'ungraced' Nature -- no 'flesh' that is not redeemed by the One Sacrifice. Similarly, the only kind of 'Grace' that is not already in intimate, nuptial, covenantal relation to 'flesh' is a supposedly time-less variety of 'Grace,' and that sort of 'Grace' always belongs in Mr. Minsky's middle box.

'Nature' has no existence apart from Grace. It never had existence apart from Grace, and it never will. 'Flesh' has its entire reality in and through the New Covenant, and 'flesh' has no existence outside that Eucharistic Event. No 'flesh' exists apart from its free relation to the Lord of history.

Every day, at every Mass, Man can freely appropriate reality itself, sanity itself: 'flesh' is real, and is sane -- it receives real life, sane life -- in and through its free relation to the 'One Flesh' in the One Sacrifice.

So, we need to remember two things. One, 'flesh' was created in and through the New Covenant, and, though fallen, fully retains its covenantal, nuptial, intimate relation to the New Covenant in and through the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. Two, as Chapter 8 showed, 'flesh' has a free -- that is, a ridiculously free -- relation to the Eucharist, the New Covenant in our 'now.'

The intimate relation of 'flesh' with Grace, and further, 'flesh's' ridiculous covenantal freedom, its surprising free creativity even in its subordination to Grace, means that Grace is the truly natural.

In a word: only within dehistoricized cosmologies -- within which no free, nuptial, covenantal, surprising, or creative relation can ever exist -- does the subordinate status of 'Nature' affect the freedom and creativity of its relation to Grace. Reality as given is "full of grace." (All allusions to the Mother of God, and to the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, in the preceding are, of course, intentional. What can only be allusions here are given intimate and wonderful treatment as part of the vocabulary and the thought of *Covenantal Theology*.)

As fully itself, given in the Eucharistic Event, 'flesh' is the *perfect* mediator of Grace, a perfection so perfect that the truly natural is Grace itself. While the capacity of 'flesh' to be the perfect mediator of Grace is, in our fallen world, fully realized only in the public work or prayer of the Church, it is fully realized there. In the Eucharist, Nature is Grace, without any doubt: "This is My Body, This is My Blood."

However, 'flesh' is still just as ridiculous, gritty, messy, and sloppy

as ever, even though, in the Eucharist, it plainly mediates grace. To be sure, in and through its free covenantal relation to the Eucharistic Event, our 'private' work or prayer has inexhaustible, free, covenantal meaning. However, fancy words should never obscure the reality: we are talking about 'flesh' here. 'Flesh' never rises above what Our Lady's juggler did. For that matter, *Our Lady* never rises above what Our Lady's juggler did, for she too is merely a creature; even the fullness of her grace, the plenitude of her reality, the sanity of her 'foolishness,' forever unmatched and unrivaled among all men of all times, is utterly dependent on the One Sacrifice of her Son. Thus, the 'problem' of the meaningfulness of individual human (sexual) acts becomes no more -- but no less -- of a problem than asking: did it matter, when he juggled in front of Her statue?

The example serves to illustrate the point:

The 'fleshiness' of 'flesh' never goes away within a truly
Catholic, a covenantal theology, nor is 'flesh' ever
condemned, destroyed, or refused.

Thus 'flesh' is either "vanity" through and through, or Nature is Grace, and 'flesh' is through and through freely related -- even as fallen -- within the Eucharistic 'order' of 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' 'life.'

Everything Man does is as ridiculous -- or as dignified and meaningful -- as what Our Lady's juggler did.

What bodies do is all we've got, and therefore, what bodies do, how they relate themselves in space and time, never matters, or it always matters.

So: does it always matter, how bodies relate themselves in space and time, or does it never matter?

Here occurs another child-like crux of the thought of *Covenantal Theology*. For obviously, each man is a body in time himself. How could a man who is inherently not free, decide about freedom? More precisely, how could a man choose to be unfree -- to turn away from God, to sin -- if he did not have a freedom prior to his decision?

The classic "theological" solution to the problem is a dehistoricized cosmology: you put "free will" in some time-less place, where it supposedly is then "safe." The problem with this solution is one now-familiar -- that puts "free will" into Mr. Minsky's middle box, which can only get smaller and smaller.

Within any dehistoricized cosmology, time itself is enslaved within a time-less framework. No individual man could ever freely and personally answer the question of whether the particular movements of

When *Humanae Vitae* speaks of the Church's duty to preach "the whole moral law firmly and humbly, both the natural law and the law of the Gospel," [HV 18] that ought to be read, not as a defense of an 'ungraced' 'natural law,' but in the context of another statement: "It is false to think, then, that marriage results from chance or from the blind course of natural forces. Rather, God the Creator wisely and providently established marriage that He might achieve His own design of love through Men." [HV 8] As illustrated in this book, 'natural law' considered apart from Christ's Eucharistic immanence in history would of necessity enslave Man in the conviction that "marriage results from chance or from the blind course of natural forces." Thus the kind of time-less 'natural law' assumed by theologians can not be the "natural law" professed within *Humanae Vitae*.

his body in time do and will matter. Any dehistoricized cosmology by definition predetermines the answer to that question, and the answer is always No. Mr. Minsky, and Ecclesiastes, see it plainly: within 'Nature' not intimately a part of the Eucharistic 'order' of history, we are -- collectively, and individually -- "bound, whether we like it or not."

Each man as a body in time himself can not give a free answer to the question of whether he will make an individual, personal choice to turn toward God, to be free, unless Nature is already Grace. That individual man is free solely as one of those for whom Our Savior died, free essentially and inherently, but solely in the blood of the Lamb, solely within Offertory, Consecration, and Communion, solely within 'flesh,' 'One flesh,' and 'life.'

Our Lord's works in time, culminating in his One Sacrifice on the Cross which establishes the New Covenant of 'One Flesh' with his forever Bride and Body, the Catholic Church, re-presented in the sacraments, give the sole freedom, and thus, the sole meaning, for an individual man's movements of his body in time. A dehistoricized cosmology can never give freedom to the movements of a man's body in time. Both Mr. Minsky and Ecclesiastes saw that, and they saw correctly. Christ's acts in time, the *Event* of the New Covenant, alone takes away the sin of the world.

Absent the Eucharistic 'order' of 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' 'life,' the possibility of Man giving any free answer to anything is absurd on its face. The possibility of freedom strangles itself before it can even be voiced, because the possibility of freedom in 'flesh' is the ultimate "vanity."

Throughout *Covenantal Theology*, in many different ways, Fr. Keefe repeatedly states his conviction that it all comes down to the Eucharist itself. It is either the center of everything, or everything is no-thing.

If bread and wine is not Offered, Consecrated, and received in Communion, then it simply doesn't matter what bodies do, ever, because what bodies do is then not 'flesh' within a Eucharistic 'order' of history, but 'flesh' alone, a "vanity."

Puny bread and wine, concrete bread and wine, fully within time, never leaving it, at a particular place, over a spare hour or so in a particular day, but within the Eucharistic 'order' of history, becomes the Body and Blood of the Risen Lord, who still bears the marks of his Passion, and who actively re-establishes the New Covenant within which all 'flesh' -- all fourteen billion light years of it -- is right now, for us, neither condemned, nor destroyed, nor refused, but saved.

All 'flesh' is 'flesh.' By rights, no grace, no complete surprise

completely intelligible, should happen to bread and wine -- ever.

A particular 'arrangement' of bread and wine in time should not be more or less meaningful than any other.

But since the impossible is in fact the case, then it matters what bodies do. It matters that we arrange our bodies in particular ways in time and in space -- for then also, as complete surprise completely intelligible, our acts, our arrangements of bodies in time, also are fully 'flesh' within the Eucharistic 'order' of history.

Our acts, though fully 'flesh,' are, by impossible possibility, simultaneously completely free and completely meaningful.

We should notice what has been happening here, in this discussion. The meaningfulness of human (sexual) acts -- even individual human (sexual) acts -- has been found, but not in some specialized theory of sexuality or even in some specialized theory of actions. Their meaningfulness -- their sole meaningfulness -- has been found in the Eucharist itself. That Eucharist, that New Covenant, is an Event. It is "radically historical," the free activity of the Lord of history in irrevocable union with his Bride.

In the radical historicity of this Event is to be found the sole -- but the sure -- meaningfulness of everything we, and Our Lady's juggler, do: in and through the public work of the Church, which freely represents by liturgical mediation the One Sacrifice of her Head, what our bodies do as they move about in time, may become our free response to Her public work, and "through Him, with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit," our 'private' work or prayer in and through Her free response to Her Lord becomes nothing less than a worship in spirit and truth.

Covenantal Theology thus does seem to provide a profoundly Catholic foundation, because a profoundly Eucharistic and sacramental foundation, for discussion of human (sexual) acts. After all, the word "covenantal" is part of the title of the book! More's the pity, then, that the Catholic academy has so far paid *Covenantal Theology* very little attention.

On the other hand, the lack of attention is understandable. *Covenantal Theology* makes a deep critique of the intellectual and scientific approach (the methodology) of Catholic theology. This makes it very hard to read, because it is very hard to read words that are very hard to swallow.

Physicists sometimes divide problems in physics into the 'trivial,' the 'non-trivial,' and the 'deep.' These words don't have their standard meanings. 'Trivial' means something like: "if I worked on this problem for awhile, I know that I could get the answer." 'Non-trivial' means: "if I worked on this problem for six years, I'm not sure I could get the

answer." 'Deep' means: "if I worked on this problem forever, I'm not sure I could get the answer, but I know that the question is important."

On the physicist's scale then, *Covenantal Theology* is somewhere between 'non-trivial' and 'deep' -- my guess is that it leans toward 'deep.' If that is so, then theologians attempting to 'understand' *Covenantal Theology* in terms of what they already 'know' -- the theological methods and categories they already use -- may find it difficult or even impossible to understand that *Covenantal Theology* is highly critical of those very methods and categories. They would be trying to use what they already 'know' -- to understand that what they already 'know' is mistaken.

In situations like that, most people simply get confused. It couldn't possibly be the case that what is already 'known' is incorrect -- it couldn't even be the case that anyone would seriously question what is 'known.' Our normal reaction is just to be baffled by talk that questions our fundamental assumptions. If someone were to tell us that there is and will always be some amount of space between us and the chair on which we are currently sitting (this is actually true), we might well have little or no reaction, so far outside of our current understanding would that statement be. This may be a real part of the reason Fr. Keefe's work has so far been uninfluential.

On the other hand, another reason *Covenantal Theology* might have had so little impact is precisely its potential impact on Catholic theology on the physicist's 'trivial' scale. A large amount of theological work might have to be re-done, if *Covenantal Theology's* basic ideas are correct.

That work would be physicist-'trivial,' in the sense that it could be done by any competent theologian who understood and accepted the new approach to those problems taken by *Covenantal Theology*. However, the sheer amount of that kind of work might not be 'trivial' in any common-sense meaning of the term. If Catholic theologians ever accepted Fr. Keefe's conclusions, they might -- this is not a prediction, only a possibility -- come to the conclusion that large portions of previous Catholic theology will have to be completely re-done, or even junked.

Especially in his Appendix, written after the First Edition was published, in response to some of the problems his (few) readers had with his argument, Fr. Keefe says that his work -- if it is correct -- might indeed be 'non-trivial' or 'deep' in the sense I'm using, and therefore hard to read. There are also hints that he suspects that the physicist-'trivial' work that theologians would need to do if they were to take his methodological reconversion seriously might be substantial.

It seems to me that moral theology would be one area where the

'trivial' work would have to be very substantial. If Nature is Grace, and "free" means "ridiculously free," and 'private' work or prayer is creative *ex nihilo* and not "pretend" or condescendingly, art-on-the-refrigerator-door creative, then at least at first glance, it would seem that a lot would have to change regarding how Catholics make moral arguments.

The rest of this chapter gives some more examples of what I mean, by guessing how theologians operating within the intellectual and scientific framework proposed by *Covenantal Theology* would interpret and extend the meaning both of *Humanae Vitae* and of its subsequent reaffirmations and expansions by John Paul II.

WARNING: before we start this demonstration, you need to keep in mind that *Covenantal Theology* makes a *fundamental* criticism of Catholic theology. It is not a book which argues that another type of Catholic theology, calling itself "covenantal," should take its place alongside the others.

As far as Fr. Keefe is concerned, there isn't any "covenantal" theology. Instead, all Catholic theology, whatever its method and assumptions, has to be theology of the New Covenant: it can't be anything more than that, and it can't be anything less. Dehistoricized cosmology, the fundamental intellectual basis of current Catholic theology, can not serve as an intellectual basis from which to ask questions regarding the New Covenant, which is perfectly 'time-full,' and not a bit time-less.

After establishing this, Fr. Keefe gives his best guess as to how Catholic theologians can re-turn their intellectual and scientific method and vocabulary more firmly toward the Eucharist (see also Chapter 12, "Method and System," for a little more on this point). Thus the following demonstration (which is mine, not Fr. Keefe's) is for the purpose of illustrating differences in approach that would have to be taken up by any and all Catholic theologians.

First, they might notice that the refusal of contraception had always been the consistent proclamation of the Church, but that the relationship of this refusal to the Eucharistic Event may not have been as clear. Now the covenantal nature of the refusal has been emphasized:

Within the vocabulary provided by *Covenantal Theology*, it can be seen that the magisterium has made an even clearer affirmation that the refusal of contraception is central to sacramental existence in the New Covenant.

However, a clear linking by the magisterium of a moral teaching to covenantal existence would have singular importance for these theologians.

First, they would emphasize that this more explicit link to sacramental existence is a far stronger 'argument' from a Catholic point of view than any argument based on a philosophical, scientific, or theological theory.

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In other words, a magisterial link of the refusal of contraception to sacramental existence is not only a stronger argument than others, but also, by its existence it renders other types of argument irrelevant.

Once the magisterium clearly identifies the refusal of contraception with sacramental existence *per se*, any attempts -- well-intentioned or otherwise -- to find the meaning of that refusal in necessity, in any theory or reality prior to it, will always fail, since its meaning is given as complete surprise completely intelligible in and through the Eucharistic 'order' of 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' 'life.'

This immediately puts at least ninety-five percent of the *defenses* of *Humanae Vitae* outside the realm of Catholic theology as *Covenantal Theology* asks Catholic theologians to define it. These defenses simply do not consistently stand within either the actual liturgical celebrations of either the Eucharist or Matrimony, or even solely within the liturgically mediated sacramental order to understand *Humanae Vitae*. Rather, either naively, or quite deliberately, they assume that there must be some 'place' outside of the sacramental order to stand, in order to understand *Humanae Vitae*. When they make this assumption, they automatically (if inadvertently) lose their status as Catholic theology.

Fr. Keefe does not use the example of *Humanae Vitae* himself, but regarding the general theological point, he says it over and over in *Covenantal Theology*, and he is not kidding. A very large part of the project of *Covenantal Theology* is to establish, beyond the possibility of refutation, that any resort to a dehistoricized cosmology automatically renders a scholarly investigation outside the realm of Catholic theology, because then (whatever the intention), the scholarly focus is on the time-less framework, and it is no longer on the New Covenant, a living and eternal *Event*, and the only thing that Catholic theology will ever study, or ever can study.

This might be one of the physicist-'trivial' ramifications of the acceptance of the ideas of *Covenantal Theology*.

Second, they would emphasize that the refusal of contraception therefore has a free, covenantal meaning. As free and covenantal, its meaning is not necessitated, either by logic, or in any other way. The refusal of contraception is then not based on a theory of sexuality, of the social order, etc., which would make the refusal of contraception necessary, logically or otherwise.

Whatever else the theological task regarding *Humanae Vitae* may be, it is assuredly not to make the sacramental order more 'plausible' or 'defensible,' if that is taken to mean, to show that the order is necessitated by a time-less structure prior to it, whether of 'logic,' 'natural law,' 'scientific research,' or 'liberation.'

Thus, "Sacred Scripture and Tradition," magisterial proclamation, and the sacraments themselves, can only be understood by standing to understand within the Church's liturgy and her free response to that liturgy.

This standing within the 'time-full,' within the Church's *liturgical* mediation of her faith, gives Catholic theology its only standing as Catholic theology. It is not an option for it, not some 'new' approach, which can itself be 'understood' (dismissed) by standing 'outside' it. Catholic theology which does not take the Eucharistic Event itself as its "prime analogate," as Fr. Keefe calls it, automatically declares that some time-less structure is prior to and conditions the New Covenant, and immediately (if, one would hope, temporarily) loses its status as Catholic theology.

If there had been any doubt previously, *Humanae Vitae*, and the papal proclamations subsequent to it, have marked the refusal of contraception as being an irrevocable element of human existence in the New Covenant. Catholic theologians may thus articulate the meaning of this refusal, in terms of questions of higher and higher quality, but they do this solely in terms of the New Covenant itself. They may ask how the meaning of the refusal is enlightened by -- and enlightens -- Sacred Scripture, Tradition, magisterial proclamation, and the actual liturgy of the Church. They may not make either the refusal or their questions 'reasonable' or 'meaningful' on any other grounds. In a word:

The complete refusal of contraception given in
Humanae Vitae was not 'correct.' It was *sanity* -- a
reality of human existence in the New Covenant
conditioned or necessitated by nothing, not even
'correctness' or even 'reasonableness.'

'Correctness,' even 'reasonableness,' only become possible within the reality given as the Good Creation by the New Covenant. In 'flesh' apart from the Eucharistic Event, nothing is 'correct' or 'reasonable,' and all is "vanity." Such might be the re-working found necessary in this area.¹

Another such 'trivial' re-working would probably have to occur regarding the free, covenantal relationship between the public work of the Church, and the 'private' work of the social and civil order.

From the standpoint of any theology that exists as Catholic because its "prime analogate" is the Eucharistic Event, magisterial proclamation has placed the refusal of contraception as given as an

1. Another way of saying the same thing: acts in time are "vanity" unless they are acts of *worship* in time. The basic intellectual difficulty comes from the traditional removal into the 'natural' world -- meaning, the world of 'flesh' alone -- of all human acts except sacramental acts of worship. By the logic of all dehistoricized cosmology, human acts couldn't be 'free' unless they were removed from any real connection to sacramental acts and placed in a world of 'pure nature.' Otherwise -- by the same logic, and contrary to the faith -- all human acts would simply be subsumed into, Caused by, the supernatural realm. But then, of course, not only is the Eucharist removed from us (it's in one 'place' and we are some 'place' else), but also, we are removed from the Eucharist, and human acts are 'flesh' alone -- pure "vanity." Further, however impossible a strict re-conversion of all the intellectual categories of moral theology to the New Covenant may now appear, any 'moral theology' not resolutely centered in the 'time-full' Eucharistic Event will founder -- because, as *Covenantal Theology* endeavors to show beyond refutation -- theology then invariable takes up a project fundamentally un-Catholic. Finally, time-less frameworks can be very handy for generating 'answers,' even if resorting to them in the long run is un-Catholic and leads to intellectual incoherence. Nonetheless, a steady commitment to the Eucharistic Event as the fundamental reality of the Good Creation, fearlessness regarding *whatever* questions emerge from that commitment, waiting in hope for better questions to emerge *in time* as a result of both the commitment and the fearlessness, and a greatly reduced temptation to generate 'answers' *via* a time-less Theory of Everything (cf. Chapters 11 and 12), would be signs of significant improvement in Catholic moral theology.

integral part of the sacrament of Matrimony.

Humanae Vitae was not the writing-down of a theory of sexuality. It was not the affirmation of a 'natural' law that exists apart from the Eucharistic 'order' of history. It was the solemn magisterial protection of a sacrament.

Does the so-called 'conjugal act' not epitomize and signify the meaning of the sacrament of Matrimony, according to much magisterial proclamation, including much recent magisterial proclamation? Thus the meaning of *Humanae Vitae*'s statement: "each conjugal act must remain ordained in itself to the procreation of human life"¹ can mean no less than that the refusal of contraception is integral to the sacrament of Matrimony. This and no other is the 'explanation' of *Humanae Vitae* that Catholic theologians should proffer, however they articulate it and elaborate upon it.

The question of magisterial 'authority' or, indeed, the necessity for 'argument' regarding the matter, whether pro or con, therefore only arises after a rejection, not of this or that moral 'tenet' or 'principle,' but of Catholic sacramental realism itself. The Holy Father and the bishops united with him act "in the person of Christ" -- or all 'flesh' is "vanity." There are no other alternatives.

No 'critical distance' exists. If any distance of 'flesh' from Catholic sacramental realism exists, the distance between 'flesh' and the New Covenant must be infinite and completely unbridgeable. All other 'distances' belong in Mr. Minsky's middle box.

Thus, as Fr. Keefe says often, all rejection of Catholicism, all 'dissent,' comes down to a rejection of Catholic sacramental realism -- which comes down to a rejection of the Eucharist.

So, *Humanae Vitae* protects the sacrament of Matrimony. Second, since, in a covenantal theology, all reality has its being in the New Covenant,² this includes the social and civil order. The sacrament of Matrimony seems to be the proximate sacramental foundation of the entire social and civil order. To argue this case within the vocabulary of *Covenantal Theology* would be to proceed something like this.

There is no 'ungraced' social order. Nature is Grace. The 'ungraced' social order is *sarx*, 'flesh,' purely, and is insane, unreal. All of reality -- all fourteen billion light years of it -- has its reality solely in the New Covenant, the Eucharistic Event.

In order to understand, we must stand within that free Event -- and we are also able to do so, in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith, which is her nuptial union with Christ her Head. We therefore must stand within the sacraments to understand the 'private' work or prayer. This in no way jeopardizes the utter -- the ridiculous -- freedom and creativity of that 'private' work or prayer, as

1. *Humanae Vitae*, 11

2. Thus the Church's authority to speak regarding the actions of all men, not just the baptized, is not an 'intrusion' of 'religion.' As this book has illustrated repeatedly, absent the Eucharistic immanence of Christ, there would be no *moral* acts at all -- and in addition, of course, there would be no possibility of conversion, no possibility of baptism -- no baptized.

was shown in the previous chapter.

To understand that aspect of the 'private' work or prayer called the social and civil order, then, we have to stand within the sacraments -- but can we get more specific? Can we find a specific sacrament that plainly links 'private' work or prayer, particularly within the social and civil order, with the public work re-presented in and through every sacrament, but particularly the Eucharist?

Yes we can. By its very nature the sacrament of Matrimony directly links the free social and civil 'private' work or prayer that is the irrevocable act in time of husband and wife, with the free public work or prayer of the New Covenant. Indeed, following St. Paul,¹ the Church sees the sacramental covenant made between husband and wife as a sign of the New Covenant between Christ and his Bride, the Church.

Here Catholic theologians reconverted to the New Covenant as their "prime analogate" need to be careful not to insert a time-less theory -- of the social order, of marriage, etc. All 'flesh' outside of the Eucharistic 'order' of history is fundamentally insane, a no-thing, without remainder. Catholic theology may not imagine a 'natural' social and civil order apart from the New Covenant, in which there supposedly exists all sorts of 'natural' human relations, including 'natural' unions of man and woman, some of which became sacramental -- covenantal -- as a 'special case.' For Catholic theology, there can be no 'ungraced' social order in which to stand, from which 'Matrimony' becomes understandable. Just the reverse:

Matrimony is a sacrament of the New Covenant within
a 'Nature' that is only real as Graced.

The obvious is only belabored if the obvious is -- at last -- obvious: apart from the New Covenant, all human relations are simply 'flesh.' Within 'flesh' apart from the Eucharistic 'order' of history, our attempts to rank-order the differing possible relations of human bodies in time, to distinguish them, to give them dignity, or to call them unworthy, are -- all of them -- "vanity," and nothing more can be said. Apart from the New Covenant, all human activities are simply the working-out of Cause and Chance, without remainder. Then all human acts -- ever -- are fundamentally irresponsible, including any union -- ever -- between a man and a woman. Catholic theology regarding either Matrimony or the social order as a whole simply can not even begin until it acknowledges this, and is re-converted to the vast surprise and inexhaustible intelligibility given solely in and through the Eucharistic Event.²

1. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church...." [Ephesians 5:31-32 RSV]

2. Need it be said that 'surprise' is not stupidity or irrationality (e.g., psychic crystal pyramids), but is intelligible. Further, the inexhaustible intelligibility of matrimony and of human relations in general is given sacramentally, but this intelligibility is given as covenantal, and is thus free. We must stand within the sacramental 'order' to understand. Nonetheless, the utterly free creativity of the 'private' work or prayer remains inviolate. No human relation is subsumable into or deducible from the free and irrevocable Covenant between Christ and his Bride. The social and civil order remains completely free, creative *ex nihilo*. On the other hand, no human relation whatever has intelligible existence apart from its creation in that Covenantal Event. Covenantal existence is free and intelligible relation. All this is further elaborated in this section.

There is a sacramental link between any 'private' work or prayer of Man and the New Covenant -- for this is the only way such 'private' work or prayer can be, and is, a worship of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The proximate sacramental link between the particular 'private' work or prayer of Man called the social and civil order seems to be the sacrament of Matrimony.

Thus the family is the "first cell of society" not by sociological theory or pious blather but as sacramental reality. The entire social order is given as fundamentally marital, not because of some theory, but because Matrimony is a sacrament.

It is not only the modern acceptance of contraception that is afflicted with the idea that Man can make reality intelligible from some time-less and therefore non-sacramental place. Despite the Holy Father's assistance, too much of the contemporary theological defense of *Humanae Vitae* accepts the New Class contention that there is a time-less and by that time-lessness 'objective' place wherein Man may stand to understand *Humanae Vitae*'s teaching. Whether that time-less place is called 'phenomenology' or 'natural law' is of little moment.

Catholic theology can not become covenantal merely by disagreeing with New Class Catholics on the manner by which and the place from which one 'properly' flees from 'flesh' to the time-less.

Reality exists because of the Eucharistic Event, and the
proper order of precedence must always be honored
within Catholic theology.

This is a major part of what Fr. Keefe means when he says that Catholic theology requires a methodological reconversion: Catholic theologians must always stand within the sacraments to understand, or 'Catholic theology' immediately disintegrates into 'flesh' merely, and thereupon flees to the time-less.

Of course, the Event of the New Covenant, and the response to it, are both free, in the ridiculous generosity of freedom that is genuinely creative out of no necessity. There is no time-less Grand Design that Man must fulfill, no list that the Almighty checks twice, to see if Man has been naughty or nice. The 'private' work or prayer is still a surprise.

To fail to see this is once again to sneak in our well-nigh unshakable conviction that whatever is meaningful just has to be somehow necessary: the entire social and civil order already exists on some god's time-less 'list,' which Man is, if slowly and haltingly, 'freely' working through. Nonetheless, at the very moment we sneak in

So, the meaning of the entire 'private' social and civic order is given in the Eucharistic Event, and (it may be) proximately, within the sacrament of Matrimony.

this conviction, says Fr. Keefe, we cease to do Catholic theology.

Two points can be made. First, the 'private' social and civil order will not cease to surprise if Matrimony is its effective sign. Its freedom, as covenantal, while subordinate, is utter, *ex nihilo*. We can not 'deduce' the social and civil order from what we know of Matrimony, nor may we subsume it into any sacrament, including Matrimony.

Second, we can, however, say with complete confidence that the social and civil order has its meaning by its free relation to the sacramental order, perhaps especially to the Eucharist and Matrimony, the sacraments of covenant.

Thus: a) the magisterium now warns that the covenantal meaning of the 'private' work or prayer of a married couple disintegrates when contraception is accepted, but also b) when the magisterium further warns that there will be harmful consequences to the entire 'private' work or prayer that is the social and civil order, if contraception is not refused, that can not be read by Catholic theologians either as mere rhetoric, or as a scientific prediction, either of which could be buttressed -- or refuted -- by 'argument' and 'experiment.'

Instead, the warning takes on literal, public, objective meaning; which is to say, it takes on sacramental meaning, a meaning that is meaningful *ex nihilo*, out of no necessity, and is conditioned, buttressed, or refuted by no 'argument' or 'experiment.' Rather, it is the re-presentation of reality to Man, an articulation of the meaning of free covenantal existence in the Eucharistic Event.

The 'private' social and civil order has covenantal existence -- its only existence -- in its free relation to the Eucharistic Event. The social and civil order ceases to exist, to the extent that it lacks free (that is, covenantal) relation to the 'public' work of the Church.

When Man relates his body in time to other bodies in time, he may freely choose to be unfree. He may be freely destructive rather than freely creative. Nonetheless, his freedom is given solely in the New Covenant, in the Eucharistic Event, and, within the 'private' work or prayer that is the social and civil order, his freedom is given perhaps most especially in and through the sacrament of Matrimony.

Man may freely choose to try to destroy the very realities that give him free and therefore meaningful existence. However, the magisterium has the unceasing obligation to tell Man the truth: that is exactly what Man does, whenever he so chooses.

Therefore, magisterial teaching on contraception is explicitly given as sacramental proclamation, performed not to offer advice, comfort, science, theology, or even 'wisdom,' but explicitly to protect the sacraments.

Theologians may preach wisdom, but the magisterium must preach Christ crucified. By means of this protection of the sacrament of Matrimony, the magisterium intends, not to offer a theory to Man, but to re-present reality to him and to his entire 'private' social and civil order. This reality is freely and sacramentally mediated as a free Event, given as complete surprise completely intelligible, for Man's free response.

This might be something like the course that theologians who alter their intellectual and scientific assumptions in line with what Fr. Keefe proposes would take in their articulation and defense of *Humanae Vitae* and John Paul II's reaffirmations and extensions of it. As can be seen, the amount of physicist-'trivial' work such theologians would be doing might be substantial.

The work might be even more substantial, and general, than could be demonstrated in the above example, for two further things can be said here about the meaning of covenantal existence, as that is treated in *Covenantal Theology*.

The first of the two topics concerns something that Fr. Keefe discusses explicitly in his book: the nature of Man's imaging of God. Neither Man nor anything else has real existence outside of the Eucharistic 'order' of history. In other words, Man's very existence is covenantal.

By now, you may be aware that, if Fr. Keefe says something, he means it. Man's very existence is covenantal -- so it isn't anything else. If Man's existence is covenantal, then Man's imaging of God is also covenantal; that is, Man's imaging of God is an imaging of the New Covenant.

However, to a very large degree, Catholic theology (and probably most of us) simply assumes that Man's imaging of God is really not an imaging of the New Covenant. In essence, we have been assuming that Man has to be what he is within all dehistoricized cosmologies: that is, Man is either a One in free motion, or a Many that is part of some subsuming One. In modern terms, we assume that Man is either an 'individual,' or a mere part of some larger 'community.'

Sometimes we like to believe that Man can be both an 'individual' and part of a 'community,' but this is really impossible within any dehistoricized cosmology. A 'community' of 'individuals' is an idea that belongs in Mr. Minsky's middle box: for one thing, how can such a thing exist, if 'freedom of the human will' doesn't even exist?

If everything is ultimately "vanity," if we are enslaved in Cause and Chance, then words like 'individual' and 'community' lose all meaning, just as surely as words like 'freedom' and 'responsibility' do.

Without getting too far afield, you probably do need to know that our everyday view in the United States, that we are 'individuals' in a 'community,' is not a view that would be shared by every single one of our fellow men at all times in history. For example, it is very clear to most scholars that the human beings in the ancient world Homer wrote about in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* did not see themselves that way. Not only would they not have understood what we meant if we had been able to speak to them about 'individuals' living in a 'community,' but also, if they had grasped our meaning, they would have rejected both concepts as ridiculous and barbaric.

People like Hector, Achilles, Penelope, and Odysseus were probably not just like us, with the single difference that they lived a long time ago. Most scholars think that people like the sort Homer wrote about had ideas about who they were and what they were doing that were very different from ours. This also means that men 3000 years from now may regard our own assumptions about 'individuals' and 'communities' with much the same bewilderment that Achilles might.

We also need to remember that, in Mr. Minsky's truly modern world, in which "freedom of the human will" is only a convenient -- if irresistible -- fabrication, the idea that we are 'individuals' in a 'community' is very much one whose meaning will be progressively evacuated over time, put more and more into the middle box.

So, there have actually been two problems, not just one, with our questions regarding how Man images God. The first problem, of course, is with our ideas of God, but the second, and equally important problem, is with our ideas of Man.

Man's imaging of God, says Fr. Keefe, is covenantal, through and through. The idea that this imaging is either 'individual' or 'communal' is simply absurd to Catholicism. The only imaging possible for Man exists in and through the New Covenant.

I'm nearly certain you're not ready for this, but it has to be said, because Fr. Keefe says it: that means that Man's imaging of God is *nuptial*. Man is neither Ones in free motion nor a Many subsumed into a One. He is a nuptial being. Man is created in the image of God -- that is, in the image of the New Covenant -- a nuptial relation of persons.

We do need to recall, that by the consistent faith of the Church, the only God available to Man is in Jesus Christ. In short, Man's imaging of God is "Through Him, With Him, and in Him," for "Through Him all things were made." We don't image the *Deus Unus* -- a God apart from the New Covenant. We image God solely in and through the New Covenant. That means, simply, that our imaging of God is fundamentally marital or nuptial in character -- for that is what

"covenantal" means.

Man is the image of God, says Fr. Keefe, as a nuptial being, for in this way alone can he image the 'One Flesh' that is the union of the Body of the Church with Christ her Head.

This is one of the ancient and yet profoundly new Catholic ideas that are the reason *Covenantal Theology* is such an important book.

Obviously, a lot of assumptions fly out the window if our imaging of God is neither 'individual' nor 'communal,' but nuptial. The development of the implications of this is not exactly going to be trivial. Fr. Keefe begins the task in his book. Two immediate implications are: a) how central the sacrament of Matrimony is to the Eucharistic Event, and b) how central clerical celibacy is to the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Two other implications he briefly points out: the meaning and dignity of Man as an 'individual' must be found in his covenantal or nuptial imaging of God. If it is not found there, his 'individuality' is "vanity" -- it will not be found, however Man pretends otherwise. Similarly, the meaning and dignity of the social and civic order will also solely be found in Man's covenantal, nuptial imaging of God.

Since our idea of who we are affects our ideas about many things, if our imaging of God is covenantal, rather than either 'individual' or 'communal,' that has many implications whose working out could be the lifetime task of many a Catholic theologian, and would definitely affect our ideas about our individuality, about our social and political communities, and about the sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders.

That is enough to give you the flavor of this concept, whose development, even in a preliminary form, will obviously take many, many years and be quite complicated -- and why wouldn't it? Our imaging of God goes right to our very bones.

We 'normal people' will have to leave the matter there, for now. However, you do at least need to know about Man's covenantal or nuptial imaging of God, for it is a true part of the argument of *Covenantal Theology* -- and what better place to bring it up than within a chapter discussing Matrimony and *Humanae Vitae*.

We conclude this chapter with a little more discussion of the truly ridiculous freedom of Man's free response to the Eucharistic Event. In the context of *Humanae Vitae*, it comes as a free refusal of contraception.

Put plainly, within the reconversion of Catholic theology that *Covenantal Theology* proposes, the fact that a man would refuse contraception must perennially come as a complete surprise to God. It can not be otherwise, or the refusal is not 'free' in the weighty meaning

assigned the word within *Covenantal Theology*.

The refusal can never come as the fulfillment of a 'task' pre-assigned, either by God or man. It must be, and is, a creation *ex nihilo*, freely, covenantally united to the New Covenant through the sacrament of Matrimony. In this way and in this way only can it be really creative, genuinely surprising, inexhaustibly meaningful, a true mediation of grace, grace itself.

In the end, the refusal of contraception is only natural as grace. The act of refusal itself, in order to be grace, truly natural, must not be necessitated or conditioned either by God or man. God himself must be surprised by it! This is, simply, the character of free covenantal existence as *Covenantal Theology* states it.

I think it is possible to put the point even more strongly:

God is the Tri-unity of Persons *most* surprised by it.

When we look at ourselves with the eyes of 'flesh' alone, we see that we are beings immersed in Cause and Chance, not capable of any real surprise, ever. God sees us differently, as we really are.

Our sole link with our full reality in this fallen world is sacramental. In the Eucharist we see, in visible and effective sign, that 'flesh' is covenantally related *ex nihilo sui et subjecti* (out of no necessity on the part of either the superior or the *subjecti* -- the subordinate). Only in the Eucharistic Event does fallen 'flesh' have any certain knowledge of its true nature. Yet there, fallen 'flesh' does plainly know itself as capable of surprise -- of being grace, truly natural.

So, to say that a man's refusal of contraception is surprising is to do nothing more -- or less -- than to refuse all our 'wisdom,' and to seek the meaning of our activities in the New Covenant, "one and the same" with the Eucharistic Event which is its free liturgical re-presentation.

If we try to understand our activities without reference to the Eucharistic Event, the "prime analogate," as Fr. Keefe calls it, we will certainly conclude to human existence as fundamentally irresponsible, precisely because it is incapable of being surprising.

Absent the free relation of 'flesh' in the Church's Sacrifice of Praise to the One Sacrifice of her Lord, who is the Lord of history, all human activity is meaningful only by being in principle predictable (Caused), or it is unpredictable, but only because it is arbitrary and pointless. In either case, human responsibility for any act is impossible. We did it because we couldn't help it, or we did it, and it doesn't matter. In either case, nothing 'surprising' ever occurs. The very idea that any human act could be surprising: that is, both unpredictable, even in principle, and

Mr. Minsky can be 'surprised' by what we do only if it is part of the world of Chance, and is therefore arbitrary and thus pointless.

Within any dehistoricized cosmology, there is no alternative to *necessity* other than *license*: you're either bound whether you like it or not, or you can do whatever you want. This is obviously not what 'surprise' means -- surprise is historical, intelligible, *and responsible*, 'time-full' within the Eucharistic 'order.' The task of speaking in this way can not be shirked, even if devising an appropriate vocabulary turns out to be a 'non-trivial' problem. It should be emphasized that modern science, as Mr. Minsky shows, is especially good at removing the pretense of the 'middle box' from our thoughts and intentions. Thus, the whole traditional theological separation into 'free' will, and necessitated action (we're 'free' to 'choose' an action that is not itself a surprise), is precisely what Mr. Minsky successfully attacks as a flight to his middle box -- you can't squirm out of the grasp of Cause and Chance just by having thoughts. In sum, any development of 'morality' in terms of a time-less framework must conclude to Man as a 'vanity,' as fundamentally irresponsible -- not a very helpful conclusion, if you're a Catholic. The effort has to be abandoned. It is currently difficult to think outside the aged categories -- but those categories fail, and they fail utterly. Perhaps by poetic justice, they fail not because of 'godless modern science.' They fail by their very nature, of necessity.

also intelligible, is simply impossible within any dehistoricized cosmology.

Neither traditional nor New Class Catholic theology has any intellectually coherent answer to this difficulty. Their 'freedom of will' is simple fluff, a flight to the time-less, which belongs -- truly -- in Mr. Minsky's middle box. Why then should we wrestle so strenuously with the idea that a man's refusal of contraception should be genuinely surprising? Within all dehistoricized cosmologies, surprise is impossible. No amount of intellectual jujitsu will allow genuine surprise, and therefore, genuine freedom of will, into any of them.

So, here is more evidence, either of how completely the ideas of *Covenantal Theology* should be repudiated by Catholic theology, or of just how much its ideas are needed by Catholic theology. Proceeding as if its ideas were valuable, we summarize as follows.

The Church's relation to Christ, while plainly subordinate, does not subsume her into Him, but is "covenantal," in which two become 'One Flesh,' a nuptial unity of persons, which is absolutely free, creative *ex nihilo*.

The Trinity is to be taken seriously, as the only God, given solely in and through the New Covenant: the God of Love and Grace. Catholic thought must refuse absolutely the *Deus Unus*, the god of Cause, who in the final analysis reserves all real surprise and therefore all real freedom of will to himself -- or, to be precise, to Itself.

Thus, within the framework provided by *Covenantal Theology*, the gift a man makes to God when he refuses contraception, is more weighty and wonderful than anything Man could ever imagine.

To refuse contraception is thus to refuse the fallen world in which the refusal would be one more Task, one more Thing Man must do to prove once again that he is condemned to be a slave to necessity, bound whether he likes it or not. The god who would assign such tasks to Man is not the Triune God given in the New Covenant, for the consequence of making Man's acts -- even his refusals -- necessary in any way is a denial of grace, of the New Covenant itself.

In sum, the vocabulary of 'tasks' and 'duties' and 'missions,' of 'services' and 'obligations' and 'laws,' is incomplete or even erroneous unless the truly ridiculous freedom inherent in covenantal existence is given its full weight. In what world of necessity does Our Lady smile upon a juggler? The only world in which she does smile upon the juggler is the world in which she also smiles upon the scientist, theological or otherwise, and upon the couple who makes the simple brute gift of themselves to each other and to Him through her, for the creation, and the salvation, of the world.

Man has been entrusted with a 'mission' ("*munus*")¹ from God, to open his sexual acts *per se* to the transmission of life and thus refuse contraception, but Christ also has been entrusted by the Father with his three *munera* (missions) of Priest, Prophet, and King,² and, of course, with his fundamental mission as Son, to be sent to give the Spirit. The 'mission' -- for both Christ and Man -- is completely free, a 'mission' to create a complete surprise completely intelligible; that is, for both, it is a mission to give grace, to be truly natural. To have a *munus* is already to possess free, responsible, and therefore creative, unnecessitated, relation. "Hail, *full of grace*"³ is literally true: Mary, though solely 'flesh,' is full of grace in the New Covenant -- her *munus* is "full of grace," no less than His, though He is her Lord.

On both sides the 'mission' is the transformation of the necessary, of Cause and Chance, of "vanity," in the New Covenant. On both sides it is the Creation of the world. The impossible, ridiculous freedom of the New Covenant is given by a Triune God whose weakness and foolishness must, by this absurdity, be inexhaustible. If such as this is not understood, much of the special childishness of *Covenantal Theology* will remain lost to this generation of Catholics.

In and through the public work or prayer of His Bride, the Church, the refusal of contraception is creative *ex nihilo*, is a real completion, in a man's 'private' work or prayer, in his 'flesh,' of what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. Thus Man's 'mission' is to create history in and through history, on the historical Eucharistic Event.⁴

For Man's activity is utter "vanity" as the working-out of some time-less 'design,' framework, or account. Nothing dehistoricized can answer 'flesh's' agonized pessimism, its conclusion, when it is at its bravest and brightest, that, in the fallen world apart from the Eucharistic 'order' of history, we are bound, whether we like it or not.

Only history -- the Lord of history's living, free, responsible, meaningful acts *in time* in and through his Bride the Church's free historical liturgical mediation of her faith -- can be the "medicine of immortality" by which we are free and the Creation good and very good.

But as free in him, in his history, in his death, we too are thus capable of *historical* acts: meaningful, responsible acts in time that are not bound by Cause and Chance but creative *ex nihilo*.

The Lord of history, in and through the free liturgical mediation of the faith of his Bride, protects the sacraments by revealing how decisive is our rejection of history, how much of a god we make the time-less, how damaging, not only to the sacrament of Matrimony, but also to the history of the world, to the entire sacramental 'order,' it is, whenever we contracept. History, meaningful time, can not be created

1. cf. *Humanae Vitae*, 1.

2. cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 31.

3. Luke 1:28 RSV

4. cf. Chapter 13, concluding pages.

A 'foundation' for human acts is impossible within 'flesh,' for flesh may only find "vanity," or flee to the time-less. The sole foundation for our acts *in time* is no time-less theory or framework, but -- bluntly -- His acts *in time* as 'One Flesh' with His Bride: the New Covenant, the Eucharistic Event. Fr. Keefe wishes us to see that it was not just the Greeks for whom this is a hard saying. Nonetheless, only our acts in free union with His Bride's may be responsible and thus free and meaningful. However, all our acts, when historical -- responsible -- are not only founded on and in free union with an historical Event rather than on any time-less thing, but, in full ridiculous covenantal freedom, we create them in and through that historical Event as a worship in spirit and truth, and thus literally make history.

from the time-less. Of necessity the time-less excludes even the possibility of the 'time-full' New Covenant and thus excludes the whole history of covenantal relation, but the time-less is inevitably the 'place' from which we contract. Like Adam and Eve, we are 'free' to be as time-less -- thus as pointless and destructive -- as we are able, but only the Eucharistic Event creates history, meaningful time, on which it is possible for us to make history, too: to create history in and through history.

But we fail to imagine the covenantal -- the ridiculously covenantal -- character of his historical sacrifice unless we begin to imagine that nonetheless our history, our responsibility, our crucifixion, can complete what is lacking in his afflictions.

Because "This is My Body, This is My Blood" is literally true, then nature, far from being an insanity, a no-thing, really is grace, in the Eucharistic 'order' of history. Further, in that same ridiculously free covenantal relation of 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' and 'life' given in and through the One Sacrifice, grace is the truly natural. Grace, the truly natural, is 'time-full,' through and through. All this does have consequences for us.

We are afraid of reality: afraid of time, afraid of our finitude, afraid of our abject and total slavery in Cause and Chance -- and we should be. After all, He was.¹ We are, of course, free to try to ignore our knowledge of our slavery, just to make it through the day -- the universe as Man can find it has plenty of room for idiots. It also has plenty of room for devils -- intelligent beings who accumulate power and seek control, even though they know that is utterly pointless. We are also free -- quite sickeningly free -- to become devils instead of idiots, quite free to say to ourselves that we are only becoming devils because that's the only real choice, because becoming a devil is after all the intelligent man's way of making it through the day.

However, by complete surprise completely intelligible; that is, by grace, by the Lord of history's free acts in time, we do not have to become idiots or devils, just to make it through the day. For we are also free, as the saints have been free, to follow Him to the cross, free to freely crucify ourselves into our time, into our 'now' -- for that is no more -- and no less -- than what He does at Mass, every day.

Man has his existence solely in the 'time-full' Event of the New Covenant, and, in that living historical sacramental covenantal Event, Man is a being capable of a free response -- a being literally capable of making history, of truly surprising not only himself, but even God. Then and only then does St. Therese have plenty to do in Heaven. Then and only then is covenantal existence real, Matrimony a sacrament, grace the truly natural, and Man free.

1. And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. Mark 14:35 RSV

10 *The Fall is Real, 'Before' it is Not*

Fr. Keefe's prose can be a number of things: polysyllabic, scholarly, allusive, but another thing it can be is wry, as will be noted from the following:

We have become so accustomed by critical biblical studies to finding in "Adam and Eve" only the figures of a nonhistorical legend that the assertion of their reality as actually responsible for the fallenness of our fallen world is perceived as a regression to the pre-critical realm of magic, myth and, it must be said, metaphysics, from which we are thought to have been but lately delivered by the higher criticism.¹

1. CT p.332

The flip side of the absolutely ridiculous freedom given Man in the New Covenant is, of course, the utter seriousness of the Fall. "In Christ," Man is free -- impossibly, creatively free -- in his historical choices in 'flesh.' Therefore, what bodies do is of earth-shattering importance, and St. Therese has something real to do in Heaven, but also, the Fall is an actual historical event. The Fall happened in 'flesh,' and (since I'm a sucker for true puns) it was of earth-shattering importance.

By making that true pun, I am trying to emphasize that turning "Adam and Eve" into mythical figures automatically trivializes the Fall, and that this automatically trivializes the freedom of the rest of us men. As Fr. Keefe understands, if Catholic theologians and exegetes wish to assert the reality of the Fall as one of the crucial doctrines of the Catholic faith, but say that Adam and Eve were not historical beings, then no covenantal freedom exists for any historical man.

Once you say that Adam and Eve had no historical existence, you automatically say that they were only 'examples' of some time-less truth. The mythologizing of Adam and Eve is, pure and simple, the 'grown-up' way of saying that we only pretend that 'flesh' can make earth-shattering decisions.

I certainly hope that, by now, you can put this whole 'pretending' argument right where it belongs, in Mr. Minsky's middle box. If you don't want the argument to end up there, you have to say that Adam

and Eve had actual historical existence in 'flesh,' and made an actual historical choice that was covenantally free, such that it had earth-shattering importance.

If you prefer "Adam and Eve" to be mythical, but you still want to assert the truth of the Fall and you do not want all of human freedom to end up in Mr. Minsky's middle box, then you still must assert that at least one actual couple completely imprisoned in 'flesh' -- let's call them Fred and Ethel Mertz -- had the ability to make a covenantally free choice of earth-shattering significance, not a 'pretend' free choice that was, when it comes down to it, really the product of Cause and Chance. It's like Demosthenes looking for an honest man -- find me at least one.

Since this renaming to Fred and Ethel obviously solves nothing, we may as well call this couple by their real names, Adam and Eve.

The historical status of Adam and Eve, and the historical status of the Fall, then, is of critical importance to the Catholic faith. It is not the same kind of thing -- at all -- as the question of whether, for example, "All the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years."¹ For nothing critical to the Eucharistic Event is disturbed if Noah really lived only nine hundred and forty-nine years, but the Fall can not be real if Adam and Eve did not have actual historical existence. If they were only 'examples' of some time-less truth, the Fall itself also becomes only an 'example' of a time-less truth.

1. Genesis 9:29 RSV

The Fall becomes something that actual human beings were not responsible for. How could we be? We weren't there.

So, the denial of the historicity of Adam and Eve is also a denial of the historicity of the Fall itself. At one stroke, it removes the Fall from any genuine connection with 'flesh,' and places it in the realm of the time-less. In the process, it leaves no ground for genuine human freedom, for real responsibility, since it removes all "earth-shattering" choices to the realm of the time-less, where 'flesh' can never go -- if only because the entire realm of the time-less is, exactly, Mr. Minsky's middle box.

Thus only in passing does all this serve to illustrate the surpassing inanity of the current 'grown-up' Catholic thought, New Class Catholicism, busily going about its self-anointed project of stuffing itself into Mr. Minsky's middle box. What it really illustrates, as Fr. Keefe points out, is that the real task of Catholic theology regarding the Fall is not explaining the Fall, but explaining why the Fall was even possible.

For 'flesh' looks at itself and says, *There is no way I can 'Fall.'* I'm "vanity" through and through. I can't 'Fall' -- because I'm already as low as I can go. Or, if you prefer the "don't worry, be happy" school of

thought favored by some, 'flesh' says, *There is no way I can 'Fall' -- just because. Q.E.D. So don't bother me with any more questions that make me feel uncomfortable.*

Thus, it's not just New Class Catholicism which has it all completely backwards, but also and equally, traditional Catholic thought. The real question is, how in the world did 'flesh' ever get the crazy free power to Fall in the first place?

This establishes the framework within which a Catholic -- versus a time-less -- intellectual and scientific "searching" regarding the Fall must proceed. The first implication of this is that the Fall is part of the Eucharistic 'order' of history: 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' 'life.'

The Fall is a simple absurdity within any framework that 'flesh' can provide solely on its own. Whether everything is "vanity," or even if Everything's Coming Up Roses, even the articulation of the possibility of a Fall is ruled out within 'flesh' alone, since there is no possibility of a free responsible existence *from which to Fall* within 'flesh' alone. Adam and Eve -- and everyone else -- have no genuine free choices at all in 'flesh' alone. It goes without saying that they have no potentially earth-shattering free choices, either.

At this point, it becomes possible to state what now is obvious: 'flesh,' as 'flesh' alone, is incapable of naming itself as Fallen, and it is incapable of finding the Fall in itself.

We are not going to be able to go back in a time machine and find the Fall. Nor are we going to be able to find the Fall in Man's partial selfishness, or, for that matter, in his partial generosity. We are not going to be able to find the Fall through the inquiries of psychology, or anthropology, or paleontology, or even theology. As 'flesh,' we are incapable of finding the Fall, pure and simple. The whole effort -- all umpteen centuries of it -- to find the Fall in "vanity" -- Nature as 'flesh' alone -- belongs in Mr. Minsky's middle box.

The Fall by its very existence refutes the world of 'flesh' alone. The Fall by definition is a consequence of a genuinely free choice by Man in 'flesh,' in time. A genuinely free choice is possible for Man, who is 'flesh,' only in the free relation given in and through the Eucharistic 'order' of history: 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' 'life.'

Because the Fall is the consequence of a genuinely free choice, and thus is fully within the Eucharistic 'order' of history, the Fall -- by definition -- does not belong solely to the world of Cause and Chance. A 'scientific' effort to find the Fall in that world of Cause and Chance is just silly, has always been silly, and will always be silly.

It doesn't matter that centuries of Catholic theologians looked for the Fall there, and continue to look for it there. That just makes the sight of all that effort depressing. It doesn't make it one bit less silly.

Whatever status Fr. Keefe's work will eventually earn within the Church's reflections, we have to be grateful to him just for having the nerve to say what only a child could say, that the emperor has no clothes. Whatever else is of value in *Covenantal Theology*, just that act, of telling us what we do not wish to hear but is nonetheless obvious, that we really ought to be embarrassed, not by the Catholic faith, but by Catholic thought about that faith, is pretty valuable. If embarrassment is the first step toward making higher-quality mistakes, then all the better.

The smugness of "why bother?" Catholicism, which blandly consigns one of the central doctrines of the Catholic faith to insignificance on the grounds that it is not convenient to a purportedly 'scientific' world-view, is bad enough. For obviously, a New Class Catholic 'studying' the Fall begs the real question: *from where do you get the exalted status to declare yourself so unFallen as to see what it means to be Fallen?*

But, of course, this is exactly the same question that has to be asked of a "what holes?" Catholic studying the same thing. While New Class Catholics are trying to use all sorts of 'scientific' tools to put the Fall into Mr. Minsky's middle box, traditional Catholic theologians are trying to use all sorts of 'scientific' tools to take the Fall out of the same middle box.

I can't begin to count the number of 'scientific' demonstrations of Man's fallenness by Catholic theologians that I myself have encountered, each one more ludicrous than the last. Some learned theologians have opined that the Fall occurred when a cave-man and a cave-woman in Africa 1.5 million years ago turned away from God. Others have demurred that, considering the scientific evidence from evolutionary biology, that it was probably a whole cave-tribe, in their role as The First Human Community, which did so.

Then also, the Fall is 'evident' within traditional Catholic theology because its consequences in the natural world are 'evident.' Evidence of the Fall is everywhere. Its first sign is physical death. Its next is the diminishment of man's faculties, especially his Reason.

One of my current favorites is an attempt to find evidence for the Fall in a little baby's 'self-centered-ness,' which he then supposedly gradually grow out of, as he grows toward others. Well, if there's one thing actual modern science actually tells us about actual little babies, it's that they are usually trying their very best, from their very first moments of life, to *attach* themselves to their mommies and daddies, and to make as certain as they can that their mommies and daddies are attached to them. The average little baby, in other words, only survives because he hasn't yet read any of the theologians' books about how

'self-centered' he is as a consequence of the Fall.

This type of 'evidence' may be so familiar to you that you can't see what's wrong with it, in spite of the fact that, in theory, there must be something wrong with it, since 'flesh' by itself can never find anything whose existence depends on more than 'flesh' -- not even the Fall.

Actually, it is fairly easy to demonstrate why all these 'proofs' must fail. These proofs can prove our finitude, the fact that we die, the fact that we get confused, the fact that we may have originated in Africa, but they can't prove the crucial thing. They can't prove that it was ever better than it is now.

We have to have had a place *from which to Fall*. This is obvious to Fr. Keefe, but it appears not to have been obvious to very many Catholic theologians.

We will never find the Fall in Mr. Minsky's and Ecclesiastes's Real World, because, within that fallen world, the freedom from which Man Fell is only available sacramentally. The Fall was not a 'pretend' Fall. The freedom that we still really possess is only available to us in and through the sacraments. Only the continued direct action in our time of the Risen Lord in the sacramental 'order' which is, simultaneously, the Eucharistic Event: Offertory, Consecration, and Communion, and the New Covenant: 'flesh,' 'One Flesh,' and 'life' provides the real context for 'flesh,' thus gives *ex nihilo* the actual ridiculous free responsibility that is Man's, and thus provides the only ground on which to stand to understand the Fall.

We resort to a familiar picture:

Here we are, over here, in the Fallen world.

< - - - Nope, that's it. We're nowhere else.

And now we destroy nothing of that picture, but transform it all:

Here is the Risen Lord, working in time, mediating,
pre-eminently in the Eucharist, the grace of his One
Sacrifice, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in and
through the Body and Bride of his Catholic Church,
with us in the Fallen world.

Catholic theology can find the Fall only in Him.

Degradation, death, insanity, devilry, idiocy, Man finds readily enough on his own. That their cause is the Fall, a moral choice made by Adam, a moral choice itself made possible only by the prior impossible possibility of free responsible existence in 'flesh,' is a truth Man can find only in the New Covenant.

We ourselves also bear the consequences of the Fall of the First Adam and the First Eve, simply because it matters what bodies do. We bear the consequences of the Fall as a consequence of the impossible ridiculous freedom given Man in the New Covenant. For the same reason, that it does matter what bodies do, we ourselves can not Fall the way Adam and Eve did.

Due to the Fall, we are 'flesh' alone, save for the Eucharistic presence of the Christ. 'Flesh,' as we have learned, can not Fall any lower than it already is. We ourselves can not commit the Original Sin, because, unlike Adam and Eve, we have no unFallen existence from which to Fall.

We ourselves can not repeat Adam and Eve's Fall, for the simple reason that the possibility of making irrevocable acts that have earth-shattering consequences is the definition of covenantal freedom. Indeed, in covenantal existence, there are no formally repeatable acts at all. Adam and Eve performed an irrevocable act that had earth-shattering consequences. In the New Covenant, human acts literally set reality on a new course -- every time. What bodies do matters -- for worse, as well as for better. If nothing else, the Fall demonstrates this.

This I believe is the point at which to discuss another aspect of the relationship between Man's 'private' work or prayer and the public work of the Church, as Fr. Keefe sees it. That relationship is one of covenantal freedom.

However, before I can discuss this, I need to ask you a question: who are public figures?

If you answered, presidents, mayors, senators, etc., you need to think again -- because the sacraments are the only truly public work.

Remember, the New Covenant, the Eucharistic Event, is the sole constituting event of objective reality -- we have to remember to take that seriously. If we don't, we instantly end up with the age-old dichotomy between the Eucharist and everything else, and that always leads to the abjectly pessimistic conclusion that a) we are enslaved in Cause and Chance, and b) therefore, that free, responsible, meaningful existence is impossible.

We are indeed completely enslaved in Cause and Chance in this fallen world. Therefore, we have a 'public' or 'objective' reality only because the Eucharist is a sacrament. As has been illustrated many times in this book, if Christ does not fully "empty himself" into our time in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith, then kings, presidents, jugglers, and each of us, are all "vanity," and nothing more can be said.

So, we need some new vocabulary to take this reality into account. People like presidents and mayors are really only part of the 'private' work or prayer that has its sole reality in and through its free covenantal relation to the 'public' work or prayer of the Church, as was discussed at some length in the two previous chapters.

Now that I've reminded you that the sole truly public work, the only truly objective work, is the sacramental re-presentation of the reality of the New Covenant, then the answer to the question, "Who are public figures?" becomes obvious.

The only truly public figures are bishops and priests.

Bishops and priests have the sole public roles in history. Acting "in the person of Christ," they sacramentally re-present the New Covenant to Man in the Eucharist, and they protect all the sacraments, including Matrimony, as was stated in the previous chapter.

Again, if we imagine a world in which truly public figures exist 'naturally,' and only some of these public figures are bishops and priests, we are back imagining a world that supposedly can find meaning within some time-less framework that is prior to the New Covenant.

I am perfectly well aware that our everyday vocabulary practically demands that we call people like kings and presidents 'public figures,' and we are still free to do so, as long as we recognize that if we really take that language completely seriously, it doesn't work, and it never will. Taking it seriously inevitably puts us back into some time-less framework in which some king, or some president, or at least some concept or reality, is prior to the New Covenant.

So, we just have to bite the bullet and call a spade a spade: the only truly public figures are part of the sacramental 'order,' the Eucharistic 'order' of history. That means: bishops and priests, alone.

Now that you know who the only truly public figures in history are, we can begin to discuss the truly covenantal freedom of the relationship between Man's 'private' work or prayer and the public work of the Church, as Fr. Keefe sees it.

In effect, Fr. Keefe says that bishops and priests need to take the Fall with utter seriousness: Man has the freedom to destroy himself and everything else as thoroughly as his powers permit. Only some trivialization of the Fall allows this message to go unnoticed. It is only the impossible Catholic optimism, the absolute confidence, not in Man, but in the Lord of history, which permits bishops and priests to proclaim this ridiculous covenantal freedom, but it is the same absolute confidence in the Lord of history that also calls for the proclamation of that freedom in all seriousness.

In this way Fr. Keefe not only endorses the work of Fr. John Courtney Murray, S.J., regarding the relationship between the Catholic Church and the civil order, work available in the compilation entitled *We Hold These Truths*. Fr. Keefe goes far beyond endorsement, and does something that will prove to have great significance for the Church: he gives Fr. Murray's work a sacramental ground. He relates Fr. Murray's conclusions directly to the freedom given in the New Covenant itself.

As Fr. Murray saw, the freedom of the civil order is grounded in the prior freedom of the Church. Fr. Murray grounds this freedom in the natural law and in tradition. This may give the impression, as many 'natural law' arguments do, that the freedom of the Church, and the subordinate yet real freedom of the civil order, ought to be available to "reason" as 'flesh' alone. What Fr. Keefe sees is that the grounding of both orders is in fact covenantal. Therefore, the freedom of the civil order is covenantal, free, and historical with the full weight of those words as he develops them in *Covenantal Theology*.

Fr. Keefe sees that the freedom of the civil order identified by Fr. Murray has a direct basis in the New Covenant. That this extraordinary insight is a mere implication of the argument developed in *Covenantal Theology* should serve as some mark of how important an argument it is.

Fr. Keefe puts this in negative terms, but it is fair to turn it around and put it in positive terms. Bishops and priests of the Church have a sacramental responsibility to protect the (humanly) impossible freedom of the 'private' civil order.

First and foremost, they do this by being clearly public figures. Otherwise, the 'private' civil order is impeded in its free appropriation of the public work given solely in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith. If bishops and priests are not clearly public figures, there are no clearly public figures, by definition, since bishops and priests are the only possible public figures.

Once bishops and priests are not obviously public figures, if, for example, they begin to intrude on the civil order, then, among other things, they risk giving scandal. It becomes easier to conclude that no genuinely public figures can exist in 'flesh,' and easier to conclude that the only realm that exists in 'flesh' is 'private.'

This immediately treads perilously close to giving the impression that the Eucharistic 'order' of history does not exist, and that the only reality genuinely available to Man is 'private,' not in the sense used in this book, 'private' within a free covenantal relation to the public work, but in the unreal, the insane sense; that is, 'private' as 'flesh' alone, without covenantal relation.

Priestly and especially episcopal proclamations and interventions regarding the civil order can therefore take on a profoundly anti-sacramental meaning unless these are manifestly public (sacramental) in character.

Of course, there have been many instances of interventions by bishops and priests that did not carefully guard the freedom of their public office, and thus concomitantly failed to guard the freedom of 'private' work or prayer. The intellectual failure to observe the sacramental, covenantal grounding of the freedom of the 'private' social and civil order has to be laid at the doorstep of the acceptance of dehistoricized cosmology within Catholic theology.

Fr. Murray's work, neglected since the Council as *passé*, is of course highly inconvenient to the projects of New Class Catholics, who, as Fr. Keefe documents, completely dominate the staffs and 'advisory' committees of American bishops, not only at the national level but very often at the diocesan level as well.

However, in a familiar story, New Class Catholics have simply walked through the 'logical' doors that traditional Catholic theology opened and continues to keep open for New Class Catholic projects. Theology that appeals to the time-less can not find a clear place for both public work and 'private' work that is not either a subsumption of one into the other, or a chaos. Only the freedom given in the Eucharistic 'order' of history, only in the New Covenant, only in the Eucharistic Event, can a free relation of public work and 'private' prayer be real and intelligible.

Man is clearly given the freedom to destroy himself and everything else just as thoroughly as his powers permit. To deny this is to trivialize or even to deny the Fall. Bishops and priests may, in their thoughts, be aghast at the evil and destruction that Man wreaks by using his powers in genuine freedom, but they are the sole public defenders of that genuine freedom.

Lacking this sacramental and therefore public and therefore objective defense of his freedom, Man is perennially prone to enslave himself by fleeing out of history to the time-less. Man as 'flesh' is afraid of time, and would often prefer to have an end of it. The 'agenda Catholicism' of the New Class is merely one modern example of the impulse to flee time for some place a great deal more orderly, complete, safe, unsurprising, and 'logical.'

Therefore, bishops and priests have a serious obligation:

First, to avoid scandal by making their role, of re-presenting the New Covenant in and through the public work of the Church, plainly distinct from all the 'private' work or prayer of the rest of mankind.

Second, to vigorously defend and protect the freedom of the Church, and through that defense, to be the defenders of the 'private' civil order. This is to defend with all vigor: the priority of the public work of the Church to the 'private' civil order, lest all 'private' work lose any real, public, objective ground; the sacraments; and the whole sacramental order, which includes the plain and consistent teachings of the Church regarding the moral life.

Third, to encourage all men that in Christ, their free responsible relation to the New Covenant is unimaginably, impossibly real, creative *ex nihilo*, and inexhaustibly productive, which is but to remind them that their 'private' work or prayer can always be a genuine worship in spirit and truth.

These three things must be done with all vigor, in season and out; however, episcopal documents, press conferences, and the like, in support of causes, agendas, and policies which are not part of the extraordinary

or the ordinary magisterium and are the subject of dispute among 'private' citizens, should not be a feature of a priest's or a bishop's public life, except perhaps in very extraordinary circumstances.

A bishop's intervention in Man's 'private' work, however well-intentioned, always threatens serious scandal and confusion. Man's 'private' work to complete what is lacking in our Lord's afflictions is irreducibly free, creative, and surprising; any intervention in that work by the episcopate always risks obscuring what must instead be solemnly professed: the absolutely irreducible freedom, creativity, and surprise of Man's 'private' work or prayer. Not only the freedom, but also the creativity and surprise of Man's 'private' work or prayer, is, and will always be, utterly beyond the talent, ability, and even the purview of the episcopate. God gives Man a freedom far beyond even the imagination of any bishop.

Second, and crucially, episcopal interventions in Man's 'private' work or prayer leaves the 'private' work or prayer with no public defenders. After all, the sole public defender of that 'private' work is the episcopate. To protect the sacraments, the episcopate can and should do everything. But by and large, bishops should limit their public judgments regarding Man's 'private' work or prayer in the civil sphere to those things that are always and everywhere true.

We need to recall *Covenantal Theology's* stress on Man's awesome -- on his ridiculous -- freedom in the Eucharistic Event. An episcopal defense of the sacraments is always a defense of Man's impossible freedom in the New Covenant, and thus *per se* is plainly protective of Man and the unimaginable dignity, freedom, creativity, and surprise of his 'private' work or prayer. The profession that contraception always gravely harms Man's ability to enter into sacramental worship enables Man to make his 'private' work or prayer a worship in spirit and truth. Nor may Man put any limits at all on what the Lord, acting in and through his Body and Bride, the Catholic Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, may yet tell Man regarding the Eucharistic 'order' of history in which we live and breathe and have our being.

On the other hand, 'prudential' judgments of bishops regarding Man's 'private' work or prayer in the civil order always carry very grave risks. On most occasions, the exercise of episcopal 'prudential' judgment -- human judgments, not magisterial professions of what is always and everywhere true -- are either blatant clericalism -- an attempt to give the merely human judgments of a bishop or bishops a more authoritative status than the judgments of other men -- or, even more seriously, they represent an episcopal attempt to speak from a time-less place, from whence a bishop may 'look' at Man's 'private' works and 'understand' them 'truly.'

This, as you now understand, does not limit Man's freedom -- it utterly removes it. When bishops attempt to 'teach' Man by standing in a time-less place, all of Man's freedom, his creativity, his ability to surprise God himself, immediately goes into Mr. Minsky's middle box.

Without the full impossibility of Man's freedom, Mary could never have been "full of grace," the activities of Our Lady's juggler would have been meaningless, St. Paul could not have completed what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ -- and St. Therese would have nothing to do in Heaven. Residential bishops must make prudential judgments all the time -- they must run their dioceses. But 'prudential' episcopal judgments regarding the civil order, even when they turn out to be correct (and they turn out to be correct, one can say with complete confidence, no more often than the judgments of any other men), still risk a great deal. They risk obscuring what God so plainly wants so badly that He was willing to risk the prospect that Adam and Eve would use their impossible, ridiculous freedom to be completely destructive not only of themselves but even of all reality, so far as their powers permitted. What does God want this much? He wants Man to surprise Him, in the ways Man loves Him. These are thoughts that outside of the ideas of *Covenantal Theology*, almost can not be thought: Man genuinely surprising God with his love, and God hoping for just that.

Only the strength of God's weakness could ever create such a freedom for Man, but -- since it does -- bishops and priests have no choice but to preach it and protect it. As the only public citizens, they are the last line of defense of the true freedom, the creativity *ex nihilo*, of all of Man's 'private' work or prayer. In the New Covenant, Man's 'private' work or prayer has the ability to surprise God himself. The episcopate can not control it in any way, not even to 'protect' Man from himself. As the Fall proves conclusively, not even God himself did that.

So, once bishops or priests intrude themselves into Man's 'private' work or prayer, they are practically admitting that God's weakness, manifested by his establishment of such ridiculous covenantal freedom for Man, is no strength at all. By expressing power in the civil order, they are practically acknowledging that there is nothing for Man except Cause and Chance, in which the only reality is not covenantal free relation, but power. They are practically conceding that they have no genuine confidence either in God's weakness or in Man's freedom. They are practically ruling out in advance the ability of Man's 'private' work or prayer to be a complete surprise completely intelligible. They are practically assuming that St. Therese has nothing real to do in Heaven.¹

'Before'

Since Catholic theology can find the Fall only by standing within the Eucharistic Event, the New Covenant, then one more childish thing has to be pointed out:

there is no 'before' the Fall.

This is yet another childish idea of Fr. Keefe's. I may be able to make the idea 'understandable' to you, but you may find it even harder to swallow, after you have understood it better.

Here is the standard picture we have:

1. First there was God.
2. Then God created Man and everything else.
3. Then Man, in the person of Adam and Eve, turned from God, sinned, and Fell.
4. Then God sent his only Son "*propter peccatum*" (because of sin) to redeem us.

1. A 'Heaven' in which St. Therese lives but has no ability to help us -- without in any way violating our own covenantal freedom - - not only shreds a central Catholic doctrine, the communion of saints, but is so diametrically opposed to her firm conviction regarding Heaven that, if she had to live in such a 'Heaven,' she would know herself to be in Hell. Charles Dickens may have seen part of it. He has Scrooge observe the ghosts of the selfish dead, who, like his former partner, Marley, wander ceaselessly, and moan, because they are no longer able to help the poor, who they had turned from in life: "The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power forever." [*A Christmas Carol*] But presumably those souls were in some sort of Dickensian Hell. If "the Lord is truly risen," if the Eucharistic Event is real, then St. Therese, the woman who on her deathbed said, "Until the end of the world I will spend my heaven doing good upon earth," does not now live in misery, and she does indeed have real work to do in Heaven.

However, Fr. Keefe says, that's not how it goes at all. The Eucharistic Event, not a dehistoricized cosmology, is the center of all reality. There is no time-less place, and putting God there is automatically to assign God himself to Mr. Minsky's middle box. However much we yearn for the time-less, it doesn't exist, and Christ calls us to 'time-full,' "radically historical," covenantal existence. We live solely in and through our 'private' appropriation of the public worship of the Church, the Bride of Christ her Head. So, we have to categorically reject the standard picture that we all have learned, because here is what that picture really assumes, in its very first step:

1. First there was God *in a time-less place*.

However cozy with familiarity that picture seems, it must therefore be categorically rejected from its very first step as unreal *and uncatholic* by the fundamental argument of Fr. Keefe's book.

Thus any 'before' the New Covenant is a flight to the time-less, because any 'before' assumes that God exists in a time-less place. Taking this seriously, Fr. Keefe draws the following conclusions.

* God did not send his Son to give the Spirit "*propter peccatum*," because of Adam and Eve's sin. That would imply a 'before,' a time-less place where God 'really' is.

* God sent his Son to give the Spirit, and that sending was itself both the Creation of the world and the New Covenant. Creation was therefore not Creation from a time-less 'before' but Creation in the New Covenant, for "Through Him all things were made." As the Book of Revelation makes clear, he is the Lamb of God who, by His One Sacrifice, is the Alpha and the Omega. How can there be a 'before' the Lamb of God who is the *Alpha* and the Omega?

The Catholic faith is a 'time-full' Event and the free response to that Event, not any time-less Thing. Trying to 'understand' that 'time-full' Event and the free response to it in the light of a time-less framework supposedly prior to both is the problem, as ever.

One of the age-old resorts to a time-less 'explanation' of the Eucharistic Event is purportedly based on the first words of John's gospel.

"In the beginning" was the Word. Of course, any dehistoricized cosmology would more than assume, it would dictate, that "in the beginning" that Word had to be the time-less *Logos* (word) of the philosophers, because of necessity there has to be a time-less

framework prior even to him. But the Word does not take dictation -- that's rather the point, isn't it? Instead, "In the beginning" was the Word: the Lord of history, the Lamb of God, the Alpha and the Omega, fully within time, but not bound by it.

Creation in the New Covenant is therefore the only Creation there is, and that Creation was also the creation of the absolutely free choice of Adam and Eve, who freely chose to be unfree and thus Fell. Thus the existence of Adam and Eve is both historical and "primordial." The knowledge of Man's true freedom, thus the knowledge of the real historical possibility of the Fall, and the historical existence of the First Adam and the First Eve who Fell, is available historically and really, but only in and through the historical New Covenant of the historical Second Adam and the historical Second Eve. This has to be, because the historicity and reality of the First Adam and the First Eve is subordinate to and dependent on the historicity and reality of the Second Adam and the Second Eve.

Nothing done by the First Adam and the First Eve required, conditioned, or necessitated the New Covenant: to the contrary. The existence of the New Covenant was the Creation of the world, and accordingly it was the creation of Man's covenantal freedom and thus the creation of the possibility of the Fall.

Thus -- despite centuries of speculation which assumed that there was not only a 'before' the Fall, but that we could stand there -- there just isn't any such 'before,' and we definitely can't stand there. Reality is given in and through the Eucharistic Event, which is 'time-full' through and through, "radically historical," as Fr. Keefe terms it. There is no 'before' the New Covenant. Any Catholic theology that does not take this with complete literalness at that moment becomes a dehistoricized cosmology and thereby at once ceases to be Catholic theology.

Many of the examples and developments in this book -- notably the interjection of Mr. Minsky's thought -- are not Fr. Keefe's, and are for the purpose of dramatically illustrating how like a child he thinks. But the rejection of 'before' the Fall is right out of his book, as is the contention that any Catholic theology which takes up a dehistoricized cosmology immediately loses its status as Catholic theology.

Thus, even when Fr. Keefe's language is simplified to make his thought more 'understandable,' it does not thereby become more digestible to Catholic theologians. This emphasizes that the critique *Covenantal Theology* makes of Catholic theology -- wrong or right -- is fundamental in character. *Covenantal Theology* may be indigestible because it is so totally on the wrong track -- or it may be indigestible because it is so profoundly, at long last, on the right track.

11 *On the Faithfulness of Science, and the Paganism of Catholic Theology*

It might be helpful to illustrate the radical, the fundamental, character of the critique advanced by *Covenantal Theology* by means of an ironic -- and scandalous -- contrast between the activity of a typical reputable contemporary (thus not necessarily a 'modern') Catholic theologian, and that of a typical reputable modern natural scientist.

Rarely as a matter of what he says, but singularly as a matter of what he does, a good modern natural scientist is quite stubborn about remaining within time and not fleeing to a time-less structure in which the Right Answer is already written down in a book, and he is quite courageous in his efforts to make his mind conform to the Real, and not the other way around, whatever the cost to what he thought he 'knew.'

Modern science continues to advance, because good modern scientists continue to behave as if their object of study had priority over the methods they employ to study it. Whatever they may say, they behave as if their methods were really historical. They do not behave as if their methods were 'obvious' deductions from 'right reason,' obeying the inexorable and time-less Laws of Thought.

Instead, they act as if their methods -- their very thoughts regarding what is "reasonable" -- were themselves fully historical, not safely isolated in a time-less place. They act as if their methods were always subject to the most drastic transformation as the result of a mysterious interaction in time between the reality of their object and their current questions, such that their methods were always and continually emerging in time as a set of even more intelligible and coherent questions regarding the object, than any set of questions that had previously been asked or even imagined.

They act as if their questions and methods might be radically imperfect, such that in their present state they could never grasp their object even in principle, and they act as if the interaction in time of those very questions and methods with their object will result in a new set of questions and methods that may also very possibly be radically imperfect, which will nonetheless be more coherent and intelligible, but in ways that are not predictable or even articulable in advance. They act as if reason itself were completely bound by time, radically historical, completely provisional. They act as if that does not bother them, because their faith is not actually in their 'reason,' but in the reality which is its object, and in that reality's fundamental and irrevocable intelligibility.

When modern scientists talk about what they do and its implications, they nearly always cast their statements in terms of a dehistoricized cosmology -- an intellectual framework which they obviously immediately abandon when they actually do science.

Thus, when they do science, their resolute 'time-fullness,' their faith in the existence of a "concretely present knowable unknown" (as Fr. Keefe terms it) can be so radiant, as to embarrass a saint. They say that

they are busily tying up all the loose ends in a universe of Cause and Chance. They act as if reality were one giant surprise, inexhaustibly intelligible.

What modern scientists say and what they actually do are thus quite often in fundamental conflict. Since scientists are card-carrying members of the New Class, the knowledge and management class, it would be unsurprising if they shared the assumptions and the language of their class. What is so surprising is the conflict between their activities, including their words, as members of the New Class, and their activities as scientists per se.

For -- even though their words often deny this -- as scientists their actions manifest a genuine response of radiant faith that reality is present to Man within the context of genuine history, and is thus both fundamentally surprising and inexhaustibly intelligible.

However, the distance -- the dichotomy -- between saying and doing is no less marked for Catholic theologians than it is for natural scientists. Unfortunately, it is the behavior of Catholic theologians (their methodology, their fundamental assumptions, their basic intellectual and scientific approach) rather than their words, which has been, far too often -- it must be said, for Fr. Keefe does say as much -- faithless and pagan. This is not to say that they personally were either faithless or pagan. What Fr. Keefe criticizes is not the personal holiness of any man but a profound mistake within Catholic theology -- a mistake, not a sin.

For centuries, Catholic theologians have said that reality is full of grace, but they have acted as if that were not true.

They have behaved as if reality were the product of necessity, of Cause and Chance, of 'logic,' as if reality were a place of no surprise, existing as the result of having already been written down in a time-less book, by a god who therefore could not possibly be called Living.

They have behaved as if 'choice' existed "because we are bound, whether we like it or not."

In marked contrast to modern natural scientists, they have behaved as if their questions, methods, assumptions, principles, categories, -- and of course, 'reasonableness' itself -- existed unalterably and therefore reassuringly in a time-less 'place,' a dehistoricized cosmology, that had priority over its object.

In short, they have behaved as if the Eucharist itself could be and needed to be understood by means of a time-less structure prior to it -- which structure, as luck would have it, was already 'naturally' in their possession.

Fr. Keefe's work is rich in ideas, themes, and argument, but regarding these behaviors for centuries endemic, even canonical, within Catholic theology, all 784 pages of *Covenantal Theology* can be summarized in one word: stop.

12 *Method and System*

Once or twice within *Covenantal Theology*, Fr. Keefe calls his book a "metatheology" and a "meta-metaphysics"; that is, his primary intent is not to do theology or metaphysics, but rather to make genuinely Catholic theology and metaphysics possible again. *Covenantal Theology* establishes both the necessity for and the possibility of grounding Catholic theology in the New Covenant itself, a ground -- one would have to say, by definition -- considerably more solid than any ground Catholic theology currently occupies, for its current ground is some form of dehistoricized cosmology taken to be 'obviously' or 'naturally' prior to the New Covenant itself.

A great deal¹ of *Covenantal Theology* is devoted to outlining what would be required for the reconversion of the two great streams of Catholic thought, Augustinianism and Thomism, to what Fr. Keefe calls the "prime analogue": the New Covenant, the Eucharistic Event.

"Reconversion" is the proper word for what is needed. Fr. Keefe devotes considerable labor to demonstrating that both Augustinianism and Thomism are viable Catholic theologies. They do not need to be swept aside, they need to be reconverted to the Eucharist.

That reconversion is, of course, also a blanket rejection of all dehistoricized cosmology. This rejection must be performed by both theologies from their outsets as theologies, and also persistently, consciously, and consistently throughout all their "searching." This is the "methodological conversion" of which Fr. Keefe speaks.

A further methodological explicitness and coherence -- another glaring methodological deficiency that Fr. Keefe finds painfully evident -- is also required of both. The natural sciences have proved that such explicitness, at a level of sophistication now nearly unimaginable within current Catholic theology, is both possible and highly desirable in itself, but Fr. Keefe also argues for this for a further reason that will become clear in a moment.

Fr. Keefe says two highly significant things regarding Augustinianism and Thomism:

- (1) They are both fully viable Catholic theologies, yet their approaches to theology are mutually exclusive.

1. Because this book is written for 'normal people,' the barest outline of Fr. Keefe's technical theological work regarding this reconversion is given here. However, you should realize that *Covenantal Theology* does not just lay bare a deep intellectual hurt in Catholic theology (which might be considered accomplishment enough). It is instead a fundamentally generous and constructive book. The separate intellectual language and categories of both Augustinianism and Thomism have been hundreds of years in the making. It proved very difficult to avoid pagan intellectual categories, and both made their respective intellectual turns to the time-less, but that hardly makes their every word worthless. Much to the contrary, together they form our Catholic intellectual treasure, for both at their best have been the intellectual language of saints: *faith* "searching" for understanding. Accordingly, both theologies instinctively "search" for the 'time-fullness' of the New Covenant -- but are prevented from doing this coherently by their pagan root intellectual categories. Fr. Keefe shows -- from within the special language of each -- how each can forsake those false categories. Taking both treasures with great seriousness, he spends about half of a 784-page book outlining, in some detail, how both Augustinian and Thomist theologians could do a better job of forming their root intellectual categories in the light of the New Covenant -- if they decided they wanted to do that.

(2) Their two approaches exhaust the methodological possibilities for Catholic theology.

This is the second reason Fr. Keefe argues for a much greater methodological explicitness and consistency within both Augustinianism and Thomism: although methodologically mutually exclusive, they have all too often incoherently adopted parts of the other's assumptions, categories, and questions, thereby making themselves into incoherent hodge-podges rather than mature "searchings."

So, after both Augustinian and Thomistic "searching" are reconverted to the same Eucharistic Event, what would remain as mutually exclusive differences between them? Here are some illustrations:

The Augustinian speaks in paradoxes, beyond common sense.

The Thomist speaks in declarative sentences, beyond common sense.

The Augustinian is systematically anti-systematic.

The Thomist is anti-systematically systematic.

The Augustinian's philosophical roots are in Plato's world.

The Thomist's philosophical roots are in Aristotle's world.

Augustinianism and Thomism have exactly the same object, the New Covenant, but the methods they employ in the "searching" that is their free response to that Eucharistic Event, are mutually exclusive -- or at least, they should be.

Why should they be? Take one example. The classic Augustinian formulation is *simul justus et peccator* - at once justified and sinful. The Augustinian is committed as a matter of basic method to maintaining the full tension of that statement. We are justified -- and yet we're sinful; we're sinful -- and yet we're justified.

The Augustinian is committed to the idea that it is impossible to answer or resolve this contradiction. Instead, his intellectual method amounts to continuing to say both things simultaneously.

Maybe that sounds just crazy, or stupid, but consider: how in the world can 'flesh' be part of the Eucharistic 'order' of history? Well, it can't possibly be -- and yet it is.

As a *Catholic* Platonist, the Augustinian first of all focuses on the utter "vanity" of 'flesh,' and how amazingly ridiculous is the surprise of grace. 'Flesh,' while not even for an instant fleeing the 'fleshiness' of time, nonetheless freely signs the Eucharistic 'order' of history.

The Augustinian is committed to maintaining the full 'flesh'-iness of 'flesh,' and the completeness of the surprise of its relation to 'One Flesh' and 'life' in the Eucharistic 'order' of history. Since 'flesh' is "vanity" through and through, 'flesh' can't really even talk about the New Covenant. Nonetheless, 'flesh' in Christ effectively signs the New Covenant.

This conundrum is the fundamental insight of Augustinian theology. In a real sense, that insight comes before language and thought itself -- since even words and thoughts are but 'flesh.' Even more, that insight can not really be articulated in 'flesh' -- it is ineradicably intuitive, prior to language and thought itself, a sheer gift given in the New Covenant. We can't grasp it, we can't comprehend it, and it has its only existence in the perfect 'time-fullness' (the "radical historicity") of the New Covenant, so, in our fallen world, the only time the intuition exists is *now*. (If St. Augustine were not a *Catholic* Platonist, the intuition couldn't exist in time at all, of course, but only in some time-less 'place.')

Our intuition of grace, though fully within time, is prior even to our categories of time, and is not available to us except in *now*.

Further, the Augustinian has to take all this with complete seriousness. That is, this fundamental apprehension of faith, this intuition that exists solely in *now* and that is prior to language and thought itself, not only resists any and all efforts to 'form' it further (to use the Platonic vocabulary native to Augustinianism), it always defeats those efforts.

We can't possibly talk about the New Covenant in 'flesh' -- we can't possibly even think about the New Covenant in 'flesh.' 'Flesh' really is complete 'vanity,' and grace really is a total surprise. The Augustinian won't ever let us forget that both things are absolutely true.

Obviously then, the only language available to the Augustinian is one fixed solely in the present, and yet always available to the complete surprise of grace in that present.

The only 'language' like that is, of course, the liturgical 'language' of the free public worship of the Church. For example: "This is My Body, This is My Blood."

Therefore the Augustinian commits as a matter of basic method to an intuitive and present-oriented appropriation and apperception of the liturgical mysteries, and to language which is a free response to those mysteries in terms of that same basic approach, which can only be the language of paradox and dialectic: *simul justus et peccator*.

This is a true and viable Catholic theology, though the approach would obviously drive a Thomist crazy. One proof of Augustinianism's viability is its predominance. For instance, St. Augustine, not St. Thomas, is more frequently cited in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Clearly also, a large amount of the saints' writings are cast in terms fundamentally Augustinian. Further, when Fr. Keefe surveys the history of Catholic theology, he finds Augustinians aplenty, and not nearly as many Thomists.

For example, in my opinion, the prominent 'Thomist,' the late Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar, is obviously an Augustinian, not a Thomist. Fr. von Balthasar denies even the possibility of a systematic theology, and his writings are primarily long, allusive, and paradoxical reflections on liturgical mysteries. His basic approach is plainly Augustinian, not Thomist. (Perhaps characteristically, he resolves this apparent contradiction by stating that Aquinas himself was not actually systematic -- in effect saying that St. Thomas was not a Thomist).

By contrast, the Thomist is, as I call it, "anti-systematically systematic."

That is, as a *Catholic* Aristotelian, he is committed as a matter of basic method to the employment of a formally systematic "searching" regarding the Eucharistic Event -- but he knows that every ounce of his system is provisional and historical, subject to radical transformation by the reality of its object.

Thomism is thus anti-intuitive, or rather, it is skeptical about intuition, as a matter of basic method. Instead, it takes its first steps not within a personal direct intuition but within the context of an already-available formal system, which is nonetheless 'flesh,' and therefore, fully historical.

Also, the Thomist is committed, not to the 'fleshiness' of 'flesh,' but to the reality of its signing of the Eucharistic 'order.' To put it another way, the Augustinian always begins with 'flesh,' and emphasizes the impossibility of it becoming more than itself -- and thus commits to holding the surprise of the New Covenant as a present reality.

By contrast, the Thomist commits to holding the intelligibility of the New Covenant as a present reality. In a word, the Thomist commits to the use of an historical system to study a metaphysical reality (the Eucharistic relation of 'flesh' to 'One Flesh') whose reality and intelligibility is not itself in question, as it always is for the Augustinian, lest the utter surprise of the New Covenant go unremarked.

To put it in a very homely way, if the Thomist really took the Augustinian seriously, the Thomist would never get out of bed in the morning to do Thomism. Making the Eucharistic Event systematically intelligible would be impossible. And yet, of course, the Augustinian is completely correct. By the same token, the fact that the Thomist does indeed make the Eucharistic Event systematically if provisionally, historically, intelligible is a fact that can never be accounted for by the Augustinian. So, the Thomist is also completely correct.

Thus, as reconverted to the "prime analogate," the New Covenant, both Augustinianism and Thomism are viable but methodologically mutually exclusive Catholic theologies.

Fr. Keefe is therefore at pains to state that Augustinianism is not a failed Thomism. It is not Thomism of a lower intellectual or theological order than 'real' Thomism. To the contrary, Augustinianism repudiates Thomism's fundamental method -- the *a priori* acceptance of a formal system -- as categorically objectionable from the outset.

To the Augustinian, the entire Thomistic project is methodologically unavailable.

Similarly, Thomism is not an arrogant Augustinianism. Rather, it repudiates Augustinianism's fundamental method -- the acceptance of an intuitive *a priori* available only in 'now,' which can never really be articulated -- as categorically objectionable from the outset.

To the Thomist, the entire Augustinian project is methodologically unavailable.

Therefore, Augustinianism and Thomism are, from their outsets, two completely viable and yet fundamentally incompatible theological methods -- with exactly the same object. This is one reason Fr. Keefe urges both to become much more methodologically conscious and consistent, lest either become a mere theological hodge-podge.

What puts the 'Catholic' in both methods -- what makes them theologies -- is their object, the identical "prime analogate" of both. They are both Catholic theologies due to their fundamental dependence on the Eucharist.

Augustinianism would immediately become pessimistic, cynical, lost, insane, desperate to flee to the time-less while knowing that was impossible -- in our day its logical conclusion would be some form of postmodernism -- if 'flesh's' present relation to the Risen Lord were not absolutely real.

Thomism would immediately become sterile, totalitarian, enslaved to necessities of its own making, no longer tied to time -- in our day its logical conclusion would be some form of scientism -- if its adopted system were not a fully historical 'private' work or prayer in the New Covenant.

Thus, for Fr. Keefe, Catholic theology need not be systematic, but then it must be, as a matter of consistent method, anti-systematic!

This is Augustinianism's manner of methodological coherence. Being entirely present-directed and thus intuitive, unalterably committed to witnessing to the 'flesh'-iness and therefore the "vanity" of 'flesh,' perhaps especially the "vanity" of formal structures, only its faith in the Risen Lord saves it from utter meaninglessness, but in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith, he does so save it, at every present moment.

Similarly, Catholic theology need not refrain from casting its questions within the framework of a formal system, but then it must also be systematically historical regarding that system, as a matter of consistent method.

This of course would constitute methodological coherence within a reconverted Thomism. Being unalterably committed to a skepticism about present-directed intuition, and to confidence instead in formally systematic inquiry, Thomism would formally and systematically conclude to the dehistoricization of time, thus to the fundamental insanity of reality and its total enslavement in Cause and Chance, but for its faith in the Risen Lord of history, sacramentally re-presented in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith.

Thus: two mutually exclusive methods of Catholic theology, both (as reconverted) finding their object, their methodological coherence -- their confidence -- directly in the Eucharistic Event.

An intellectually incoherent 'mixing' of Augustinianism and Thomism (or at least of Platonism and Aristotelianism) has happened more than once in Catholic theology's long history. For instance, so-called 'neo-Platonism' mixed Platonic assumptions with Aristotelian ideas about logic. That fundamentally incoherent philosophical mixture was often resorted to in early Catholic theology, and always had less than beneficial intellectual consequences.

Therefore, Fr. Keefe strongly urges theologians to stick to their chosen lasts, whether Augustinian or Thomist, because intellectual hodge-podges do no one any good. These may 'solve' some problems temporarily -- but they do so only by fudging the problems, and that's never a good thing in the long run. It might at times be very difficult for Catholic theologians to maintain the methodological integrity of their chosen 'stream' of Catholic theology, but they still have to do it.

After having said all this about the importance of methodological integrity within both Augustinianism and Thomism, I probably do need to remind you, though, that *people* are never 'Augustinians' or 'Thomists,' any more than *people* are 'theologians,' 'scientists' -- or jugglers.

Augustinianism and Thomism are the two basic ways Catholics can perform their 'private' work or prayer in the New Covenant when their "searching" is by means of intellectual questions of higher and higher quality.

Nobody is an 'Augustinian' or a 'Thomist' when he's asleep, when he's juggling, or when he is participating in the liturgy, the public work of the Church. When you're asleep or you're juggling, that's a totally different 'private' work or prayer than theology is. On the other hand, when you're at Mass, its public reality transcends, completes, and unifies all 'private' work or prayer.

So, trying to 'be' an 'Augustinian' or a 'Thomist,' as if it were some kind of life-style, is silly at best, and, at worst, substitutes being an 'Augustinian' or a 'Thomist' for our blunt 'time-full' participation in the Eucharistic 'order' of history. We need to sleep and eat and do the millions of other things besides theology that also, in the New Covenant, inexhaustibly mediate that Covenant in our 'private' work or prayer, and we need to let the Mass and the other sacraments be what they are -- the only really public work fallen Man can participate in.

However, since we can't and shouldn't 'be' Augustinians or Thomists, that does mean that we 'normal people' can read and reflect on both Catholic theologies whenever we wish.

If we're in the mood for comedy, tragedy, pratfalls, despair, puns, paradoxes, poetry, horrifyingly evil acts, radiantly good ones, all in the utter surprise of grace, we might try a little Augustinianism. (You can see why Augustinianism has been the historically more popular choice).

On the other hand, at every Mass, we are not only confronted by the utter surprise of grace, but also by its utter reality. Then, like the Virgin, we might out of sheer wonder exclaim, "How can this be?" [Luke 1:34 RSV] -- and, at that exact moment, St. Thomas has gotten us interested in his project.

'Normal people' are lucky. We don't have to choose between Augustinianism and Thomism -- but when theologians do theology, they do, as Fr. Keefe makes absolutely clear.

Another thing regarding method and system needs to be said in this chapter. For the question arises, what is Fr. Keefe's own method within *Covenantal Theology*?

His method is both explicit in the text and implicit. A small outline of that method -- its working assumptions, categories, and starting points -- will thus serve as one more way into the ideas in his book. Fr. Keefe appears to believe that the Catholic theologian has an obligation to make his method scientific, in the sense discussed in the previous chapter:

A Catholic theologian is committed *a priori*, before he begins, and throughout his "searching," to the reality and inexhaustible intelligibility of his object.

He is also committed *a priori* in the same way to the fundamental and ineradicable historicity of his own "searching."

He is unceasingly skeptical regarding himself, his methods, his questions, and his answers. He never doubts the reality and the inexhaustible intelligibility of that which he studies. If either commitment is swerved from even for a moment, at that instant, what he begins to do is anti-scientific and completely pagan, and for both reasons it is no longer Catholic theology. This outline -- which applies to both the Augustinian and the Thomist, as each applies his own distinct, incompatible, but thoroughly Catholic theological method - is fleshed out as follows:

A Catholic theologian does not assume that he has everything all worked out.

A Catholic theologian does not assume that he has anything all worked out.

He does not assume that Catholic theology has everything all worked out.

He does not assume that Catholic theology has anything all worked out.

He does not assume that Catholic theology will ever have everything all worked out.

In fact, he assumes the reverse: a Catholic Theory of Everything is fundamentally un-Catholic.

By contrast, he knows in advance that both his question and his answer will be insufficient to his object.

On the other hand, he knows that questions and answers *in time* are the only real ones, and that he must stand within them in order to understand.

Thus, he does not assume that he will be able to answer any question he poses, for he has no ultimate confidence in his method, nor his categories, nor his technique, nor his scholarship, nor even in his powers of 'reason,' but only in the reality of his object.

He does not even assume that he will be able to formulate a question of higher quality, for the same reason: he knows that he is no more sufficient to his object than was Our Lady's juggler.

He may have no idea how to ask or to answer any particular question in Catholic theology.

Only his confidence that his object, the Eucharistic Event and the free response to that Event, is a "concretely present knowable unknown," allows him to proceed.

He proceeds by making his method of posing questions and answering them as conscious, explicit, historical, and Catholic as he can.

Thus, and first: in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of the New Covenant, he stands within his free response of faith to the liturgy of the Church -- to repeat, his primary response of faith is in and through the liturgy and to the liturgy, not to an idea of it, not to a commentary on it, but, specifically, to the Church's actual historical re-presentation and mediation of the New Covenant in sacramental sign.

In and through that standing, he stands within Sacred Scripture and Tradition, for "he was known to them in the breaking of the bread."¹

1. Luke 24:35 RSV

Then, standing within both, he stands within an historical tradition of inquiry: the historical 'private' free response, the work or prayer of the faithful in time, in a particular time, which is a "searching" that in no way can be limited to the theological, but which includes the theological with all seriousness.

He refuses to try to make his "searching" 'safe' or 'defensible' by a flight to a time-less court of no appeal. His inquiry is historical throughout, responsive to his fleshly historical tradition of inquiry, and never to some infinite and time-less 'standard' apart from it.

First, however, his inquiry is radically and thoroughly responsive to the historical reality of the New Covenant, freely re-presented in time in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith. He submits his work or prayer in time totally, without remainder, to the historical and not the time-less judgment of the real and historical Bride of Christ.

Thus, abjectly historical, he assumes that his very thoughts, even his thoughts about what is 'reasonable,' are open to a total historical transformation by the reality of his object.

Thus, with both the confidence and the humility exemplified by Our Lady's juggler, he makes his 'private' work or prayer freely available to the whole Church, to make of it what she will.

To conclude this chapter, it is worthwhile to reiterate a point made earlier in it, for the point really does capture one of the absolutely basic ideas in *Covenantal Theology*: a Catholic theologian is committed *a priori*, before he begins, and throughout his "searching," to the reality and inexhaustible intelligibility of his object.

That is, no Catholic -- and so, of course, no Catholic theologian -- can seriously ask this question regarding the Catholic faith: "*An sit verum?*" (but, on the other hand, is it true?). A Catholic is unable to ask this question -- because he can't really take it seriously. The question assumes that there is some 'place' Man can stand 'outside' the Eucharist, where he is able to 'evaluate' or 'understand' it:

The Eucharist is over here,

Another way of saying the same thing is, when Man seriously asks, "*An sit verum?*" he is automatically assuming that thought precedes the Eucharist. He is assuming that thought already exists in some time-less realm that is "higher" than and prior to the Eucharist's bluntly physical presence in time.

Fr. Keefe says, the nature of reality itself is Eucharistic: this is the faith of the Church. Therefore, reality is historical, not time-less: it is meaningful solely because the Eucharist is a sacrament -- Christ's actual, physical presence and his One Sacrifice, re-presented and poured out to us in sacramental sign *now*.

Therefore, the substrate for our very thoughts is no time-less place, but only the Eucharist. Its bluntly physical, unswervingly 'time-full,' sacramental, covenantal, historical presence as an Event, not as a 'framework' or a 'structure' or a 'theory,' is the literal creation of the whole world, and its redemption from the Fall wreaked by Adam and Eve's sin.

The Catholic can not ask, "*An sit verum?*" (but, on the other hand, is it true?) not because he is not 'allowed' to ask it -- not because Oppressive Church Authorities refuse to permit such impertinence. He can't ask this question, because he understands that he has to stand in a time-less place in order to ask it. The question immediately dribbles away into absurdity, into the "vanity" of 'flesh,' as soon as it is formulated.

Nor can the Catholic answer the question, "*An sit verum?*" when it is asked by another. The question itself, by assuming that Man can stand to understand in some 'place' outside the Eucharist, already asserts the contrary of what the Church proclaims. So, partly, "*An sit verum?*" can not be 'answered' because the question itself is not a real question, but a conclusion: that the Eucharistic Event is not prior to the questioner or the 'place' where he stands. The question implicitly assumes the existence of a 'place' prior to the Eucharist, by which it will be 'evaluated' and 'understood.' The only 'answer' a Catholic can give to "*An sit verum?*", a 'question' that assumes its own answer *a priori*, is some very, very gentle and polite way of saying, "That's not a question -- it's a conclusion."

So, the fundamental reason that the Catholic can not answer "*An sit verum?*" is because Catholics don't have answers. Catholics have a Person, who acts, in our time, in and through sacramental sign, freely given in and through the free liturgical mediation of the Church's bodily, physical, 'time-full,' historical, covenantal faith in her Head.

< - - - and here we are, standing some place else, in the 'normal universe,' looking at it, and trying to understand it.

Catholics don't have answers because the Eucharistic Event, the New Covenant, is not an answer. It is not any idea or theory *about* reality. It is the re-presentation of reality, in and through the free, covenantal, sacramental, historical, nuptial relation of the Bride and her Head, 'One Flesh' in the One Sacrifice.

Catholics can only stand within the blunt physical, sacramental, 'time-full' acts given in and through the Eucharistic Event. This standing is the sole understanding available to Man -- no other exists. The only way 'in' to time is by being baptized into the death of the Lord -- and, as even the pagans know, there is no other alternative: there is no way out of time.¹ Catholics can not give any man, even themselves, an 'answer,' because reality is not an answer, but is the Eucharistic Event, in all its blunt physicality and particularity, in all its ridiculous refusal of the time-less, without remainder.

This is Good News, but, because the News is truly free, Man is always free to reject it. No iron necessity forces Man to be free. If "but, on the other hand, is it true?" is really the challenge, "Force me to accept reality," then the Catholic must, by all that is holy, remain mute, for such binding by necessary reasons directly contradicts the New Covenant, and Man's freedom.

Alternatively, if "*An sit verum?*" (but, on the other hand, is it true?) is really the question, "What is the difference between your claim and any other?", again, the Catholic can in the end only point to the Eucharist, not answer. From the earliest years of the Church, Catholics have presented evidence that the New Covenant, once it is freely appropriated by Man, is indeed radically and inexhaustibly intelligible. Two thousand years later, they're still showing that -- and still able to show that -- as Fr. Keefe's book demonstrates. Nonetheless, the word 'once' in the 'once it is freely appropriated' part of the last sentence is fundamental, for there is no place to stand from which even to ask the question about differences, except the Eucharist. First Man has to stand within the Eucharist; then he can -- finally -- begin to ask questions and tell the difference between reality and no-thing.

The Church can only appeal to other Christians in the same way: you can only understand fully by standing within the Eucharist. Nothing -- not even the Bible -- can be understood apart from the New Covenant. In other words, the Church says to nearly all Protestants: the Bible is true because "This is my Body, This is my Blood" is true, and for no other reason. The Eucharistic Event, the New Covenant, created the Bible -- not the other way around.

When Christians reject Catholic sacramental realism, they inevitably, if inadvertently, replace the New Covenant with some time-less framework, for that is fallen Man's only alternative to the Eucharistic Event. The difficulty for all Protestantism then becomes the two classic alternative problems of all dehistoricized cosmology.

For evangelical, fundamentalist, and other 'traditional' Protestants, one of the problems created by a rejection of the 'time-full,' historical Eucharistic Event is an unbridgeable gap between Faith and Reason. Take evolution, for instance. These Christians devote strenuous effort to trying to explain away Darwin's profound insight, without which modern science could scarcely function. (Some Catholics try this too, in spite of the fact that the Holy Father has said that it's not necessary.)

1. Fallen existence is still covenantal existence ("Through Him all things were made"), but this reality can only be appropriated sacramentally -- the Fall was not 'pretend.' In this life we live solely by baptism into his death. At death the reality of covenantal existence is no longer only available sacramentally. Since our sole entry into covenantal existence is in his death, Fr. Keefe thinks that physical death -- which is also his death -- is the sole moment that the unbaptized are free to appropriate the reality of life lived in the death of the Lord, a life daily available to the baptized.

There probably isn't any intellectually coherent way to reconcile evolution with the idea that reality as sacred comes in a pre-packaged time-less Divine Plan. Recognizing this, these Christians, despite their evident faith in Christ, end up wasting countless hours trying to ignore one of the fundamental tenets of modern science, or trying to discredit it. As far as they're concerned, if evolution is correct, then everything they believe is false. It couldn't be a more classic representation of an unbridgeable gap between Faith and Reason.

On the other hand, most mainline Protestant churches have adopted the alternative 'resolution' of the paradigm -- the subsumption of Faith into Reason. These well-meaning Christians have increasingly reached the conclusion that, if the Eucharist itself is not the center of the Christian life in every way, intellectual as well as in all else, then there really isn't a center to the Christian life. Christianity, therefore, not only has to be evaluated by means of 'reason,' it has to be shored up by means of 'reason.' Enter New Class Protestantism, whose long-range goal, apparently, is not merely apologizing for your grandmother's faith, but apologizing for everyone's faith.

So, to "*An sit verum?*", a Catholic can not give any answer. A Catholic does not have 'answers,' but for his whole life long, he can "search." This "searching" is not a second-best something that the Catholic has to settle for until he can get time-less Answers. The "searching" is his full crucifixion into time, each man's 'private' work or prayer, his quest, in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith, to complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. The "searching" is his life, made meaningful, as complete surprise completely intelligible, solely in the Eucharistic 'order' of history.

Sometimes this "searching" is in the form of intellectual questions of higher and higher quality -- this is Catholic theology. These questions can be of such quality that they can serve as 'answers,' until better questions can be found. Most often the "searching" takes other forms -- an inexhaustible variety of forms, in literal fact. We all have plenty to do on earth, as we will in Heaven.

The blunt physicality and particularity of the Eucharistic Event, its sheer this-ness, its utter refusal of the time-less, has at times greatly troubled the wise, but its firm proclamation in the present age might even be heard as Good News by some true moderns -- if they, by ridiculous grace, were ever tempted to abandon their own personal flights to the time-less in favor of Offertory, Consecration, and Communion.

Still, whatever its reception, the Good News must be preached, in season and out. Fr. Keefe asserts that it is the consistent faith of the Church, proclaimed in her liturgy from the earliest times, that Life does not come out of 'wisdom,' out of Thought. Thought comes out of His Life. As the writings of both St. Paul and Tertullian show, the present age is not the first one in which the assertion of the priority of the living sacramental presence of Christ crucified to all things, even to wisdom -- his covenantal priority even to real wisdom, genuine good -- has looked ridiculous to some of the wise.

13 *Why It Was Worthwhile To Have Read This Book*

The claim at the beginning of this text was that if you managed to slog your way through it, you might find out a few things to help you think of yourself as a grown-up who has the same Catholic faith as your grandmother. So, in a sense, you, not me, ought to be writing this penultimate chapter.

The title of this chapter is meant to hint to you that it is different from the others: it contains concluding remarks, but they are even more personal in tone. That is, you might regard the chapters before this one as my personal opinion of what *Covenantal Theology* is about. This chapter is my chance to highlight a few of my personal ideas about its immediate or its practical relevance. By doing so, I still hope to make ideas in *Covenantal Theology* itself clearer to you, but in fairness you should realize that in this chapter in particular its ideas will be filtered through opinions -- strong opinions -- of my own.¹

First, I hope reading this text convinced you that Fr. Keefe's work is important enough to deserve to be widely read within the Catholic academy.

I also hope you can see better than before why it would be very difficult for Fr. Keefe's work to be genuinely read -- let alone widely read -- by that Catholic academy. If Fr. Keefe's criticism of Catholic theology is as fundamental as I've said, most of the people we currently pay to think about Catholicism quite literally don't speak Fr. Keefe's language, and can only 'read' what he writes in the manner that anyone would 'read' any unfamiliar language -- haltingly, if at all.

So, the very first thing that the Catholic academy has to learn about *Covenantal Theology* is that, as a Catholic academy, it has to change substantially, just to make itself capable of reading what Fr. Keefe wrote.

Why would the Catholic academy go to such trouble? Perhaps only if Catholic thought were so played out, at such loose ends, and at such dead ends, that learning Fr. Keefe's language seemed less painful than continuing the present course. However, the first edition of *Covenantal Theology* was published in 1991. To this day, Fr. Keefe's work remains, within both traditional and New Class Catholic academies, almost unread, unnoticed, and unremarked.

Academics, scientists, and intellectuals can't be completely at the mercy of what 'normal people' consider to be 'common sense,' or else, 'common sense' could never improve. We would still consider cures of diseases to be beyond human power, flights to other planets inconceivable, and so forth. People forget that, as late as World War II, the word 'computer' meant 'a *person* who computes.' During that war, 'computers' were *hired*, not purchased.

1. To repeat the warning: this chapter is different. All other chapters in this book try to illustrate Fr. Keefe's thoughts -- however poorly they accomplish that. This chapter conveys my thoughts, particularly about *Covenantal Theology's* immediate practical relevance.

To some extent, then, academics, scientists, and intellectuals rightly have to pay more attention to each other than to us in order to do their job, which in part at least is to get the human race beyond what we think we already 'know.'

On the other hand, no academy, Catholic or otherwise, can make any dehistoricized claim. An argument that precisely the problem with the Catholic academy is what it 'knows' can not simply be dismissed by academics. It is not true that if 'normal people' just leave academics alone forever, everything will always work out fine.

Since Fr. Keefe's argument is both very faithfully Catholic and also very learned and creative, it is likely that academics who learn his language well enough to apply it to their theological interests will find his language to be both powerful and fruitful. I have tried to provide a few hints of that potentiality in this text.

Just to hazard a wild guess, it might be a good idea for Catholic theologians to take seriously Fr. Keefe's call for the reconversion of Catholic theology to the New Covenant. 'Normal people' like you can not do this work, but you can urge that it be done. Considering the remarkable intellectual and scientific complacency of the Catholic theological academy in all its current embodiments, it may even be necessary for 'normal people' like you to urge this, before Catholic theologians find that they are willing to do so.

However, to be willing is different from being able. The challenge *Covenantal Theology* makes to all present day Catholic theology is very considerable. To think like a child, but not childish, is really beyond the abilities of most of the human race at any particular time. Catholic theologians can be no exception to this exceedingly well-established observation.

Even more, the task of reconverting Catholic theology to the New Covenant, a task obviously suitable only for children, if children of all ages, may also be primarily a young man's game as a practical matter. Taking up new intellectual categories is difficult. Giving up a large measure of one's present intellectual categories -- be they 'liberation' or the *Deus Unus* -- in order to take up new ones, at least doubles the work needed. If those categories have become cherished by years of personal and institutional use, then it's all the more difficult.

To be young, smart, optimistic, even a little brash, and relatively uncommitted, can have its advantages -- if what the grown-ups 'know' is incorrect, and if a better alternative is at hand. Physics found this out at the turn of the twentieth century. I'm hoping that Catholic theology will also find this out at the turn of the twenty-first.

The example from physics is not a bad one. Einstein did not 'defeat' Newton. Newton's law of gravitation is still studied by every physics student. What has happened is, in part, that what was studied by Newton, and the circumstances under which and by which it applies, are now better defined and understood.

Furthermore, subtextual notions of 'dominance,' 'defeat,' and 'revolution' with regards to scientific developments -- often entertained -- miss the main point: it's not about who wins. If a physicist works his lifetime to understand three things that are all superseded by better theories five minutes after he retires, he was still a physicist. Only recourse to a non-existent time-less 'totality' will ever show otherwise. Thus, it is horrifying for Augustine or Aquinas to be deeply wrong, only if the object of the 'game' is not genuinely historical "searching" in spirit and truth, but being the first to write the time-less Catholic Theory of Everything.

Further, as Fr. Keefe insists, the two main streams of Catholic theology, Augustinianism and Thomism, are not going up against the wall, come the 'revolution.' They are and will remain Catholic theology's two streams. There is no "covenantal" theology. The two streams of Catholic theology are Augustinianism and

Thomism. In either embodiment, theology as Catholic exists solely as theology of the New Covenant. Fr. Keefe's own work exists merely to point this out.

However, theology is not coterminous with the faith. Catholic theology can be done well -- and it can be done poorly. There is no particular sacramental protection extended to Catholic theology, or even to its root intellectual and scientific categories.

Thus, there is no pre-determined limit to how poorly Catholic theology can be done. Nor is there even a pre-determined limit to how long it can be done poorly. The magisterium can not do theology, any more than it can juggle, not because either theology or juggling is beneath its dignity, but because both theology and juggling are exercised in full covenantal freedom, as worship.

In a word, the magisterium can not do theology any more than it can juggle because the magisterium can not worship for Man. It can only protect the sacramental reality freely re-presented in the Church's liturgical mediation of her faith. It can only protect Man's ability to worship. In that sense only is there any limit as to how poorly Catholic theology can be done. Quite literally, no one knows in advance how poorly Catholic theology might be done or how long it might be done poorly.

If questions of higher quality are not forthcoming from Man regarding the Eucharistic reality re-presented in and through the Church's worship, no power in heaven, on the earth, or under the earth can change that. This is the simple reality of responsible existence in the New Covenant, which every day re-presents a freedom and a responsibility in time which is beyond Man's dreams and, if truth be told, is also typically well beyond his inclinations.

Further, to say that Catholic theology has made serious intellectual and scientific mistakes does not impugn the faith of the theologians who made those mistakes, and is no more threat to your faith or to your grandmother's faith than it would be to observe that Our Lady's juggler kept dropping two balls out of three in front of her statue.

So, another reason it may have been worthwhile for you to read this book is to learn how Fr. Keefe thinks about Catholic theology. Whether it's the very latest thing or practically venerable from centuries of use, it's just juggling. That means it gets its dignity solely because it is trying to be worship. If you now understand that Our Lady's juggler may well have found more favor with her than she finds in some pronouncement of a "distinguished" New Class -- or traditional -- catechist, theologian, or exegete, that's worthwhile.

If you now understand that your own "searching," in some quiet corner of the world, to make your own 'private' work or prayer a worship joined to the public work or prayer of the Church, is a "searching" that -- no less than any theologian's -- indeed also might be blessed with her smile, all the better. If you can entertain the notion that, just possibly, what 'normal people' like you -- and your grandmother -- have been doing all these years may have been a worship superior to that which the Catholic academy has been providing during the same time period, then you are beginning to understand *Covenantal Theology*.

For *Covenantal Theology* is an extended argument that your grandmother very possibly took the sacraments more seriously, in her own way, than Catholic theology as an intellectual and scientific discipline has been able to do for centuries.

If Fr. Keefe's argument is accurate, it is possible that the Catholic faith has continued mainly on the backs of people like your grandmother -- and, perhaps, on the backs of people like you. It may even be that what 'normal people' have done over the centuries has made up for many errors committed by the theologians.¹

Theology has no special status among Man's responses to the Eucharistic Event. Nor is there any guarantee that theology will be done well, just because it is attempted. The Catholic academy, slowly working its way toward its 'epitome' in New Class Catholicism, may even have been a net drain on the Church for several centuries. Your grandmother's response in faith, not Catholic theology, may well have been a truer worship in spirit and truth.

For centuries, the faith of people like her may well have been of more actual assistance to the magisterial protection of the sacraments than the 'assistance' provided by theologians, both 'distinguished' and otherwise. Generations of grandmothers may have been making up for generations of manualists² -- as you may have to make up for the mistakes of Catholic theologians today.

This is not to say that your thoughts can correct those of the theologians -- that is pretentious. That is also not what Our Lady's juggler was doing. Without contradicting any theologian -- and certainly without violating any moral teaching of the Church -- he simply offered what he could to Our Lord through Our Lady.

The above is not meant as a serious argument. After all, it's probable that no one wrote down every single one of your grandmother's mistakes, but the mistakes of theologians (as theologians) are literally a matter of record -- thus much easier to count. The real moral is, there is no 'contest' among believers as to whose seat in Heaven is higher. When we worship in spirit and truth, we're grown-ups. It may have been worthwhile to read this text, just to be able to understand that better.

One final reason reading this text might have been worthwhile is that it might make clearer to you the problems involved in evangelizing the 'modern world' -- which is to some large extent the world produced and run by the New Class.

This particular evangelization, as most people recognize, has not been going all that well. Reading this book has been worthwhile if you are now able to see that there may be theological reasons for this lack of success.

Obviously, there are innumerable reasons why members of the New Class might find living a Christian life at least occasionally inconvenient, but that hardly distinguishes them from the rest of the fallen human race, including every single loyal Roman Catholic.

1. To say it again, Catholics -- even saints -- can make theological mistakes, while at the same time personally taking the Eucharist at least as seriously as your grandmother. A Catholic mathematician, juggler, or theologian can make a mistake in his profession, without any sin, and without his faith being impugned in the least. To say otherwise is to make theology a sacrament instead of a science.

2. A 'manualist' is a writer of a theological 'manual' -- a handbook of the Catholic faith.

The New Class is the knowledge and management class. It inquires, produces knowledge, and utilizes it. That is its job. It is highly educated, and preoccupied in its daily activities with the giving of rationales, or even actual reasons, for everything. Should we not expect the New Class, therefore, to be unusually sensitive to failures in Catholic theology?

It has been worthwhile for you to have read this book if you now realize that if Fr. Keefe's criticism of Catholic theology is on target, then the intellectual and scientific flimsiness of present day Catholic theology may be an important component of the notable lack of success the Church has had in evangelizing fully 'modern' people.¹

In a word, the 'modern' world may not be 'post-Christian' because the New Class is more evil or ungodly than is normal for men. To some extent, the balance may have been tipped because the New Class does not find Catholic theology very convincing or attractive. If present day Catholic theology has severe intellectual and scientific deficiencies, this will probably most affect the evangelization of people for whom intellectual and scientific deficiencies would most matter: the New Class.

One more thing. We should probably separate the present power of the New Class from its capacity to be evangelized. If we lived in a world that was not so driven by the production of new knowledge and its utilization, then the New Class would not have the power it does now. The New Class would not be the dukes and princes of Civilization As We Know It. Its opinions of Catholicism would not matter nearly as much. We might not be wringing our hands over the evangelization of 'the modern world.'

However, if Catholic theology were seriously deficient in that other, less knowledge-driven world, then the people whose job it would be to produce knowledge and to give reasons -- although they would in that society be relatively few in number and relatively powerless -- would still find any serious deficiencies in Catholic theology to be an impediment to their own evangelization.

Covenantal Theology gives some deep reasons to think that present day Catholic theology is in fact seriously deficient. What impact this may have had on the Church's ability to evangelize the New Class is the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

The New Class is the knowledge and management class. The production and utilization of new knowledge is taken to be both the driving force and the linchpin of the New Class world. The New Class is powerful because most people assume that the modern world could not even continue, let alone improve, without its assistance.

It is pretty easy to imagine the underlying rationale of New Class Catholic thought as being the assumption that New Class methods and techniques really do make the modern world run, and are a real source of hope for the world's further improvement. Managing Catholicism, so that it at least does not interfere with New Class activities, thus becomes a serious and worthwhile project. By the same token, it is also good to 'borrow' New Class assumptions, methods, and techniques, so that Catholicism also can join the

1. This is a possibility Fr. Keefe himself does not consider. To the contrary, he more than once comes close to saying that the New Class considers it necessary to define itself as being in opposition to Christ and his Church. However, Fr. Keefe's conviction about the New Class does not otherwise affect his argument. The rest of this chapter explores the possibility that, while the New Class may do whatever it wants, it may not have been given sufficient opportunity by Catholic theology to define itself in covenantal relation to Christ and his Church.

modern world and thus also 'improve.' Of course, the 'borrowing' and management that New Class Catholicism has to engage in to carry out this project amounts to putting both New Class Catholic thought and Catholicism itself into Mr. Minsky's middle box, as Chapter 6 showed.

If we take as established the idea that both New Class and traditional Catholic thought, whatever their differences, have the same underlying intellectual commitment to dehistoricized cosmology, then traditional Catholic theology's relation to the New Class also becomes clear.

Even the possibility of 'time-full,' free, responsible, historical, covenantal relation can not even be imagined within any dehistoricized cosmology, as this book has shown repeatedly. Therefore, traditional Catholic theology also can not imagine a covenantal relation to the New Class.

As has been illustrated in this book, one of the two major 'resolutions' of the insoluble conundrum posed by dehistoricized cosmology is the swallowing of one thing by another. For example, in the end, Faith subsumes Reason, or, alternatively, Reason subsumes Faith. New Class Catholic thought, as Chapter 6 showed, amounts to the swallowing of Catholicism by the New Class. Traditional Catholic theology takes the eventual, inevitable swallowing to be in the other direction: the subsumption of the New Class into 'Faith.'

This doesn't mean that *Catholicism* requires either subsumption, of course, but it is to say that Catholic theology in all its variants must require one of the two alternative subsumptions, as long as Catholic theology's basic intellectual commitment is to dehistoricized cosmology.

So, deep underneath, the 'problem' of the evangelization of the 'modern world,' the world of the New Class, gets set up within all variants of present day Catholic thought (and to be fair, within secular New Class thought, too), as a war. In the end, only one thing is real: 'Faith,' or 'Reason,' and one of those things is ultimately going to be subsumed into the other.

Consider just the sheer public relations difficulties this sets up for Catholic theology's attempts to evangelize the New Class. Why in the world would the New Class wish to be subsumed?

The New Class may not be very interested in hearing that it is 'free' because it is bound, "whether it likes it or not." Yet, according to the fundamental intellectual commitments of traditional Catholic thought, the time-less 'natural law,' the fundamental nature of reality, binds the New Class, just as it binds everyone else, and dictates the rules under which the New Class may play its games.

Since traditional Catholic theology can't even find much for St. Therese to do in Heaven, it should be unsurprising if, at best, its intellectual vocabulary allows only a condescending pat on the head for the New Class, if it happened to play its fundamentally irrelevant games within the rules, like a good boy. We should recall that "Pray as if everything depended on God; Work as if everything depended on you" is the kind of nostrum that is virtually forced, given the fundamentally incoherent stance toward work given within all dehistoricized cosmology. Nobody's work is actually meaningful within any time-less framework, except by being subsumed into that time-less framework. Why should the New Class receive different treatment?

Of course, 'liberal' Catholicism is just as vulnerable to this criticism. To the New Class, it could scarcely matter if its required subsumption is into the *Deus Unus* or into 'liberation.' After all, all by himself, the New Class Man can -- and does -- think of plenty of time-less frameworks into which he can enslave himself. The New Class Man is thus like any other man in that regard: to perform the task of enslaving himself into the time-less, he scarcely requires the assistance of Catholic theologians, whether 'conservative' or 'liberal.'

Absent words of 'time-full' covenantal relation, the New Class is intellectually correct to conclude that Christ is at very least irrelevant to it, since the New Class knows itself to be quite capable of constructing time-less frameworks on its own.

The New Class man

recognizes that he is fully capable of choosing the time-less on his own, assumes that time-less 'Reason' and not the New Covenant gives the ground of the Church's teachings, understands the Church to be using 'divine authority' as a code word for Man's subjection, takes it for granted that, since Man's subjection is inevitable, his ability to choose his own form of subjection (and to reject the Church's form of it) is all the 'freedom' he has, and hears no words about his ability to create something really new, unpredictable, and yet good.

Given all this, why shouldn't the New Class man find Catholicism repulsive, or at least, irrelevant?

In a way, New Class Catholicism defines itself by its acceptance of the 'reality' of the New Class victory over 'Faith.' For New Class Catholicism, the intellectual 'war' is over. The New Class won. 'Reason' is in the end always prior to, and subsumes, 'Faith.' This leaves traditional Catholic thought, also intellectually trapped within dehistoricized cosmology, to 'defend' the only other intellectually conceivable side, to insist that the 'war' has not yet been 'won' by the New Class, that it is still going on, and that its eventual outcome will necessarily be the ultimate triumph of 'Faith' over the New Class.

Of course, each day that the New Class somehow manages not to topple under the sheer weight of its manifest ungodliness is yet another day that has to be 'explained' by traditional Catholic thought, committed as it is to the view that the New Class will -- eventually -- falter of necessity.¹

Considering the number of times the grandmother of some traditional Catholic in the United States is cured of her disease by New Class medicine, or the believer himself uses a computer or an ATM machine, talks to his wife on his cell phone, watches television, or flies in an airplane, traditional Catholic theology has a massive daily task, if it is intellectually committed to showing that the New Class is fundamentally flawed, and will inevitably fail, in order that 'Faith' can triumph.

Thus, there is something to the New Class Catholic charge that traditional Catholic thought is 'fundamentalist' -- inherently unsophisticated, naïve, or hypocritical. Deep down, both sides completely accept, even take for granted, a dehistoricized cosmology of some kind. That means, at bottom, however politely either side disguises this, that 'Catholicism' has to be subsumed into the New Class, or the New Class has to be subsumed into 'Catholicism.' The problem is, if there's a war going on just below the polite surface, it's a war that the New Class appears to be winning. Intellectually, traditional Catholic thought can not coherently explain the abundant fruit produced by the secular New Class -- although traditional Catholics also use every ounce of that fruit, up to the very moment that doing so seems to be inconvenient to 'belief.'

This difficulty with the obvious, manifest, and abundant fruit

1. *Of course* the New Class will die. This leaves unanswered the only real question, whether it will die in Christ. Unable to imagine covenantal relation, some traditionalist rhetoric, more blunt about the 'war' it sees between Faith and Reason, can stoop pretty low. A) Things are 'actually' awful now -- despite appearances, the New Class has already failed. One 'proof': the 'unusual' savagery and 'extraordinary' violence of modern wars. This despite overwhelming evidence that pre-industrial societies were, and are, far more homicidal than industrial or post-industrial ones. (Across pre-industrial societies almost one in three young men are killed during competitions for status and resources, and men who have killed often do receive additional status and resources, and have more children. Daly M, Wilson M (1988). *Homicide*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.). B) The opposite extreme: we're deadened spiritually and weakened morally by *how nice* it is now. This rhetorical tack can verge appallingly close to rooting for the New Class to fail, so that 'the Faith' -- presumably unable to prosper amidst all this New Class good fortune -- can rise again.

produced by the New Class may be a key to understanding the problem Catholic theology of the present age has had in evangelizing the 'modern world.'

Genuine, and global, increases in wealth -- not a mere redistribution of it -- have been a feature of the last two hundred years, something truly new in Man's economic life, if a recent historical economic analysis is correct.²

For example, for the average worker, the cost of a simple but valuable thing, light, has probably fallen a thousand-fold since his great-grandmother's day, and light today is about 30,000 times cheaper (in constant dollars) for the average worker than it was only two hundred years ago. By contrast, the cost of light for an English worker in 1800 AD was probably only about ten times less than it had been for his Babylonian counterpart in 1800 BC.

The cost of light for the average worker today is about 300,000 times less than it was for the average worker in 1800 BC. Between 1800 BC and 1800 AD, 3600 years of human history, for the average worker, the cost of light probably dropped only about ten-fold. In the last two hundred years, it has dropped a further 30,000-fold.

The same aforementioned analysis suggests that this stupefying real economic growth is at least in part due to increases in the production and utilization of new knowledge. The cost of light has dropped so dramatically in the last two hundred years, not primarily because of increases in land, labor, or capital, but because what light is and how it is produced has become increasingly better understood. In other words, more than any other factor, the work of the New Class may be the reason the average worker's lot has become so much better -- in this analysis, 30,000 times better -- over the last two hundred years of human history.

The current members of the New Class, and their predecessors, have been at least one of the principal agents for the creation of something genuinely new under the sun. Although misery has not vanished from the face of the earth, in many ways, for billions of people, it is not nearly as constant a companion, and billions more are now wealthy, not only in material goods, but in simple physical well-being, beyond the dreams of their great-grandparents. The simple fact of the matter is that more of the blind now see, more of the lame now walk, more of the sick are cured of their diseases, than in any previous time in human history. The credit for all of this belongs very substantially to the New Class and its direct forebears.

The first thing that needs to be remarked is that Catholic theology is not really set up to thank the New Class for this stupendous achievement -- nor could Catholic theology have been so constituted.

2. Nordhaus D (1996). Do real output and real wage measures capture reality? the history of lighting suggest not. in: Bresnahan T, Gordon RJ, eds. (1996). *The economics of new goods*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Problem: no coherent theological vocabulary with which to establish a positive relation to the New Class.

In the first place, the very idea that wealth can be produced is a new one.

Catholic -- as well as biblical -- moral thought regarding wealth was historically -- and realistically -- framed in terms of the distribution of and access to an amount of wealth that was, within one human lifespan, or even several, essentially fixed. For most of human history, wealth was a zero-sum game. If the cost of light dropped only ten-fold in 3600 years, that probably means that human beings have essentially always lived in a world that as a whole was not getting any richer over any realistic time frame. If you -- or your people -- were getting richer, it was realistic to assume that someone else -- or someone else's people -- were getting poorer.

Moreover, it is very likely that the idea of becoming 30,000 times richer simply doesn't register with any human being. We're probably set up to react -- and vigorously -- to a fairly small range of economic wealth or scarcity, since that range was our lot, from time immemorial.

Thus, both our common sense 'natural' economic rules of thumb, and Catholic moral theory, are simply not set up to handle a situation in which new wealth is being produced because new knowledge is being produced. Both our common sense, and Catholic moral theory, has simply ceded that whole territory to the New Class, to figure out as best it can.

Catholic thought, at least as a first approximation, appears to be pretty much irrelevant to the positive activities of the New Class. To a fair degree the New Class has had to learn, on its own, the positive value of everything it has ever done. It has had to learn for itself the positive 'moral' rules proper to its task. The New Class has had to learn for itself the goodness of transparency within businesses, business sectors, and whole economies; the value of competition and thus of some amount of social dislocation; the importance of profit; the necessity of free and unfettered inquiry, and so on.

Furthermore, the increase in scientific knowledge that is the ultimate engine of a profound two-hundred-year economic advance is evidently not the result of mere deductions either from 'common sense' or from Catholic theology.

To the New Class, the Church must look like a back-seat driver: always ready to criticize, but unable to do any of the actual work. The New Class -- not the Church, nor its teachings, nor its theologians -- is responsible for golden eggs: vast increases in material well-being, not merely for some fat cat, or even for some fat cat nation, but for the average worker all over the world.

Since the Church appears (to the New Class) to be irrelevant to any of the positive activities of the New Class, the Church may look like it

is trying to instruct the goose as to the proper manner of its laying, when it instructs the New Class regarding its moral duties. After all, according to the New Class, it would have gotten nowhere, if it had waited for the Church to tell it how to proceed -- as the New Class is ever ready to tell the Church, beginning with the New Class version of the encounter between Galileo and the Church.

Thus, the lack of any apparent intellectual or theological connection to the positive activities of the New Class is politically and psychologically detrimental to the Church's efforts to preach the Good News to it. The kids are apt to treat the 'wisdom' of doddering old grandmother with little seriousness, or even with derision, especially when ignoring grandmother has in the past been a productive, even a necessary, strategy.

It should be emphasized, therefore, that, however evil the kids are, or how rude they have been to grandmother, there is still an intellectual and theological defect on grandmother's side, that will not be remedied no matter how nice or 'loyal' the kids decide to be.

Thus this homely image is meant to make two serious points. First, the lack of an intellectually and theologically serious relation to the positive activities of the New Class leaves the Church in the political and psychological position of appearing to 'intrude' whenever it speaks to the New Class. Second, the political and psychological perception is correct, in intellectual terms. The built-in 'critical distance' of all present day Catholic theology is decidedly unhelpful to the Church when it preaches the Good News to the New Class. The Church's moral teaching to the New Class appears to be wholly negative in character, and always debatable, even then.

Thus, for example, if we take the 'natural law' regarding economic matters to mean what traditional Catholic theology has taught us to think that it means, a social or economic theory grounded in 'natural' 'right reason' and reinforced by divine authority, then for 'modern scientific' men the Church's moral teachings appear to remain grounded (for example) in concepts of 'justice' and 'fairness' that at root assume that Man is still arguing over how a fixed economic pie ought to be divided.

This underlying economic assumption -- which is almost certainly incorrect -- could not possibly make the Church's moral 'argument' stronger. However, the problem is really much more serious, because it is deeper. The discussion of 'morality' is still implicitly set up, not as the re-presentation of the New Covenant, but as an 'argument' -- as the intellectual determination of the proper moral life, a determination that is 'naturally' available to Man if he would simply stand within the *correct* 'critical distance,' the position of 'right reason.'

The lack of theological or intellectual (as distinct from liturgical) vocabulary regarding the positive activities of the New Class impedes its evangelization to some extent. New Class Catholicism's subservience to the New Class is even worse, since this must eviscerate the fundamental mode of evangelization, which is liturgical.

Once 'moral instruction' is a theological argument, then, if the argument is incorrect, the 'instruction' is meaningless. Further, if moral instruction is an argument, then the New Class (which quite literally makes arguments for a living), not only runs the world and provides it with stupendous new wealth, but is -- and should be -- the principle source of 'moral instruction' in that world.

This of course is seen most clearly in New Class Catholicism: bishops should always defer to the judgments of New Class Catholic theologians -- because bishops are not really as qualified to make technical arguments as 'their' theologians are. Needless to say, if even a bishop must defer to a theologian, your grandmother's place in the moral pantheon is not exactly assured.

It is worthwhile to be reminded of what is wrong with this picture: there is no safe 'place' in 'flesh' for 'reason.' When Man is at his brightest and bravest, he sees that apart from the Eucharistic Event, he is not responsible for his actions, he has no 'free will' -- what he does is Cause or Chance, period, despite his pretensions to the contrary. 'Moral' arguments in 'flesh' are simply unavailable, insane. You can't have a moral life at all, let alone make 'arguments' regarding it, if everything you do is in the end either pre-determined or arbitrary.

Thus, at the heart of the New Class is a great emptiness, the age-old pagan pessimism and despair that is an inevitable result of any dehistoricized cosmology, any time-less framework that divides the world into Cause and Chance. Further, as was argued in this work, the ultimate survivors in the world of Cause and Chance must of necessity be either idiots or devils. This too the New Class knows, however it hides this from itself.

So, the Church a) though it has liturgical vocabulary in abundance suitable to the task, currently possesses no intellectual or theological vocabulary to establish a connection to the positive activities of the New Class; b) finds even its most loyal theologians in the position of trading 'arguments' with a Class which makes and trades arguments for a living; and, most importantly, c) lacks the theological vocabulary to help it to touch and to heal the root pessimism and despair of the New Class, all because present day Catholic theology, both New Class and traditional, also accepts dehistoricized cosmology as its intellectual foundation.

Why, then, should the evangelization of the 'modern world' be proceeding smoothly?

Something really new has arisen in human history. The blind really see, the lame really walk, the sick really are cured. But the New Class, not the Catholic Church, is responsible. Indeed (at least to the New Class) the Catholic Church appears to have been either actively

Catholic theology's own adoption of a time-less framework for its discourse inevitably prompts a 'Battle of the Time-less Frameworks' with the New Class, and worse, it may imply to the New Class that 'evangelization' is such a 'Battle.' If it is a Battle, then naturally, the New Class will not want to lose it.

Despite its power, the New Class does not escape the age-old pagan pessimism -- it too needs to and deserves to have the Good News preached to it.

antagonistic, or at best, irrelevant, to the whole process, and continues to be so.

Catholic theology has thus far provided the magisterium with very little ability to articulate the profound covenantal freedom of Man's 'private' worship, its creativity *ex nihilo*. Catholic theology's fundamental intellectual and scientific location within a dehistoricized cosmology -- whether of 'natural' law or of 'liberation' -- simply has no place for genuine surprise, for intelligible free covenantal relation, for 'private' worship that is simultaneously a "vanity" -- mere juggling -- and a completion in 'flesh' of Christ's afflictions -- a surprise to God himself.

Present day Catholic theology, fundamentally based on the articulation of the necessary and the arbitrary, can not really even account for the surprise of the New Class's contribution to the human race -- let alone thank the New Class for it.¹ How could Catholic theology find the words to thank the New Class for a surprise, when the entire concept of genuine surprise is eliminated in advance by its fundamental intellectual commitment to dehistoricized cosmology?

Catholic theology's categorical inability to imagine, let alone articulate, true covenantal relation in any intellectually coherent way, has had devastating consequences. Intellectually, present day Catholic theology must agree with the New Class, that, in the end, the only possible future that Catholic thought can imagine for the New Class is its necessary 'humiliation,' the subsumption of the New Class by 'right reason' into 'Faith.'

Should we really expect the New Class, enslaved in its own chosen dehistoricized cosmology, to be able to imagine covenantal relation on its own, and then teach Catholic theologians of its existence? Of course the New Class is only able to imagine that the faith of the Church should be subsumed into the New Class! The task of establishing the intellectual possibility of a covenantal relation of love must perforce be performed by Catholic thinkers, not secular ones. It is to be hoped that any reader who has come this far in this book can understand that even the intellectual possibility of covenantal relation only exists in the Eucharistic Event.²

How then can 'the modern world' be evangelized, if Catholic theology can provide no intellectually coherent way to offer the New Class covenantal relation -- true love -- and can, in the end, only predict the New Class's 'necessary' humiliation and subsumption?

Catholics of the present age have often acted as if the evangelization of the New Class world were (either directly or implicitly) a matter of responding to New Class charges against Catholicism. That's getting the cart before the horse. Fallen Man can

The theological or intellectual key to the evangelization of the New Class appears to be a theological articulation of true covenantal relation.

1. This is no glorification of the New Class. The New Class as apart from the New Covenant is, pure and simple, a "vanity" -- as it too knows in its heart of hearts. It too has no room for genuine surprise -- just ask Mr. Minsky. Only the New Covenant in the Lord's Blood relates 'flesh' to the Eucharistic 'order' in which all men -- including the New Class man -- may worship, enter meaningful time, make history.

2. This is actually a large point, so it deserves a little extra emphasis. The primary burden of both evangelization and ecumenism falls squarely on Catholic shoulders, and no other. The very words -- the very thoughts -- out of which persons are evangelized and churches are made one in Christ do not come from some dehistoricized place 'naturally' available to fallen Man, if only he would stand within the 'correct' critical distance. All evangelization, all ecumenism, must come from the acts in time of the Lord of history in and through the free liturgical mediation of the faith of his Bride. They must come from the Eucharistic Event. Thus another devastating consequence of the enslavement of Catholic theology to dehistoricized cosmology is the lack of both theological and practical instinct that both evangelization and ecumenism have to be primarily a directly Catholic responsibility, not because Catholics are more 'guilty' (or more 'triumphant'), but because the fullness of the risen Lord's presence -- the one thing necessary -- is solely re-presented in the Church's worship.

not find any basis for a covenantal relation of love, and thus, for evangelization, on his own. There is no basis for evangelization but the Eucharistic Event. All of the initiative for evangelization is in and through the New Covenant, and there alone.

Further, it is perhaps poetic justice, if no less devastating a reality, that present day Catholic theology's intellectual inability to form words of covenantal love is the very reason Catholic theology, in all of its current variants, is under such intellectual pressure from the New Class, pressure so severe that Catholic theology can't even really hear, much less answer, the central charge that the New Class in its turn makes against Catholicism:

By the power of our *unbelief*, we cast out demons.

The 'modern scientific' view is that active unbelief is a prerequisite for scientific, and thus, for technological, advance. If you truly want the blind to see, the lame to walk, the sick to be cured, then you must consign 'belief' to Mr. Minsky's middle box.

Further, this 'must' doesn't mean, "it would be nice if you would do this." It means, that when you work as a scientist and thus participate in the advance of knowledge, you are "bound whether you like it or not" by the very foundations of reality, the 'natural law,' to consign all 'belief,' including your own, to Mr. Minsky's middle box.

As Mr. Minsky says, we can't be consistently truthful about reality, even to ourselves, because then we would become despairing and anxious: "We're virtually forced to maintain that belief [in free will], even though we know it's false -- except, of course, when we're inspired to find the flaws in all our beliefs, whatever may be the consequence to cheerfulness and mental peace."¹

Man must lie to himself, just to make it through the day. Even though the New Class admits this, it still calls even its own intermittent resorts to 'belief' a lie, and contends that freedom -- even in Hell -- is preferable to even one moment of the sweet slavery of 'belief.' Moreover, a true modern, such as Mr. Minsky, believes that the choice for freedom, not for 'belief,' turns out to be sole real remedy for Man's suffering.

This charge, then, is ironically merely the mirror image of traditional Catholic theology's claims against the New Class. The New Class also invokes the 'natural law.' Its claim is that the 'natural law,' the fundamental structure of reality, by which we are "bound whether we like it or not," quite obviously divides the world into Cause and Chance, and therefore *necessarily* consigns Catholicism to the non-existent middle box, "whether it likes it or not."

1. Minsky M (1986). The society of mind. New York: Simon and Schuster, p. 307.

The proof of this, continues the New Class, is in the pudding. When we members of the New Class treat Catholicism as irrelevant, when we treat it as if it belonged in a non-existent middle box, knowledge advances, misery is decreased, wealth is increased, the blind see, the lame walk, and the sick are cured. The New Class quotes this scripture to Catholics:

You will know them by their fruits.¹

1. Matthew 7:16 RSV

The New Class sees 'believers' as simple hypocrites. Believers love the fruits provided by the New Class's conscious and deliberate rejection of the middle box, and avail themselves of every last one of those fruits.

The New Class contends that the believer simply pretends for his convenience that the New Class rejection of the middle box had nothing to do with the production of its good fruits. The believer pretends for his convenience that these wonderful fruits produced by the activity of the New Class just magically appeared, that they just dropped out of the sky. The believer can not explain why war, violence, and every perversion imaginable long pre-dated the birth of the New Class, and yet the blind could not see, the lame could not walk, the sick could not be cured, until men began to embrace New Class 'ungodliness,' the 'modern scientific' stance, conscious and deliberate rejection of Mr. Minsky's middle box.

The believer (continues the New Class), unwilling to give up his "cheerfulness and mental peace," continues to lie to himself, continues to 'believe,' in 'free will,' in the Catholic faith, etc., and, for every minute that the believer does so, he plays no part in helping the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the sick to be cured. For every minute that he does so, he is a leech on the backs of the brave, the honest, the truthful people -- the unbelievers -- who actually are making the world a better place.

The New Class therefore feels completely justified to say to all 'believers': *We are the good tree that bears good fruit, and you are not.*

Thus, the final and gravest implication of the central New Class charge is that 'belief,' perhaps especially in its Western apotheosis, Roman Catholicism, is actively antagonistic to the activity of the New Class, and the New Class is actively antagonistic to the activity of 'belief,' because 'belief' is a rejection of the real, plainly the work of the Tempter, the Evil One. 'Belief,' and perhaps particularly its apotheosis, Roman Catholicism, is for the New Class, provably the Anti-Christ, provably the destroyer and perverter of the good.

The New Class -- not being stupid -- attaches all manner of other

Since its unbelief produces wondrous fruit that even the believer calls good, the New Class feels justified in calling 'belief' the work of the devil, a rejection of the real.

claims, charges, and agendas to this, its key, its most persuasive, and its most fearsome charge against the faith of Catholics. That charge is most fearsome because it is fundamentally theological, or at least anti-theological, as has just been seen. Of course, in addition to making its central charge, the New Class quite obviously chooses its own timeless gods, and applies its power to enslave itself and others to them.

However, it is worthwhile to separate the current power of the New Class from its central intellectual theological challenge. Men can make mischief. Men who make mischief can tell themselves that they are fine fellows. Men with power can make more mischief than powerless men. What is unusual about that?

We need to get beyond the sheer power of the New Class in the present age to its central charge against the faith of the Church. Most often, the charge is less presented than hurled by the New Class, either with smug condescension, or with -- it ought to be said -- outright contempt and hatred. However, we need to look beyond this, to the utter pessimism and despair just underneath the surface of that charge. In presenting its strongest brief against the faith of the Church, the New Class must unavoidably also consign itself to Cause and Chance, with no place to hide, and no hope of refuge.

Admittedly, many members of the New Class -- however 'educated' they are -- will choose to be idiots. They simply won't ever face the implications of their own charge: that, by their own fundamental intellectual commitments, it simply doesn't matter whether they live or die, and saying differently puts themselves right into Mr. Minsky's middle box. Regrettably, besides New Class idiots, there will no doubt continue to be many New Class devils as well, who will continue to accumulate power and to seek control, even though intellectually they fully understand that to do so is completely pointless, by their own fundamental commitments.

But what of the millions of New Class members who would not wish to be either idiots or devils? At the present time, Catholic theology can offer them nothing.

Although Catholics must certainly confront the power of the New Class in all its guises, whether Catholic theology can do anything with the peripheral intellectual maneuvers of the New Class is almost beside the point, for the fact is that Catholic theology in the present age can do little more with the central theological charge of the New Class than to sputter incoherently, either in incoherent outrage or in incoherent denial, and that is a true scandal, with the gravest consequences.

No New Class Catholic theologian gives any coherent response to the central New Class claim, nor does any traditional Catholic theologian.

[Cause] [] [Chance]

Catholic theology can not at present give any coherent answer to the central New Class charge.

All arguments, from 'Design' or otherwise, whose roots are a dehistoricized cosmology, by their fundamental intellectual commitments simply reinforce the division of the cosmos into the necessary and the arbitrary, and thereby of necessity put any 'God' that is not necessary or arbitrary into Mr. Minsky's middle box. How could present day Catholic theology, in any of its variants, possibly refute a charge that is merely the final implication of its own basic intellectual commitments?

Catholics need to begin to realize that the most devastating words the New Class can say against Catholicism are the very words that condemn the New Class itself to slavery in Cause and Chance. No doubt there will be many New Class men who will find it inconvenient to acknowledge this, but it's still true. Even more, until Catholics genuinely begin to realize and to say out loud that the New Class is right, and that Catholics too completely share the New Class fate of slavery in Cause and Chance, the evangelization of the New Class can scarcely begin, for 'evangelizing' the New Class does not mean anything more than offering them, in and through the free liturgical mediation of the faith of his Bride, the Cross of the Lord who "emptied himself" completely into our very real slavery, into our genuinely fallen Real World of fate and time and death.

Until Catholics start taking the intellectual responsibility that can only be theirs, they will remain in the position of 'responding' to this horrifying cry of the New Class against its fate as if it were a threat to the faith, and help neither the New Class nor Catholics by doing so.

Thus, although the New Class cry prompts Catholics to love the New Class, to be with it in its agony, and to continually offer it the Eucharist, the sole "medicine of immortality," that cry is devastating against present day Catholic thought, precisely because Catholic thought's own fundamental intellectual commitments don't allow it to hear the cry as a cry, but only as an intellectual challenge, part of the 'Battle of the Time-less Frameworks.' What's more, Catholic thought loses the 'battle.'

The New Class contends that its refusal of the middle box (the box containing 'beliefs' such as in 'free will' and 'Catholicism'), is its choice for the real, whatever the consequences to "cheerfulness and mental peace." That this refusal is a choice for the real is substantiated by the abundant fruit which flows from that choice -- fruit not available from those who 'believe.'

To 'win' this 'battle,' then, Catholic thought is in the position of denying that the New Class has produced and is producing good fruit, yet, at the same time, Catholics, just like everyone else, use those fruits every day.

[Cause] [] [Chance]

Why are believing Catholics put in the position of appearing to be hypocritical exploiters of New Class fruits? The entire world relies on the successes of the New Class, and yet Catholic thought, in order to 'win,' either has to deny any real success to the New Class, or it has to adopt New Class Catholicism's fundamental stance -- the New Class, not the Church, 'won.' Since Catholic theology's fundamental intellectual commitments are identical to those within which the (secular) New Class charge is framed, Catholic theology can not win this 'battle.' A genuinely Catholic response to this, the central charge the New Class makes against Catholicism, will not come from Catholic theology as we know it today, nor can it.

If there is anything that *Covenantal Theology* makes plain, it's that putting the label 'Catholic' on some time-less framework not only never works, but also is fundamentally un-Catholic. A 'Battle of the Time-less Frameworks' is all that can result when present day Catholic Theology, in either its New Class or its traditional variant, engages the central New Class charge.

Even worse, no time-less framework has loving arms. In them all, the Good News is ruled out from before the outset. Fallen Man at his brightest and bravest finally knows that every breath he will ever take is "vanity." The only 'answer' to a universe in which only idiots and devils can long survive is to become an idiot or a devil yourself.

The absolutely devastating reality is, if present day Catholic theology ever really took its fundamental intellectual commitments seriously, it could only agree.

The first time I picked up *Covenantal Theology*, it made a profound impression on me. It was the very first time I had ever heard a Catholic theologian make an intellectually coherent argument that refusing Mr. Minsky's middle box was not merely intellectually respectable, but that the complete refusal of the time-less has always and everywhere been re-presented and consistently proclaimed in and through the Eucharistic worship of the Church.

So, Fr. Keefe can point to the work of Fr. Stanley Jaki,¹ and to his own work, as a possible indicator that, contrary to the New Class claim, 'grown-up' talk is not exclusively on the New Class side of this argument. More than that, Good News can not be preached within any dehistoricized cosmology. Within them all, to be 'grown-up' is to find all free will, all responsibility, all creativity, all novelty, all surprise, relentlessly sucked into the biggest Black Hole that will ever be, Mr. Minsky's middle box.

It needs to be said one last time: Mr. Minsky is correct. Ecclesiastes is correct. If fallen Man ever finds anything fundamentally reassuring in fallenness *per se*, he can be sure he is deceiving himself.

1. e.g., Jaki S (1978). *The road of science and the ways to God*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Christ "emptied himself" into the Real World, and no other. His blunt acts in time as One Flesh with his Bride, *not* an time-less 'idea' or framework, is our faith. The consuming pessimism at the empty center of all time-less frameworks is only refused by the "radically historical" reality of the Eucharistic Event in the One Sacrifice. There is no other source of Catholic optimism.

Catholic optimism is the only real optimism there is, and the only one that can last. Within the Eucharistic Event alone is the time-less perfectly refused. Standing within the free liturgical mediation of the Church's faith in her Lord -- the Lord of history -- is the only place fallen Man can stand in this fallen world where he is not "bound whether he likes it or not" to conclude to a pessimism beyond despair. Apart from covenantal existence, Man is quite literally bound to lose his nerve, forced by inexorable necessity to become either an idiot or a devil just to make it through the day, bound to try to flee time for some time-less unreality that in the long run can only increase his suffering.

Thus, within the vocabulary provided by *Covenantal Theology*, the New Class refusal of the 'middle box' is correct. The 'middle box' is the appeal to the time-less, a flight to an unreal refuge from time. However, the New Class, even while bravely and correctly rejecting the time-less in one guise, still sees no alternative to the brute reality of the world's unfree and irresponsible existence, because we are bound "whether we like it or not." The world is enslaved in the necessary and the arbitrary, completely and forever shackled by the time-less 'natural law' of Cause and Chance.

Some 'godless' members of the New Class, even though they understand this, refuse to flee time for the time-less, whatever the cost to themselves. Their brave -- their impossibly optimistic -- crucifixion into time, the historical fact that 'modern science' was "stillborn," in Fr. Jaki's memorable phrase, in every culture except the Christian West, and the contention that 'modern science' is only possible for Man, not when he submits himself to a time-less structure or framework, but only when he tries to be present in time to a "concretely present knowable unknown," as Fr. Keefe says, equally memorably, all practically cry out to teach Catholics much about the New Covenant, given always and everywhere in and through the plain flamboyant worship of the Church, if Catholic theology possessed even the rudiments of the language needed to notice.

The reality of Man and the world is covenantal, solely. Creation -- all fourteen billion light years of it -- exists as good and very good solely by the Christ's covenantal presence as One Flesh with his Bride in the One Sacrifice. The entire Creation is made living, and free, but solely in and through his death. Reality is of its essence a good surprise: not predictable in advance, yet inexhaustibly intelligible. Therefore, in the Christ's

An optimism about time is required for modern scientific inquiry, but this 'time-full' historical optimism is only given and grounded in the Eucharistic 'order,' in and through the "radically historical" Eucharistic Event. Man's *history* is created solely in and through Our Lord's *history* with his Bride and Body.

living acts in time in covenantal union with his Bride, fallen Man *while remaining fully fallen* may find an unquenchable optimism *fully in time*, inexhaustibly available for his appropriation.

This optimism, Catholic optimism, covenantal optimism, is free. No iron necessity will ever force Man to appropriate it, yet as complete surprise completely intelligible, it is perennially available to him -- almost as if Man were perennially tempted to hear the Good News, but never forced.

In Mr. Minsky's (and Ecclesiastes's) Real World, enslaved in Cause and Chance, it doesn't really make sense to do science: all you're going to find out is that you are enslaved in Cause and Chance -- but you already knew that. Why should the details matter? To the contrary, at the heart of modern scientific inquiry is a crazy optimism, a confidence that time means something, that reality is not insane -- in short, that reality is, deep down, a wonderful surprise, inexhaustibly intelligible. No optimism at all, of course, let alone the ridiculous optimism seemingly demanded by scientific inquiry, is available within any dehistoricized cosmology. The sole font of Man's occasional ability to overcome his fear and be present in time to a "concretely present knowable unknown," is the Eucharistic Event.

It would seem that the existence of grace, not the enslavement of the cosmos into Cause and Chance, is the real prior assumption of all scientists. 'Modern scientific' men sometimes claim that the Church is a leech on the back of unbelievers -- of necessity the only men who can do science. To the contrary, modern science is a "leech" on the Eucharistic Event! Fr. Jaki has had much to say in his career regarding the ridiculous optimism regarding reality which slowly, over centuries, seeped into Christian men as they stood around the altar of the One Sacrifice.

They ate his Body and drank his Blood, and they became not leeches, but men, men free enough, fearless enough, to refuse the time-less, whatever the cost to themselves. In their world and no other 'modern science' came to be, for only in a world of men at least partly washed in his Blood could the world at last be really interesting -- a good surprise, inexhaustibly intelligible.

Heaven itself is boring in all dehistoricized cosmologies. A world in which surprise can not exist is no fertile ground for science as modern man understands it.

Science's continued existence is not any less dependent on the Eucharist than was its birth. Indeed, as this book has shown, modern men, New Class men, are precariously in danger of losing their nerve, their optimism. Absent the Eucharistic presence of the Christ, reality as Man can find it is Mr. Minsky's and Ecclesiastes's Real World, and no other. It is not beyond the capacity of 'modern scientific men' to freely build a world like so many others men have built, in which real science is simply not possible.

In all those dehistoricized worlds, "freedom of the human will" is a necessary fiction, despair a given, real surprise unimaginable. Of course, in a world in which 'freedom' is only a necessary fiction, 'responsibility' is also. When all is "vanity," all is power, and a man may be as vain as he can get away with. In such a world, no man can say that the emperor has no clothes. When all is "vanity," then appearing ridiculous, being wrong, making real mistakes, as well as actual sin, become luxuries only the poor can afford.

However, science thrives only in worlds in which men can always make real mistakes, serious mistakes -- and admit that they have. It can not be done in a world in which too many men consider that only power is real. Nor can it be done in a world that lacks basic optimism, in which too many of the brightest and bravest see that they are enslaved in Cause and Chance, and thus lose their nerve, are slowly eaten alive by doubt and fear. Nor can it be done in a world that is ultimately divided into the convenient and the inconvenient, or one in which too many men -- whatever their learning -- are idiots or devils.

A world in which "freedom of the human will," and thus, genuine responsibility, are necessary fictions, is also a world in which real surprise and true creativity are also logically impossible. No time-less explanation

for the cosmos can ever allow even one of these four to be anything but 'pretend.' However, the existence of all four appears to be vital to the existence of science as modern men understand it.

'Science' is itself no time-less thing. It will not continue unless Man creates a world in which it can exist. Thus, the Real World that is indeed the world that 'flesh' correctly finds on its own is not only insane, pessimistic beyond despair, and a world that of its very nature forces Man to lie to himself, just to make it through the day. It is also a world in which science is literally inconceivable -- a world in which even the idea of true science can not appear, because the idea of true science relies on the reality of free will, responsibility, creativity, and surprise.

To put this in the stern theological terms that such a serious topic merits, a world in which 'grown-ups' find it inconceivable that a man could commit a mortal sin at any time, is a world in which science as we know it, and many other things as well, have breathed their last breaths -- because mortal sin is only possible for men who are genuinely free, and thus, genuinely responsible. Yet the devil makes such a world, a world in which Man is 'freed' from the terror of mortal sin, *via* the minor sacrifice of enslaving himself into fundamentally un-free, irresponsible, uncreative, and unsurprising existence, easily available to Man, every day of Man's life.

Of course, even if the preceding argument is much more clever and decisive than I imagine it to be, it is only an argument. It proclaims the Good News to no one. New Class men may indeed turn one day from the argument that Catholicism should be attacked, ignored, dismissed, and reviled -- because the existence of Catholicism is antithetical to New Class interests -- to the argument that Catholicism ought to be encouraged, because the existence of Catholicism is convenient to New Class interests. After all, the Romans themselves did no less. But proclaiming, either to the old Romans or to the New Class, that they are loved *and therefore* are under judgment, is something Man can not do. For this sacred task, only the Eucharistic presence of Christ himself will suffice.

Man needs to hear the Good News, today, as much as ever, and Catholic theology can help draw Man toward the sole re-presentation of the Good News in the Eucharist. However, the magisterium can not worship for Man. Better Catholic theology is an inviolable aspect of Man's covenantal freedom. A history which includes Catholic theology better turned toward its "prime analogate," the "radically historical" Eucharistic Event, will not exist until Man makes that history, by creating it in and through the public history given in and through the Church's worship. The history of that better Catholic theology does not yet exist, and it may not exist for a long time, but oh, how that history is needed.

Members of the New Class are free to reject the hard saying that is also the sweet yoke of Catholic faith which is offered them. This scarcely distinguishes them from any other men.

However, as a class the New Class must always be profoundly affected by Catholic theology, for all its members spend their working lives inquiring, producing knowledge, or utilizing it, and are thus preoccupied with the giving of reasons. If Catholic theology has made, and persisted in, deep intellectual and scientific mistakes, members of the New Class in particular will be impeded in their own "searching" to find and to appropriate Christ's sacramental -- his covenantal -- presence.

Moreover, the present theological situation is about as bad as it can get for men whose job is the production and utilization of knowledge. Theirs can be no mere 'aesthetic' reaction to the particular defects in present day Catholic theology documented in *Covenantal Theology*, for these specific inadequacies affect all the members of the New Class immediately and personally, as human beings. Members of the New Class as members of the New Class have little or no opportunity to recognize themselves as loved by Christ. They spend their daily lives at tasks for which present day Catholic theology has no words.

Within the words provided by present day Catholic theology, men can not recognize themselves as beings capable of using their minds in ridiculously free and awesomely responsible covenantal worship. Instead, nearly everyone, Catholic and anti-Catholic alike, 'knows' that 'faith' is about the 'submission' of the intellect, the 'humiliation' of reason to The Really Necessary Truth that binds us whether we like it or not.

Responsible existence, as even Mr. Minsky sees, can only be free existence. Further, it can not exist within any dehistoricized cosmology, not because Man has not yet found the 'correct' dehistoricized cosmology, but because all dehistoricized cosmologies at their brightest and bravest can only be a representation of what Man, as 'flesh' alone, looking at 'flesh' alone, really and truly finds.

As Fr. Keefe shows, Man's freedom is a sharing in the One Sacrifice of Christ, a completion of his afflictions by our own loving crucifixion, not into a time-less world we make up, whether of 'reason' or 'liberation' or the *Deus Unus*, but into *meaningful time*, which is, precisely, our time, but solely as concretely given in the concrete and 'time-full' worship of the Church, in and through whose Body her Head is a living presence to us.

Our crucifixion into free and responsible time is of course then our crucifixion into the Church's 'time-full' worship in all its historical concreteness, which includes its solemn proclamations regarding what is commonly referred to as the 'moral' realm.

This public worship, the Eucharistic Event, the One Flesh of the Bride and her Lord in the One Sacrifice, is the creation of our own freedom. Lest there be any mistake on this point, no time-less 'explanation' beyond, before, or beside them, but only the actual irrevocable history of the Church's acts in her nuptial union with her Lord constitute the freedom by which we are free. Try as we might, we can not find any 'truth' beyond, before, or beside the blunt historicity of her concrete sacramental acts in time, for there is no such time-less place.

We can not make our acts free and thus responsible unless they are concretely, in body, in time, and therefore, responsibly, joined to hers, which are joined in free nuptial union to the historical One Sacrifice of her Lord, "one and the same," for, as has been shown, no fallen power, no matter how fierce or overwhelming or well-intentioned, can make even one of our actions, not even one of our thoughts, free.

In history, then, -- in the Eucharistic Event -- is created the possibility of our existence as historical beings, capable of creating *ex nihilo* our own 'private' work that, insofar as it is created in and through the public work of the Church, is meaningful, unrepeatable, irrevocable -- earth-shattering, history-making.

"Through Him, with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit" our 'private' work in response to the Church's public Sacrifice of Praise to her Lord can become prayer, a worship of the Father in spirit and truth, a worship in and through the New Covenant. Though fully in time, that worship, that crucifixion into time, is history created in and through history; it is free -- a complete surprise completely intelligible.

Freedom, responsibility, creativity, and surprise can not exist in a world of Cause and Chance. At present there are almost no *non-liturgical* words to treat of the reality: free human acts in time that are free as historical, as responsible, as *history created in and through history* -- historical acts, worship, created *ex nihilo* in and through the "radically historical" Eucharistic Event. The New Class needs to hear that its creativity is real, but also that it is only real as *historical* in the sense given here. 'Creative' acts not created in and through that *historical* Event are as meaningless as they are time-less.

This is the truth that no dehistoricized cosmology can -- one might say, envisage, except that the precise (though less polite) term would be, stomach.

As with any other intellectual and scientific activity founded on a dehistoricized cosmology, present day Catholic theology simply can not allow the activity of the New Class to be covenantal worship, both ridiculously free and awesomely responsible in His death, creative *ex nihilo*, a complete surprise completely intelligible, not bound by any agenda, not written down on any list of the naughty and the nice, not predictable in advance, not required or even conditioned by any necessity, whether of God or man.

Although it must weigh on every man, it must particularly weigh on members of the New Class: present day Catholic theology by its fundamental intellectual commitments must rule out in advance what is proclaimed every day in and through the Church's free liturgical mediation of her faith in her Lord: the creation of genuine good surprises -- something real for Our Lady's juggler to do on earth, something real for St. Therese to do in heaven.

By either the 'law' of 'nature' or of 'liberation,' the very best gift that the New Class can give to God can not exist -- precisely because the very best gift the New Class can give to God can not be necessitated, can not be predicted in advance, can not be controlled. According to present day Catholic theology, there can be no 'job' whose essence is the creation of good surprises, true covenantal worship in spirit and truth. There can only be duties to perform, duties written down in a time-less book by a god, whether the *Deus Unus* or 'liberation,' who binds us whether we like it or not.

Within the formidable strictures of present day Catholic theology, itself enslaved by its intellectual and scientific commitments to a dehistoricized cosmology, covenantal relation can not exist -- so it does not. The New Class therefore exists to be exploited, either nakedly, as in traditional Catholic thought, or by means of the cravenly submissive 'borrowings' of New Class Catholicism. Within *Catholic theology* of the present age, the New Class can be worshipped, or it can be feared, but it can not be loved. How then can it be evangelized?

The theological evangelization of the New Class awaits a re-turn of Catholic theology to the New Covenant.

14 *Epilogue: A Quote*

¹In sum, our objective reality as human is covenantal, and as historical is Eucharistic; *this* reality is the single interest and the single subject matter of Catholic theology, because it is the single ground of existence in Christ. The Eucharist is the center of objective existence because it is the constituting Event of the historically free world, of the Good Creation. Therefore the work of theology is not speculation but practice, a dimension of the Eucharistic worship of the Church. It is the responsibility and privilege of the theologian in and for the Church, inherent in the freedom of his commitment to the inexhaustible mystery of the New Covenant which sustains him, to inquire in and out of season into the freedom of the Good Creation that is good as in Christ, into the mystery of its historical objectivity, into the nuptial dignity of our covenantal imaging of God, and in that inquiry to remember that such understanding as he may gain is a gift, carried in a most fragile vessel, and that his questions, like any other expression of his worship of God, mark his indigence, not his self-sufficiency. The theologian is very much Our Lady's juggler; by himself he is only ridiculous: his sole dignity is his service to the Church. There is no other dignity than this, our participation in the One Flesh of the One Sacrifice by which in Christ we have access to the Father.

1. *CT*, p. 654