

Out of the Cave

Out of the Cave

A Student Journal

Spring 2020 Edition

Created by

The Students of John Paul the Great
Catholic University

Out of the Cave

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Opening Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you, You, who made the heavens and earth, For bestowing on us the dominion and gift of natural reason and of artistic talent That we may think and create and be alive. We ask you humbly to ordain and guide our talents That through them we may give witness to the true, good, and beautiful And worship you, giving glory to You, who are true, good, and beautiful.

Letter from the Editors

John Paul the Great University is full of young artists and thinkers who are eager to make their mark upon the world. Some of those students are already sitting down and working on honing their craft, be it photography, poetry or philosophy. We, the editors of *Out of the Cave*, have proudly collected the works of the students and selected those in this book as being of exemplary value. *Out of the Cave* is now one year old, and we hope to continue to present the work of the students of John Paul the Great Catholic University for many years to come.

Out of the Cave

“Next, then,” I said, “make an image of our nature in its education and want of education, likening it to a condition of the following kind. See human beings as though they were in an underground cave-like dwelling with its entrance, a long one, open to the light across the whole width of the cave. They are in it from childhood with their legs and necks in bonds so that they are fixed, seeing only in front of them, unable because of the bond to turn their heads all the way around. Their light is from a fire burning far above and behind them. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a road above, along which see a wall, built like the partitions puppet-handlers set in front of the human beings and over which they show the puppets.”

—Plato

From *The Republic of Plato*,

Translated by Allen Bloom,
(Basic Books, 1991), 193.



FICTION

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A Man Goes for Milk Stories

We open our Fiction category with a group of John Paul Catholic classics. Each student who attends the university as a freshman is required to take a class called Story, Genre, and Structure taught by Professor Chris Riley. Perhaps the most memorable part of this class is when he assigns the “Man Goes for Milk Story.” The assignment is simple: in one 8^{1/2} x 11 page or less, tell the story of a man who goes for milk. The exercise is to practice making words count, and on only one page it is a challenge. Professor Riley critiques the stories based on whether or not they meet Billy Idealsen’s definition of a story, something any JPC student can tell you: “A story is a hero’s struggle against an obstacle, to reach a goal.”

The Farmer's Son

Miguel Alejandro Marquez

A farmer's son gets a glass of milk. Palms sweating. Lips numb. All sense of purpose repositioned to working hands moving and shifting to the beat of the ticks. Tick. Tick. Tick. Go right. Go left. The humming didn't help either. The creature itself being restrained to the frantic sounds coming from the device. Everything comes out like a chalky paste whereas the steel clamp has a river of goop going into an air trapped cylinder.

The farmer's son stops. Looks at his watch. One point seven seconds. The farmer's son screams and curses as his overtired cow lingers in the back, beside the calm cows being sucked on by senseless and joyless cords that lead to an ever staring machine. Its polished buttons making unblinking red eyes towards the passionate farmer's son and his glass of warm, newly made milk; the brim of which having cream completely void in the machine's mix.

The farmer's son wasn't quick enough; the machine had beaten him in a matter of seconds. Ravaged by defeat, the young man gets up and trots back to the end of the field once known as his future inheritance. It is to be sold as a processing plant to house a multitude of cows being used by a multitude of lifeless machines. The times of passion are gone. Dead are the days of a stiff plow being dug in to dirt by an even stiffer laborhand. The farmer no longer makes his own milk.

A Guy Goes for Milk

Michelle Regello

Clouds scud across a watercolor sky. A light breeze touches hot cheeks and damp hair, tucked into fancy hats. Emerald grass lies waiting. An insistent clatter matches the distant roll of thunder. Electricity flows through the crowd as colorful silks ride through the tunnel.

Fedoras, bowlers, even boaters scuffle in the opposite direction. With bills and betting tickets in hand, men—and even a woman or two—hurry toward the barred windows to lay money on a last-minute tip.

Newspapers, tip sheets and the Daily Racing Form accompany the murmur of voices comparing the odds: How's the track? Did you hear ... Rumors spread.

“The white horse will be running today.”

“Naw, he was injured in the last race.”

“No, really. It's right here.”

“I'll be right back.”

Samuel Johnstone pulls out his wallet and counts the bills. Shaking his head, Sam searches his pockets. Among the lint, he finds several coins. Satisfied at last, he makes his way to the nearest betting window and shoves the money across the counter.

“I'm putting it all on Milk. It's a sure thing.”

A Wretch Goes for Milk

Joshua Peck

Tom is staring at the milk on his counter, specifically the chunks he can see floating in it. It occurs to him that he hasn't left his house in over a month, let alone gone to the store. That reminds him of the oak tree, and he reaches for the bottle of bourbon beside him, but it's empty. Moldy milk he can handle, but a dry liquor cabinet is a problem. He grabs his wallet and heads out the door. He isn't drunk; after all, he's sober enough to flip off his neighbor Steve when he asks if Tom is "feeling okay." No, not drunk at all. He still isn't drunk when his friend Joey pulls up next to him on Main Street. "Get in the car, Tom, we should talk." Tom sneers and spits, "Joey, 'ave I ever asked for yur' pity?" Joey starts to reply, but Tom is already crossing the street to the convenience store. Within a few moments he's standing in the Milk aisle with a bottle of Jack Daniels in one hand. "You ok, Tom? I haven't seen you around since—" It's Jack, the store's owner and Tom's friend once upon a time. Tom cuts him off before he can finish. "Keep the change, Jack." Tom pressed a ten into his old friend's hand, grabs a carton of whole milk and walks out the door. Outside, Tom is trying desperately to cross the street, waiting for a lull in the traffic so he can get to the other side. He doesn't have to cross, in fact it's longer that way, but he wants to, needs to. He keeps walking with his eyes on the road waiting for a moment to run. He sees a gap and steps out into the road, only to be met by a blaring horn. Tom jumps back onto the

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sidewalk, and the driver stops. But now Tom isn't looking at the road; he's looking at the sidewalk, or rather past it to an oak tree with a splintered trunk, at the tire marks still in the dried mud. In front of it some kind soul has erected two crosses. Tom can feel his eyes fill with tears. "Are you ok, sir?" It's the owner of the truck; Tom is about to tell him just exactly where he can shove his 'sir' when he notices the milk. The carton he just bought, it's moldy. "Are you ok, sir?" This time no insult comes to his mind. He simply puts the milk in front of the two crosses, and tosses the whisky bottle into the gutter. "Yeah, I, I just need to go get some milk."

A Mouse Goes for Milk

Erik Arvidson

Morning comes upon the mousehole and the family of Manny Mouse. Manny is excited today because he woke up before the rest of his mousehold to see a discarded cracker at his doorstep. This kind of incident rarely happens but is very appreciated by the Mouse family. To surprise his house, Manny decides to give them the best breakfast that they have had in a long while. However, a mouse can't simply serve his family an unmoistened cracker as a meal. But what could successfully quench the thirst presented by this dry cracker? Why, milk of course!

A delicacy used only to celebrate special occasions, milk would be the perfect way to surprise his small family. Undoubtedly, it will be difficult to get a hold of. However, Manny feels a strong urge to bring joy to his mousehold in this way. And so, as quiet as a mouse, Manny sneaks out of the hole with his bucket and sets off on this exciting adventure. The journey to attain a mouse-sized meal of milk will be difficult and dangerous. Reaching a corner, Manny lays low to avoid the beast. This menace of an animal with a long tail and whiskers has been torturing him and his ancestors for generations. It drinks from an endless supply of milk several times a day. Manny doesn't find a sign of the beast anywhere, and so he decides to continue to the pool.

Reaching the basin, Manny uses the family bucket to collect the milk. But, Manny was so enticed by the pool in front of him that he didn't notice the large being lurking behind him. A shadow forms

slowly overhead. Finishing his scoop of milk, Manny turns to see a creature behind him. Shock comes over his body as he recognizes the beast instantly. Tossing his bucket, Manny darts for a corner. The monster follows in hot pursuit. Manny finds the wall quickly. He begins to scurry up the wall in front of him. However, his footing is lost while in his climb. The beast meets him in his corner. Manny squeaks and screeches for help in desperation, but nothing can change his fate. It all happens so fast. Manny's future is sealed. All for a drink of milk...

Flight 11-16

Audrey Marie Daniels

No matter how hard I looked, no matter how hard I tried,
I could not separate the ocean from the sky.

Ode to My Schoolbooks

Paula Heine

When I am old and well-written,
And wiser, I'll reach for the shelf
And, laying hold of a paperback book,
I'll read a part of myself.

Starved Bodies

Anonymous

Doubts don't discriminate between the young and old
As we all race around each other tryna reach one goal:
Ideal; perfect body and what does she look like?
You and I but we starved our way to blindness

We stare right into beauty's bright eye
While having the grit to say her face is ugly and lie
All eyes, no sight, pitiful poor vision
So instead, I'll cut 2,000 in half
Using simple division
Now look at my decision!
Doubling my beauty by cutting me in half
What more is to become
of my soul, which I don't think will last?

Withered away
I stand shivering at the cold.
Starving myself down to my brittle bones
Was it worth it?
To reach size zero: the common goal?
To rank ten outta ten just to feel whole?
A number on a scale to dictate the scale of my worth

The size of my worth belongs to having no size at all!
Lies of being weightless
Less size, less weight, more stress, more gates
Teeth-like jail bars
Even while food is bared
The only gates that open
Open new eyes seeping into the black of your mind
Infecting the mind with diseases of lies
From whisperings to shouts
As shouts become yelling
The silent mind screams,
“I’m ugly not fine!”

Soon I’ll no longer be in control
Consumed by repetitive
Sharp voices gossiping of flaws, flaws deeper than a black hole
The only thing now makes me human
Is numbers and counting,
Upon calories.
Obsessed with things I cannot eat
Pretending drowning tastes like a treat
By feeding my devils
By starving myself
I’ve been consumed by life itself
Any other body would suffice
Not me, not mine
Everything I once loved...

Lost.

Society taught me what's on social media's real
While magazine models materialize photoshopped people who've been
missing meals
And TV fails to capture the actual picture
It's not our body that is scripture but our souls
The tragedy's we mask under basements with locked doors
Is clothed with the tip of the iceberg
How we define ourselves is more important than
How the world defines us as a whole
We are more than a pretty picture
We are worth more than a fake smile
Laughing loudly so we can distract others from our sad eyes
We are not a drop in the ocean but an ocean in one drop
More complex than what we show on the top
If we are what we eat don't eat nothing
Because you are everything
If you have the chance to swing for the extraordinary
Do so because you were made for more

To Love Without Touch

A Meditation for Men

Nick Haren

To love without touch is a beautiful thing.

It sets the soul on fire; gives it its wings

To love without touch is to accept there's no return;

To give, to grant, to offer, to sacrifice and burn

All hope of rewarding pleasure. It's sifted out like sand.

To be rid of what is finite reveals a truth so grand.

To be intimate does not require lustful thoughts and petty desire
Intimacy strikes a common goal; to do our part as part of a whole;

To better each other; to do something more:

The calling God placed in our very core.

To love without touch is a hard thing to say.

It stirs us as men to kneel down and pray.

I surrender her Lord, for she is not mine.

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I give her to you, and follow your design.

I wish to prepare her as a sanctified bride
For the man of Your choice, who will stand by her side.

And whether that man be me or another,
My wish stays the same as her spiritual brother:

To guide her to happiness, the source of which is You.
Can I love without touch? Lord, teach me to say, "I do."

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Darth Vader and the Problem of Evil

Katherine Thayer

I - Introduction

To get a disclaimer out of the way, I understand that philosophy isn't theology, and I also get that we shouldn't be using theology in a philosophy paper; but considering the thesis I wish to present, as well as the philosophers I will be using, theology has to be present in this argument.

The universe has two main forces that permeate all forms of life, good and evil. When it comes to good and evil, both of these forces came from God. While it is understood that God is good, He also allows evil in his creation. When it comes to the problem of evil though, there isn't a concise reason why that evil does exist. However, God permits evil in the world. While the source itself may seem confusing, the purpose of evil is also to lead us back to said source. In other words, we fall from good, into evil, but the suffering in that evil should return us back to the good.¹

In film we have many characters to show off this fall and rise, but I wish to choose one that is close to my heart: Darth Vader, from the Star Wars franchise. Star Wars has a supernatural entity known as the Force, and it behaves like God does in the Catholic faith. Being born as the chosen one, falling to the dark side of the Force, before

¹ Younan, Andrew, Introduction to Philosophy, pg 89

redeeming himself by bringing balance at last; Vader shows the problem of evil in all of us, as well as how it can be solved.

II - Beginning

After our baptism, and every time we receive absolution in the sacrament of penance, we are considered in the state of grace, or in good favor with God. In other words, we should be maintaining the morals given by God, in order to stay in the state of grace. This state of grace is the ideal of what Catholics should be in their daily life, and is, in essence, the key to get into heaven. Maintaining the state of grace, however, isn't as easy; for as Catholics, we will be constantly tempted to fall into the state of sin. These temptations can be a difficult struggle, but they can be overcome, and with them overcome, we can maintain the state of grace.

As for the *Star Wars* films, there is really only one way to define if you're in a state of grace or sin, that being which side of the Force you were on (the light side being a state of grace, and the dark side being the state of sin). While you may be born in one side of the Force or another, you can change over time between the two sides; or even become what is known as a Grey Jedi, people who are able to use both sides of the force, but for this argument we will only worry about the light and dark sides.

Before Darth Vader fell, he was one of the best in the light side of the Force. Known as Anakin Skywalker, he was born with the essence of the Force coursing through his veins.² Anakin was incredibly gifted in using the Force, and joined the Jedi order at a young age,

² *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*, George Lucas

rising through the ranks to become one of their most gifted knights in the whole order. While he did follow the Jedi code, he was tempted by the various emotions to break his state of emotionless that the Jedi required.

III - Temptation and Fall

When we think of the fall, there are two different falls we could see. First there is the fall of man, also known as the fallen human nature, or there's the more relevant fall I wish to analyze further, which is the fall from grace into sin. I choose to look at this fall because it is the falling into evil from a state of goodness that the problem of evil is trying to solve. While the state of sin could be defined either with venial sin, mortal sin, or general sin, for this argument, I will be using the general state of sin. While it may seem to be a corruption, the fall into the state of sin can be seen as a disordering of the person, for the state of grace is deemed to be the ideal order.³ Throughout the Catholic lifestyle, we are tempted to do actions that go against our own Catholic morals. Whether it be through lust, or despair, we are tempted to fall away from God and into the hands of sin. Once we are tempted though, we are in the state of sin, or being out of favor with God.

In the Star Wars prequels, Darth Vader shows us his fall through his feelings. While still Anakin Skywalker, as a Jedi Knight (in essence a monk), he couldn't have any relationships at all. However, he got tempted and fell into a lustful love with Padmé, the queen of Naboo. After getting her pregnant, Anakin had a vision that she would die, but he wasn't sure how she would die. His love for Padmé and his

³ Younan, Andrew, Introduction to Philosophy page 90

desire to save her life, pushed him from only committing sexual sin, to fully joining Palpatine (later revealed to be Emperor himself) in the dark side of the Force, taking on the name Darth Vader.

Once he has his Sith name, Vader starts killing Jedi children, and his murder spree culminates in him dueling his own master and with him losing most of his limbs. This fall to the dark side can be seen as his fall into sin, and once he receives his life support suit, he is not only further tempted by the claim that he did kill his wife Padmé, but he also further embraces his state of sin by becoming more ruthless in his killing of Jedi. By embracing the evil he has chosen to follow, Darth Vader has fully become a true Sith, and a sinner.

IV - Redemption

Once you have fallen though, you aren't stuck in the state of sin forever. As Catholics we have the opportunity for the sacrament of confession, so that our sins can be forgiven, and with our sins forgiven we can return into the state of grace. In confessing our sins to the priest, we are reaching Jesus Christ himself, who died for our sins so that we can have the chance to receive confession, and through that font we can find our own redemption. The only way we can is by recognizing our own flaws, admitting that we are to blame for our actions, and being sorry for the sins we have committed. It is through that contrition that we can be able to head to the fountain of mercy that is Jesus.

Star Wars may have not had Jesus in it, but there definitely was a Jesus figure. Luke Skywalker, Vader's son, offers him plenty of opportunities in the original trilogy to bring Vader back to the light

side. Luke was able to get the truth out of Vader in *The Empire Strikes Back* and soften up Vader around him,⁴ and in *Return of the Jedi*, we see how Luke is able to start convincing Vader to turn away from the dark side of the force.⁵

While all of these offers may have softened Vader a bit, what really broke him was seeing his own son dying at the hands of his master. At the climax of *Return of the Jedi*, father and son duel, before the Emperor shocks Luke with so much Force Lightning that it could have killed him. Seeing his own flesh and blood perishing allowed Vader to acknowledge his own⁶ flaws and the flaws in the dark side of the Force in general. Having this realization finally breaks him from the dark side of the Force, killing his master, and saving not only his own son's life, but also his own soul. By sacrificing his life to save his own soul, Vader was able to have his sins forgiven as a Sith and, in essence, return to his original identity of Anakin Skywalker. As the original trilogy wraps up, we see Anakin return as a Force ghost, saved by saving his own son. His sins were forgiven, and once more he could return into the light again.

V - Conclusion

With how we begin, fall, and rise back up again, humans do rotate around the states of grace and sin as if it was nothing. Between the temptations of the material world, as well as the spiritual struggle that prayer life has to offer, we can fall into sin easily. Yet, at the same time, it is acknowledging those flaws inside ourselves that allows us to

⁴ *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, George Lucas

⁵ *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*, George Lucas

⁶ *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*, George Lucas

receive the redemption that we so desperately seek. This allows us to go towards the fountain of mercy and receive forgiveness for our sins.

Once we are forgiven, we can return into the state of grace once more.

Furthermore, we can see how Darth Vader, who is arguably one of the strongest Force users ever, shows us how we can fall so far, and yet allows us to see how we can be redeemed in the end. From his temptations to love, to his emotional turn, vengeance, and anger, before finally returning to the light he was born into at the end of his life; Vader shows us the arc of the fallen hero but in a way that is relatable to all audiences.

Descartes in the Matrix

Ruvianne Dela Cruz Mercado

Introduction

For a short time, Rene Descartes conducted a philosophical experiment with the goal to come to clear and distinct truths. His first step was to doubt everything he had perceived. Descartes doubts all that he sees in order to block out all opinions and be objective.

The Matrix applies some of Descartes' meditations but not for finding mathematical equations and the like. Morpheus and the rest of the Nebuchadnezzar crew utilize some of Descartes' meditations to fight against the illusions of the Matrix and to also save those who have not been unplugged yet. The Matrix applies Descartes' first meditation the most. In his first meditation Descartes says, "All that I have, up to this moment, accepted as possessed of the highest truth and certainty, I received either through the senses. I observed, however, that these sometimes misled us," (193). Descartes doubts his senses because they deceive him and find out objective truths without them. He, however, makes a point that there are things that the senses present that cannot be doubted. He gives the example, "I am in this place, seated by the fire," (194). What makes the Matrix so interesting is that in the Matrix once someone is unplugged, they have to doubt absolutely everything. It is no longer a matter of someone's eyes mistaking a word on a sign for something else but for that sign to actually end up not being a sign. In the Matrix, the sign can be something else. It might be a sentient

program about to shoot you with a gun.

Maturity

The Matrix is designed to distort reality for people and keep them plugged into the system to use them as energy. Those who are oblivious are not ready to be unplugged. Those who are, have to begin to doubt what they have always thought to be true. There are similarities between Descartes' decision to do this and the idea of being unplugged in the Matrix. In this sense, being unplugged is like a type of maturity. Descartes talks about intellectual maturity which he believed would allow him to get rid of all his former opinions he had formed up until the moment he conducts this experiment, "I waited until I had attained an age so mature," (193). However, according to Morpheus, Neo has reached a level of maturity that makes it difficult to understand the Matrix. Initially, Neo struggles to understand the Matrix and how it works, so Morpheus guides him.

Dreams

In Meditations I, Descartes mentions dreams and how they are deceiving because it is hard to know whether one is dreaming or awake. At the start of the movie Neo asks Choi the question, "Do you ever have that feeling where you're not sure if you're awake or still dreaming?" to which Choi responds, "It just sounds to me like you might need to unplug, man." Descartes regarding dreams says, "There exist no certain marks by which the state of waking can ever be distinguished from sleep," (194). Regarding people who are still plugged into the Matrix, it is impossible to realize that they are living in

a computer simulation. Neo has a feeling that he might be, but because no distinctions are clear, he is incapable of unplugging himself.

The Matrix is not like any dream Descartes is talking about. Because the Matrix presents a world that is so believable and leaves almost no room for doubt, there is no distinction between dreams and reality. The Matrix is a dream that is reality for plugged-in people. Descartes writes that, “Whether I am awake or dreaming, it remains true that two and three make five,” (195). The Matrix will become unbelievable when the principles of mathematics are no longer stand true, but seeing as they do, with the exception of Neo, there is no way to distinguish the Matrix from actual reality.

Those who are unplugged re-enter the Matrix by plugging themselves back in. It puts that person in this mode of sleep where they cannot move in the real world, yet they will still be susceptible to anything physical that happens in the Matrix. It is like lucid dreaming. They understand that everything around them is part of the simulation. However, lucid dreaming also implies that one can manipulate their dreams, which the crew cannot do. All they can do is doubt when they get plugged back in, but in the end, Neo finds that he can manipulate the Matrix.

Red Pill or Blue Pill?

The iconic red pill or blue pill scene marks Neo’s journey into a Cartesian reality. The red pill leads to a world of doubting, and the blue pill is to continue to live in ignorance with no pursuit for reality and truth.

In the white room, Morpheus begins presenting Neo with

Descartes's first meditation. He asks Neo, "What is real? How do you define real? If you're talking about what you can feel, what you can smell, what you can taste and see, then real is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain." Morpheus is saying that if reality is just what the senses make of things around it, then there is nothing more to reality. There is no point in thinking through things because the only real things are those that we can perceive by our senses alone.

Descartes believes that there is more.

The body makes it possible to perceive things through the senses, but because the senses are not trustworthy within the Matrix and within Descartes's philosophical experiment, what is left? Neo would rather believe that his senses are telling him exactly what he is perceiving. He regrets taking the red pill and expresses the desire to go back and live in ignorance. Descartes asks, "Am I so dependent on the body and the senses that without these I cannot exist?" (199). This poses the question of the function of the senses for the sake of existence. Descartes believes that the mind gives him existence. Neo illustrates this dependence when he refuses to accept that his reality was a lie.

How Knowledge Is Acquired in the Matrix

To start off his journey towards finding the Matrix and Morpheus, Neo is told to follow the white rabbit. Alice in Wonderland used the idea of following a white rabbit. Alice follows the rabbit out of curiosity which helps her come to see her ignorance. Neo following the white rabbit does not merely lead him out of his ignorance of the Matrix, but toward his first step into a full understanding of it.

Descartes had no white rabbit.

Knowledge in the Matrix is acquired through doubting what someone has always believed to be true, revealing what it actually is, and accepting its actual reality. They also somehow are able to acquire knowledge of anything by being fed the information directly to their minds. This is all acquired through someone or something else.

The fight scene between Neo and Morpheus introduces the importance of manipulating the mind. Morpheus tells Neo, “Don’t think you are, know you are.” What Morpheus seems to be implying is that instead of thinking that we can be someone, tricking the mind into making that potentiality an actuality without the in-between steps will make that thing true. This even goes beyond Descartes’ famous cogito ergo sum line. The Matrix goes beyond simply thinking, and that alone is what makes him exist. The Matrix makes thinking a handicap. Thinking prevents Neo from winning in the sparring match against Morpheus the first time. This seems like an equivocation for the word “thinking,” but the concept of thinking in the Matrix aligns with Descartes’ idea that thinking is used to affirm his existence, “to be something.”⁷ The Matrix takes that idea and moves beyond that. The entire concept of the mind—whether it be intellectually, or emotionally, like Neo believing he can do something—is connected. The mind affects the capabilities of someone’s existence. Morpheus’s line seems motivational so Neo can believe in himself more, but it is actually for Neo to create something that is not only beneficial to him, but can become a truth for everyone else.

⁷ Descartes, Rene, *A Discourse on the Method*, trans. Ian Maclean (New York: Oxford World’s Classics, 2006), 28.

In the scene where Morpheus is taking Neo through the streets, Neo gets distracted by a woman in a red dress and once Morpheus questions if it was actually a woman looking at him, it turns out to be one of the computer programs. This scene reaffirms the idea of how easily manipulated the mind can be and also how dangerous it is to accept what others say. This is why Descartes doubts and why doubting is important in the Matrix as well.

The Difference Between The Matrix and Descartes

What makes the Matrix different from Descartes is that while Descartes' goal is a mathematical one, the Matrix's goal is a metaphysical one. The characters in the Matrix lack actual reality and being, something that Descartes has. Living in the Matrix means that absolutely everything can be doubted and there cannot be anything to search for if there is no solid foundation of reality or truth first. Their entire goal is to free people from the illusions of the Matrix and actually live in a world that no longer deceives them. Life in the Matrix is actually a simulation.

Notes Leading Towards a Definition of Story

A Philosophical Examination

Joshua Peck

Several definitions of story have been attempted before, some descriptive, others practical. However, in both cases, the definition fails in specificity. For example, there is Billy Idelson's, "A story is a hero's journey, against an obstacle, to reach a goal."⁸ Your average dictionary provides a more focused alternative, "an account of incidents or events."⁹ However, if there is to be a philosophical examination of story, then it ought to be defined as narrowly as possible; this would be using Aristotle's essential definition: genus plus specific difference.

Unfortunately, Aristotle himself does not provide us with a definition of story, at least not a clear one. The closest he comes is in *The Poetics*, where he says that imitation is an essential quality to both tragedy and comedy, which he considers to be the two main types of

⁸ Idelson, Billy

⁹ *Merriam Webster*, s.v. "Story," August 19, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/story>.

story. “Imitation then, being natural to us—as also the sense of harmony and rhythms... it was through their original aptitude, and by a series of improvements for the most part gradual on their first efforts, that they created poetry out of their improvisations.”¹⁰ Aristotle later goes on to describe how stories, especially tragedies, are an imitation of reality. However, this principle does not distinguish stories from other types of art, like painting or sculpting, and thus, we must look elsewhere for our definition.

The first task is to find the genus under which story falls. This will be the genus ‘narrative.’ Many would argue that story and narrative are the same thing; however, it is precisely in distinguishing these two terms that we find the definition of story. Throughout the *Poetics*, Aristotle frequently describes stories as possessing a beginning, middle, and end. Yet, if this is a definition, it could just as easily describe a song or even a train for that matter. This description more accurately describes the genus narrative, which I will define as “a communicated sequence of events.” This definition of ‘narrative’ possesses Aristotle’s ‘beginning middle and end’ but also emphasizes the necessity of communication to a receiver.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle*, trans. Ingram Bywater (New York: Random House, 1954), 227.

Within the genus narrative can be found: songs, descriptions, accounts, and of course, stories. After several months of contemplation on the topic, it seems that the specific difference of stories is that they possess “an intrinsic purpose,” giving us the following essential definition of story: *a story is a narrative with an intrinsic purpose.*

To illustrate the difference, consider a man whose wife asks him to explain why he was late. He can respond in one of two ways: through narrative alone, or story. In the first case, he will tell her that there was an accident on the freeway and that he needed to get gas. This is a narrative with an extrinsic purpose, which we will call an ‘account.’ The husband tells the account only to communicate to his wife why he was late; the purpose of the narrative rests only in passing information to his wife. However, a more experienced husband will tell a story. In this case, even if he uses the same words and changes only the emphasis and intonation so as to add humor to the narrative, he has changed it from an account to a story. This is because now, while it still communicates the same information, it also poses the intent to entertain, which exists only within the story.

Both the account and the story imitate reality as Aristotle pointed out, but a story goes one step further and abstracts some meaning from the imitated events and highlights that meaning within

itself. Even so, that purpose still resides within the story because the humorous purpose cannot be separated from the story. Whereas, in the case of the account, the purpose is extrinsic because it is found in the experience, thus if the wife was in the car with her husband, there would be no need for an account.

This is the measure of a story: if the listener were to experience the events of the story, rather than hear them told, would he be missing any meaning that existed in the story, assuming he did not abstract in the same manner as the storyteller? If there is no meaning outside the corresponding experience, then the communication of that experience is merely an account. If there is some meaning or purpose which existed in the account, but not in the corresponding events, then it is a story.

With this definition of story (A Story is a narrative with an intrinsic purpose), one can evaluate their own stories or others based upon the degree to which they possess an intrinsic purpose. A film, book or performance which possesses nothing that could not be gathered from simply sharing in the events portrayed, is not only a bad story; it is not a story at all. Conversely, the storyteller must see his role as extending beyond the mere regurgitating of events and ask to what end he is creating the story.

Ratzinger's Ideas of the Liturgy:

Essence, Sacrifice, Time and Space, Form & Ars Celebrandi

Timothy Rodriguez

I. Introduction

The Catholic liturgy as described by Joseph Ratzinger is the liturgy of the Word made flesh and flesh for the sake of the resurrection. The sacramental celebration is woven from sign and symbols. The matter comes through sacred signs, liturgical objects, and grace through the sacraments. Ratzinger's intention of his book, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* is to “encourage in a new way, something like a liturgical movement.” This liturgical movement is mostly based on a renaissance of the past. By referring to the rich intellectual history of the Church we can discover once more the heavenly liturgy, in the hopes that by looking towards the liturgy and towards the right way of celebrating the liturgy, both inwardly and outwardly. Ratzinger goes through many different ideas about the liturgy, but, for the sake of the length of the paper, we will only expound on five particular ideas. These are the essence, time and space, form, and the *ars celebrandi* of the Sacred Liturgy.

II. Essence of the Sacred Liturgy

Ratzinger uses the Exodus event to describe the essential nature of the liturgy. One of the important themes in the book of Exodus is

God saying, “Let my people go, that they may serve me” (Exodus 8:1). The Hebrew word used for ‘serve’, *abad* can either mean work or worship. With this in mind at the beginning of Exodus, God is expressing His desire to liberate Israel so that they may worship Him. Ratzinger further notes that although reaching the Promised Land was an important element of the Exodus, the worship of God was what gave true meaning to the taking of the land. By renewing the Abrahamic Covenant with Moses, God is simply giving back what was originally promised to Abraham and the nation of Israel. The “land flowing with milk and honey,” (Exodus 3:17) is the place that God has set aside or consecrated so that Israel may worship Him through feast and sacrifice. “The service of God, the freedom to give right worship to God, appears, in the encounter with Pharaoh, to be the sole purpose of the Exodus, indeed, its very essence.”¹¹ A liturgy entirely dependent upon God’s revelation is its true nature. The true “cult” worship embraces the ordering of the whole human life. From this true worship, law and ethics must be firmly rooted and inspired in the meaning of the liturgy.

Ratzinger uses the religious theme of sacrifice to explain true worship. The purpose of sacrifice is to surrender oneself to God in order that one may find oneself through dedication to God. Liturgy has its place in both the cosmos and history. In the Old Testament, creation was revealed to be the place where God wanted to make a covenant with man. While in the New Testament, Christ's sacrifice was a historical event that happened in time, but by being the perfect

¹¹ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2000) pg.20.

sacrifice, His blood is able to atone for all past and future transgressions. With this in mind, every Eucharistic celebration is the recapitulation of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. Ratzinger states that "creation looks towards the covenant, but the covenant completes creation and does not simply exist along with it. Now if worship, rightly understood, is the soul of the covenant, then it not only saves mankind but it's also meant to draw the whole of reality into communion with God."¹² Within the essence of worship, true sacrifice is not some type of destruction but rather "the civitas Dei." Meaning that by love, mankind is transformed and through creation's surrender of all things to God's love is divinized. Ratzinger concludes that the goal of worship and the goal of creation as a whole are one and the same: "divinization, a world of freedom and love."¹³

III. Old and New Testament Sacrifice

In the third chapter, Ratzinger explains how the liturgy takes place in the context of both the struggle of man and society to find atonement, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This is made easier when man comes to find that the only real gift he should give to God is himself. He further states that Christian worship fulfills Israel's worship in two ways. The first is the fulfillment of the Temple sacrifice system through Christ the Lamb given by God. The Old Testament Temple worship was always accompanied by a clear sense of its insufficiency and the intense awareness of the desire for something greater, something indescribably new. With Jesus' Passion and Resurrection,

¹² *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, pg. 27

¹³ *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, pg. 28.

real worship begins. Because in Jesus' self-surrender on the Cross, the Word is united with the reality of human life and suffering. His act of self-giving finally makes sufficient the debt that humanity owed by its disobedience therefore, there is no longer a replacement cult.¹⁴

Secondly, it fulfills the synagogue service of the word. This is because Christian liturgy cannot be viewed as the 'Christianized' form of the synagogue service but an actual development of the service. The synagogue finds its fulfillment in the Christian house of God. This is because the synagogue service is oriented towards Jerusalem, towards the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The new sacrifice, prefigured by Christ's own Eucharistic Sacrifice, takes place on the altar and becomes the place where heaven is opened up and leads the Church into eternal life. Lastly, the Torah is replaced by the Gospel, which gives new light and interpretation to the Torah. The shrine of the Word or the Ark of the Covenant is transformed into the throne of the Gospel.

IV. Time and Space in the Sacred Liturgy

Foremost, it is important to understand the importance of the time and space of the Crucifixion and Resurrection to understand Christian Liturgy. Without the Cross and Resurrection, Christian worship is null and void, and a theology of liturgy that omitted any reference to them would just be talking about an empty game. The liturgy as present in man's life partakes of both¹⁵ time and space. The foundation of the liturgy is in the historical event of Christ's death and resurrection: meaning that "Christian worship is surely a cosmic liturgy,

¹⁴ *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, pg. 47

¹⁵ *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, pg. 55.

which embraces both heaven and earth.” In addition to this, Ratzinger notes that Christian worship operates on three levels: past, present, and future. Although Christ’s Passion was a historical event that happened “once for all,” His interior act of self-giving transforms this historical event into something that embraces all the dimensions of reality. Since the Christian liturgy is about representation and not a replacement, Christ’s self-giving is meant to become mine as a living sacrifice with Him (Romans 12:1). The future or eschatological dynamism of the liturgy is meant to instill in us the desire and orient us towards everlasting life. In the Eucharist we are caught up and made contemporary with the Paschal Mystery of Christ, in his passing from the tabernacle of the transitory to the presence and sight of God. The foundation of the liturgy, its source and support,¹⁶ is the historical Pasch of Jesus. His Cross and Resurrection have become the once for all event and ever-abiding form of the liturgy. It is this eternal liturgy that the Holy Spirit and the Church enables us to participate whenever we celebrate the mystery of salvation in the sacraments.

V. Form in the Sacred Liturgy

In part four, Ratzinger explains liturgical forms. He describes ‘rite’ as an approved practice in the administration of sacrifice. Orthodoxy means, therefore, the right way to glorify God, the right form of adoration. This is the greatest gift of the Christian faith: the ability to offer the right worship to God. Rite gives us a practical arrangement made by the community, in time and space, for the basic type of worship. Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch are the three major

¹⁶ *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, pg. 57.

rites that he explains come from the primatial see in the First Council of Nicaea. The fourth rite, Byzantium would be included in the fourth century. Rites are not developed by culture but rather are forms of the apostolic Tradition and take form through the progression of time following tradition. Jungmann explains it as, “the liturgy that has come to be,” meaning that the liturgy grows in an organic fashion. As for the relationship between culture and liturgy, what is important is that the great forms of rites embrace many cultures. This means that creativity cannot be an authentic category for matters liturgical.

This sheds light on the man's participation in the liturgical form which mostly occurs through his body. His ‘participation’ in the liturgy refers to a principle action in which everyone has a part. The real action in the liturgy in which we are all supposed to participate is the action of God himself. This is what is new and distinctive about Christian liturgy; God himself acts and does what is essential. The oratio in the Eucharistic prayer is essential since we all must pray for the Sacrifice of the Logos to become our sacrifice. This unique quality of the Eucharistic liturgy is precisely the fact that God himself is acting and that we are drawn into that action of God.

As for our external actions, they are secondary since doing really must stop when we come to the heart of the matter—the oratio. The oratio “is important precisely because it provides a space for the actio of God.”¹⁷ Anyone who understands this can see that it is not a matter of looking at or towards the priest but of looking together towards the Lord and going out to meet him. It is by surrendering ourselves to the action of God that we in turn cooperate with Him.

¹⁷ *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, pg. 174.

This is what begins in the liturgy and is meant to unfold further beyond it.

VI. Ars Celebrandi in the Sacred Liturgy

The art of celebrating, or the *Ars Celebrandi*, Ratzinger presents to bishops and liturgists: “The bishop, celebrant par excellence,” is the one whose example, particularly in the cathedral, sets the tone and standard for the liturgies of a particular Church. Later in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict called for respect for the rites that have been handed to us by the Church. *Ars Celebrandi*, therefore, is the faithful adherence to the liturgical norms in all their richness. This is fitting since the liturgy is given to us as a gift of God and a gift of the Church. As mentioned in *Exodus*, God gathers His people to worship; we do not gather ourselves for some activity that we control or even manipulate. He also notes that the art of celebrating is deeply influenced by human culture; however, it must not make itself subject to the culture. The foundation of the art of proper celebration is understanding what you are doing. It is crucial to imitate what you celebrate and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s Cross. Liturgy is an action of the *Christus totus*,¹⁸ or whole Christ. Those who even celebrate it without signs are already in the heavenly liturgy, where celebration is wholly communion and feast. In this context ‘understanding’ is a sacred gift of the Holy Spirit; in order to welcome understanding and knowledge, it is important to have humility, in the form of a willingness to learn.

Through the correct participation of the liturgy, we obtain the

¹⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1136.

spiritual blessing of the Father and profess our faith in Him. If celebrating was meant to be a well-formed art, the art of proper celebration should never become too specialized—too difficult to be done by the ordinary and only exercised for an elite few. Overall, the purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ and, finally, to give worship to God. The Eucharistic Prayer in the Roman Missal states flawlessly the importance to worship God: “It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.” The *Ars Celebrandi* means that priests should be good liturgical craftsmen and artisans of the worship of God.

Regarding Arguments in Marriage

Andrew Koltuniuk

Among the vocations in life, marriage is one that is unique and special. It is the culmination of two people coming together in one union. A man and a woman pledge themselves to each other for the rest of their lives. In one of the most beautiful acts of creation, God brings forth children from this union. The road of marriage is not, however, paved with gold and sunny days. On the contrary, it is full of hardship, loss, bumpy roads and rainy days. Arguments, one of the many occurrences in marriage, can be a trial or a relief. Evil exists in the world, and because of this, we have arguments in marriage. This paper will examine biblical examples of arguments, both good and bad, and how we can argue effectively in our marriages.

Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, man has been plagued by temptation after temptation. If we are to understand why humans argue, we must first try to understand why evil exists in the world. Evil is a consequence of the fall, this is true; however, we must go back even further to the creation of man. When God first created man and put

him in the Garden of Eden, God said, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall die.”¹⁹ The LORD God gave Adam a command, and he told him not to eat of one of the trees. Adam and Eve had free will. Free will is the ability for humans to choose the choices that they make. If humans are incapable of free will, then we don’t actually have the ability to love God. We know from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) that “man alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity.”²⁰ By the simple fact that man is called to love, he has free will; he has the choice to love God or not, and he chose the latter. Adam and Eve chose not to love God and, thereby, were allowed the knowledge of good and evil, as Genesis says. In this way, evil was promulgated into the Earth, and man has faced the consequences of this since the fall. Many may argue that this is unfair, and that God should not allow evil in the world. However, if God had not allowed evil into the world, we would not have the choice to love Him, and therefore, we would merely be puppets who are under the control of a

¹⁹ Gen 2:16-17 RSV

²⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., 356.

puppet master and are only able to do his bidding. The very fact that evil exists only serves to prove God's love for us all the more.

Because evil exists, humans naturally are tempted and have the capacity to disagree and hurt one another. We go from being the best of friends in one moment to the worst of enemies in the next. We see even from the earliest moments in the Bible that man and woman argue, especially in Marriage. Not only that, they argue poorly. In fact, the earliest example of a bad argument is the argument between Adam and Eve when God finds out that they have disobeyed him. After God asks if they have eaten from the tree of God and Evil, Adam immediately blames Eve; he says, "The woman, whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."²¹ Eve, when asked in turn, replies in a similar way, placing the blame on the serpent. This is a poor example of argument in marriage. Neither spouse is willing to admit that they were the one in the wrong. Each of them blames someone else for the problem that the two of them created, and in the end, it brings about the downfall of the entire human race.

Jacob and Rachel are a perfect example of how to fight poorly as a couple. The reader will recall that Jacob worked seven years for Rachel and was given Leah instead. So, he was also given Rachel in

²¹ Gen 3:12 RSV

exchange for another seven years of labor. When Jacob tried having children, Leah was fruitful, and Rachel was barren. So, Rachel went to Jacob, “and she said to Jacob, ‘Give me children or I shall die!’ Jacob’s anger was kindled against Rachel and he said, ‘Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?’”²² This perfectly illustrates a poor argument within a marriage. Rachel comes to Jacob and yells at him for something that he can’t control. Jacob, for his part, allows his anger to flare up against Rachel, and he responds to her in anger, even though he is right. The two of them are unable to communicate effectively with one another.

A third and final example of a bad argument in marriage is that of Job and his wife. Job, who was a righteous man in God’s sight, was tested by Satan in order to demonstrate whether or not he was as righteous as God said that he was. After Job lost everything, his body was covered in sores and boils. He was very uncomfortable, so his wife came to him and said, “‘Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.’ But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?’”²³ This confrontation between Job and his

²² Gen 30:1-2 RSV

²³ Job 2:9-10 RSV

wife is not one to be emulated. Job's wife, instead of being there for him in his time of need, chose to instead tell Job to curse God. This is exactly the opposite of what should have happened. Job does not correct his wife either. He instead insults her and does more harm than good.

With so many examples of poor arguments and poor communication, are there any examples that are good? It turns out that there are. Isaac and Rebecca are an excellent example of humility. When it is time for Rebecca to be taken to Jacob, they first ask her if she is willing to go with them. Secondly, when Isaac and Rebecca were married, "Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren,"²⁴ This is an excellent example of humility. Isaac chooses to pray to the LORD for his wife, interceding on her behalf. She, for her part, chose to bow to her father's will.

Another excellent example of a spouse choosing the right thing is Zipporah; as Moses returns to Egypt to talk to Pharaoh, the LORD meets Moses and tries to kill him. "Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it."²⁵ Here is a great example because Zipporah recognizes that Moses did wrong in the

²⁴ Gen 25:21 RSV

²⁵ Ex 4:25 RSV

sight of the LORD. She chooses to right her husband's wrong and has the humility and the respect to stay with her husband and support him. Zipporah truly fulfills the Ezer role of the wife in this case. The Ezer role that a wife plays is that of a saving helper—similar to the role that God plays in our lives. It is in this role that the woman truly shines in marriage. Zipporah is a perfect example of this.

Finally, what greater example than that of Mary and Joseph. When Joseph finds out that Mary has a child on the way, he is visited by an angel of the LORD. When the angel tells him to take Mary as his wife, Joseph does so and is humble and takes good care of Mary. Joseph basically gives up everything that he has and is to become the father of Jesus and the husband of Mary, without any consideration for what he could have been. He is one of the best examples of an excellent spouse in the Bible.

How do we take these examples and apply them to the marriages of today? This question is one that has plagued many people. It is one of the reasons that marriages today fall apart and disintegrate. Men and women today are not capable of having arguments, particularly not when it comes to marriage. Fighting is a word that is often thrown around when you hear about a couple who are not doing well in their marriage. They fight, which leads to the two of them

spending time away from one another, which leads to more fights, which continues down a path that most couples never thought they would go through in the first place. All of this boils down to exactly what we saw in our Biblical examples: a lack of respect for your spouse and a lack of communication.

It can be Adam and Eve, refusing to take any responsibility for their actions. It can be Jacob and Rebecca, blaming the other for something that they cannot control. It can be Job and his wife, unwilling to help their spouse during a difficult time. Respect is such an important thing. When two people pledge to live with one another for the rest of their lives, they say the words, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part. These words cannot be taken trivially. They are the “backbone” of a marriage. If we examine the three Biblical examples, we can see exactly where they each fall in this “backbone” of marriage.

Adam and Eve refusing to take responsibility is a lack of respect for the other person. They are refusing to stay with them for worse. The best thing that each of them could have done was own up to their mistakes and admit the problem that they each made. They would have each been able to forgive one another, and the fall may have ended up

differently. Jacob and Rebecca are an example of refusing to love and respect their spouse in sickness. Rebecca blames Jacob for her inability to have children, something that he cannot control because that power lies with God. Jacob does not gently correct his wife. He, too, falls into the failure by losing his temper with his wife over her mistake. Job and his wife fall into the category of “for poorer” as well as “in sickness.” Job’s wife is completely happy and content until Job loses all that he has and is reduced to nothing. His body is covered in sores and boils, and she tells him to curse God instead of being the support, and the Ezer that he needs in that moment. Job, for his part, allows the temptation brought to him by his wife to get the better of him, and he sins before God. A lack of communication and respect will always cause problems in a marriage.

Is there a benefit to arguments? One could argue that a couple should just avoid arguments altogether so that one does not harm the other spouse at all. This is not true at all. As Song of Solomon says, “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.”²⁶ A husband and wife are brought together by God; “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.”²⁷ If a

²⁶ Song 6:3 RSV

²⁷ Gen 2:24 RSV

husband and a wife aren't able to at least dialogue with one another, they are going to have to bottle up feelings that, if left unchecked, can lead to the relationship souring between the two of them. This is often times worse than all out arguments because the couple can hold grudges. So, one of the benefits of arguing is being able to get your opinion out so that the two of you can see each other's viewpoints. This is very important because it is one of the foundational aspects of respect in the relationship. If you do not feel like your opinion is at least being listened to and respected, then you are not going to feel like your spouse is giving everything of themselves.

Having seen that this comes down to a lack of respect and communication in a marriage, what can the average couple do to amend that? The biggest thing that a couple can do is learn how to communicate better with your spouse and have a deep respect for them and their wishes. That seems so easy on paper, but how can we make that a reality in our own homes? The first step is to really get to know your spouse. If you are not completely comfortable with them and sure of what they need and how they click as a human being, you are going to be incapable, not only of loving them as they need to be loved, but also of respecting them as they need to be respected. This means that you need to spend time with your spouse. You are not going to learn

everything that you can about a person just from a talk over coffee. It is a lot more complex than that. You need to see them as a human being.

One of the big goals that many people talk about when it comes to marriage is remembering that you are responsible for the soul of your spouse. This means that you need to be working to make sure that they are going to go to Heaven. Having bad arguments is a sure-fire way to harm you and your spouse. This means that we need to have good arguments. This is where it seems simple, but it is not. Several things to focus on for this are as follows. Watch your language and have humility. If you and your spouse disagree on something, this is not the time to bring out the newest cuss word you learned from your co-workers at work. Now is the time to remember that you are both trying to get the other person to heaven. As hard as it is, humility is the key to good arguments. If you believe that you always have something to learn about your spouse, then you are going to do well.

Learn to dialogue and disagree without being too personal. Do not bring in small personal things. Maybe take a class in how to have a good dialogue with someone, maybe something that the two of you can really bond over. Then when you are able to dialogue about the small things, the big things will come of their own accord. And they will not be hard and tough conversations that you have to have. Instead, they

will be easier, and you will be able to really talk and engage. Disagree while still being loving. Remember that you can disagree with your spouse. It is not about being right. It is about loving your spouse. You need to be able to voice your opinion and still be able to love your spouse at the end of the day. It is not necessarily about liking them. It is loving them and wanting the best for them.

There are two excellent points to highlight in the New Testament regarding marriage and how a married couple is supposed to treat one another. Ephesians says “Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord... Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her”²⁸ First Corinthians says, “For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does,”²⁹ These two verses further solidify what we have been discussing in this paper: that the two are one flesh. So, you should act exactly how you would act with yourself. Treat your spouse with the same respect and dignity that you bestow upon yourself.

In conclusion, evil is a part of our world and a part of our life. We, unfortunately, must deal with it. But it allows us to have our

²⁸ Eph 5:22 5:25 RSV

²⁹ 1 Cor 7:4 RSV

freedom. Because evil exists, we do not always get along with each other. We argue with our spouses at times, and we observe from the Bible that these arguments can be both good and bad. It is not necessarily bad all the time. We also explored exactly how a couple has the ability to learn to discuss and argue well with one another. And finally, the Bible reminds us that a husband and a wife are one flesh. They are meant to work together to bring each other closer to God and the ultimate result of Heaven. Let us all work to get to know our spouses better so that we can help them get to our home in Heaven.

The Divine Name and the Prognosticate of the Incarnation Found in Exodus 3:13

Timothy Rodriguez

I. Context

Exodus is the second book of the Pentateuch, and it recounts the oppression of the Israelites by the Egyptians, the calling and sending of Moses, the Israelites departure from Egypt, the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness, the apostasy and Covenant renewal, and the building of the Tabernacle. The title of the book means “the way out, exist, departure,” which refers to the central historical event in the book: the departure of Israel from Egypt. The word *exodus* is derived from two Greek words: *ex*, “out, out of,” and *hodos*, “road, the way.” Tradition has attributed the author of Exodus and the entire Pentateuch to Moses, thus being written in Hebrew. Bergsma notes that the central theme in the book is, “Israel is my first born son, and I say to you, ‘Let my son go that they may serve me.’” (Exodus 4:23)³⁰ The

³⁰ John Bergsma and Brant Pitre, *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible, Vol. I: The Old Testament* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2018), 167.

Hebrew word “serve” (*abad*) can also mean either *work* or *worship*.³¹

Therefore, since the beginning of Exodus God is expressing His desire to liberate Israel so that they may worship Him. In being able to worship God properly, God can bring them into a filial relationship. This orientation towards the right worship is expressed by the Ten Commandments and the instruction to build the Tabernacle given to Israel by God through His prophet Moses.

II. Spiritual Meaning

In Exodus 3 Moses encounters the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the form of a burning bush. Moses is given two distinct and separate commands from God. The first “Don’t come near here!” and the second, “Remove your sandals because the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Holiness defined by Gentry is, “seen as roughly equivalent to ‘purity’ and ‘transcendence.’”³² This definition suggests that as we approach God, we must recognize his infinite excellence above all that is created. These two commands should have been the first indication to Moses that he is not dealing with an Egyptian or pagan god but instead, the God of Israel. Subsequently,

³¹ Bergsma and Pitre, *Introduction*, 170.

³² Peter J. Gentry, *The Meaning of “Holy” in the Old Testament* (Biblioteca Sacra 2013) 401.

God is separating Himself from other gods so as to reveal to Moses that He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

A. Prognosticate the Incarnation

The burning bush illustrated in Exodus 3 is evocative of the Incarnation of the Son of God to come in the New Testament as eloquently stated by John the Evangelist, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1). Both the burning bush and incarnation is the result of Moses and Mary’s *fiat* or ‘yes’ to God; “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). As St. Gregory of Nyssa stated, “the light of divinity . . . did not consume the burning bush, even as the flower of her virginity was not withered by giving birth.” Just as the fire did not consume the bush similar, the divinity of Jesus did not destroy His humanity. Gregory also argues Mary’s Virginity was not consumed by the Divine fire, and therefore, she remains a Perpetual Virgin. This passage further testifies to the fact that God does not force His way into His creation but works in cooperation with our free will. In addition to this, God is seen taking the initiative

and seeks Moses through the mundane and everyday business of life. As God met Moses in the ordinary business of life so, too, He did similarly with the Blessed Virgin Mary in her home in Nazareth. God does not will to destroy our humanity or take away our identity but wants to show us who we truly are and free us from our sins. God's graces do not overcome nature but transfigure it closer to perfection.

Both the incarnation and the burning bush are manifestations of God's presence and both points directly to Christ. Within Scripture, fire is one of the most recurring means by which the invisible God is represented. Fire by its very nature is meant to consume, but within this passage, the bush is not consumed. This represents the divine presence that does not consume the physical realities but wishes to sanctify creation. In short, God is no less divine, and the bush is no less a bush; Jesus Christ was fully human while remaining fully divine; similarly, fire came to the bush without consuming it. The Incarnation stated in Philippians 2:14, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." Mentioned beyond, Jesus himself would remain obedient to the Father's will, even to the point of death on the cross, so that humanity may be redeemed and therefore divinized—meaning brought closer to perfection. Both encounters in Scripture show us

God's desire to divinize his creation that does not entail dehumanization of His creation. God is shown transcending his creation, and through creation's willingness, humanity opens itself to the transcendence. God draws nearer to His people by revealing to them some aspect of His nature, whether it be who, where, what, and why He is.

III. Interpretation

The burning bush and the revelation of the Divine Name is one of the most theologically significant passages in the Old Testament because God makes Himself known in a rather personal manner to the people of Israel. First of all, God makes it known to Moses that He hasn't forgotten the Covenant that He established with Abraham: "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmaster; I know their suffering" (Exodus 3:7). In renewing the Abrahamic Covenant, God is merely giving back what was originally promised to the nation of Israel. The "land flowing with milk and honey," (Exodus 3:17) is the place that God has *consecrated* or set aside so that Israel may worship Him through feast and sacrifice. But since Pharaoh does not know the Lord, he refuses and

only worsens their labor and persecution. God, having heard the suffering of his people, will act to deliver them from their enslavement: “so I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders which I will do in it” (Exodus 3:20). As Pharaoh exercises his dominion over the nation of Israel so, too, does God make it known to Pharaoh that he is the true Lord and also shows his divine judgment. Bergsma notes that a number of contemporary scholars have interpreted the ten plagues as a form of *theomachy* or "divine combat" between the one true God of Israel and the many gods of Egypt.³³ The plagues portray God as taking drastic measures against Pharaoh in order to harden his heart so as to break it.

A. The Mystery of God found in the Divine Name

It is important to note the way God introduces Himself to Moses; “God reveals himself to Moses as the God of the three patriarchs: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6). In naming Himself after the patriarchs he communicates to Moses that if you know them, you will then know me.

³³ Bergsma and Pitre, *Introduction*, 173.

Komonchak comments, “we Christians name our God ‘The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ,’”³⁴ and this is precisely because Jesus fulfills the Old Testament Covenants, therefore, replacing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Further, God's covenant with Israel in Exodus is firmly rooted in the same covenant with Abraham in Genesis. When Moses insists on another name, the Name beyond all those human names, he does not receive one.

This passage is significant because through this dialogue God reveals his name as “I am who I am” or “I will be who I will be,” depending on the translation. Both translations denote that God is in himself—that he is eternal and simply *is*. They also denote that God is beyond the confines of time but is eternal in the sense that he has no beginning and no end but has always been. Another interpretation is that “I AM” is God refusing to answer the question posed by Moses; in doing so, God preserves his mystery. The Church has long seen this simple utterance as being a statement of enormous significance. When translated in Greek, the language in which the earlier Church read the Old Testament, the verbs here are those of being. God was in a sense

³⁴ Joseph A. Komonchak, *The Naming of God: A Homily on Exodus 3* (Religion and Intellectual Life 1987) 21.

declaring not that he was a being among others but rather He was stating that He was Being itself.

The Penalty of Death in a Culture of Life

Shayla Millman

For centuries, Christians have discussed the purpose of the death penalty in civilization. The controversial practice has been rejected by recent popes and many bishops around the world. In the United States, where mass incarceration, homicide, and unfair legal proceedings are commonplace, Catholic adults are becoming more opposed to the death penalty.³⁵

While it is encouraging that the death penalty is being increasingly rejected by many Catholics, there are still those who find justice in the unmerciful execution of those convicted. The increase in opposition to the death penalty is a hopeful glimpse into the Catholic Church's push for a Culture of Life—an all-encompassing desire to uphold the dignity of every human person.

³⁵ “Opinion Polls: Death Penalty Support and Religion.” *Death Penalty Information Center*, 2019.

The Death Penalty in America

In 1970, just half a century ago, the death penalty was legal in forty out of the fifty U.S. states.³⁶ According to the U.S. Department of Justice, “from 1976 through June 2005, 962 men and 10 women were executed,” “42% of death row inmates are Black, far higher than their percentage of the overall U.S. population,” and “approximately 3,400 men and 54 women await execution.”³⁷ Currently, twenty-nine states have the death penalty, and four have the death penalty with gubernatorial moratoria—the governor’s authority to halt executions in states where there are sentenced inmates on death row. Since 1976, approximately 1,500 people have been executed in the U.S.³⁸ The number of executions and the number of people sentenced to death per year has decreased greatly with a growing opposition to the death penalty on both sides of the political spectrum.

Many Americans support the death penalty over life in prison because they believe that taxpayer money is better spent on executions than on providing resources for those who are imprisoned. The error in this sentiment is that death penalty cases cost more on average than

³⁶ “State by State.” *Death Penalty Information Center*, 2019.

³⁷ *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., 2005), 7.

³⁸ “Death Penalty Fast Facts.” *CNN*, last modified July 26, 2019.

non-death penalty cases. One study found that “in California the current system costs \$137 million per year; it would cost \$11.5 million for a system without the death penalty.”³⁹ Several factors are attributed to this finding. According to the Amnesty International website, there are three primary ways the death penalty system costs taxpayers more than a life-in-prison system:

[Firstly,] Trials in which the prosecutor is seeking a death sentence have two separate and distinct phases: conviction (guilt/innocence) and sentencing. Special motions and extra time for jury selection typically precede such trials. [Secondly,] More investigative costs are generally incurred in capital cases, particularly by the prosecution. [Lastly,] When death penalty trials result in a verdict less than death or are reversed, taxpayers first incur all the extra costs of capital pretrial and trial proceedings and must then also pay either for the cost of incarcerating the prisoner for life or the costs of a retrial (which often leads to a life sentence).⁴⁰

With this research, the economic argument for the death penalty is disproved. The fact there is even an economic argument for the execution of a human person is a shameful lack of regard for the dignity of human life, upon which no monetary value can be set.

I will speak only briefly of the racial and gender discrimination that is rampant in death penalty cases. Nearly half of inmates on death row are black, and almost all death row inmates are men. The legal

³⁹ “Death Penalty Cost.” *Amnesty International*, 2019.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

system tends to show more mercy toward white men and women, as is seen in the percentage of incarcerated people who are black (34%) compared to the total percentage of black people in America (13%).⁴¹ A system in which money, lawyers, and jury members fall to class and race subjectivity cannot practically and effectively decide the fate of human persons in society. Exonerations from death row based on DNA evidence prove that a court's sentence doesn't always equate to actual justice. We cannot rely on a subjective system to dictate the objective end of a life.

Christian Tradition on Capital Punishment

Capital punishment has been expounded upon in great depth throughout history. In the Old Testament, God says in the covenant to Noah, "Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood will be shed by man, for God made man in His image" (Genesis 9:6). This may seem to be an approval of the death penalty by God Himself, but if we look to the New Testament, we find a new revelation of God's law. In the gospel of John, we see the story of Jesus saving the adulterous woman from execution. The Pharisees cite the Law of Moses that commands adulterous women be stoned to death. Jesus says to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" (John

⁴¹ "Criminal Justice Fact Sheet." NAACP, 2019.

8:7). When the crowds dissipate, Jesus tells the woman, “Neither do I condemn you... Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11). Jesus instructs us to cast no stones but to admonish the sinner and instruct them to sin no more. This contrasts the Old Law’s many commands to execute those who disobey certain Laws. Of course, a distinction may be made between someone who has committed adultery and someone who has committed murder, but Jesus’ command to extend grace and forgiveness to those who have sinned against God and against man reflects God’s extension of undeserved grace and forgiveness to all of mankind.

Church fathers including St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas have justified the death penalty in certain cases. In *City of God*, Augustine writes,

They who have waged war in obedience to the divine command, or in conformity with His laws have represented in their persons the public justice or the wisdom of government, and in this capacity have put to death wicked men; such persons have by no means violated the [fifth] commandment.⁴²

In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas declares, “it is lawful to kill an evildoer in so far as it is directed to the welfare of the whole community... the care of the common good is entrusted to persons of rank having public

⁴² St. Augustine, *The City of God*. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1962) 1.21.

authority: wherefore they alone, and not private individuals, can lawfully put evildoers to death.”⁴³ Augustine and Aquinas are renowned and respected figures in Catholic tradition, but these men lived in a time very different from our own. The criminal justice system was cruel and undiplomatic, if one existed at all. The legal system that we have in place today prevents public executions and provides more humane means of incarceration than those in place during the Middle Ages. There are different means of cutting off wicked people from society that do not include capital punishment. As we have the resources to sustain the lives of convicted men and provide for their conversion and repentance rather than end their lives entirely, we should take steps in this modern era to revere the dignity of all people and engage in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Cultivating a Modern Culture of Life

There has been a resounding call for all Christians to adhere to the principles that support a Culture of Life. In a 1996 pastoral letter, a conference of bishops from Kentucky states, “current Catholic teaching on the dignity of the human person represents a unified ‘Respect Life’ stance, a ‘consistent life ethic’ encompassing all human life from

⁴³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1947) II-II. q. 64. a.3.

conception through natural death, from the innocent to the guilty.”⁴⁴

The letter continues in opposition of the death penalty saying,

We see our rejection of capital punishment as part of the Church's opposition to every attack upon human life. It is in line with the struggle against abortion, against euthanasia, against the destruction of a nuclear war. We proclaim the sacredness not only of innocent life, but even of the life of the guilty!⁴⁵

One of the most important traits that a Christian can hold is commitment and consistency in his beliefs. How can we call for others to “Respect Life” in regards to abortion and euthanasia while, at the same time, deny the dignity that those lives on death row are due? The oft-used label of “pro-life” is inconsistent and meaningless if we do not respect life at all stages; “the misery of old age, sickness, physical and mental handicaps, or criminal violence does not negate or completely mar the grandeur of a human person made in God's image and redeemed by His divine Son.”⁴⁶

Pope Francis recently altered the *Catechism* to reflect the Church's redefined teaching on the practicality of the death penalty. As in previous versions, the death penalty is still directly addressed and not completely rejected: “The traditional teaching of the Church does not

⁴⁴ “Statement on the Death Penalty.” *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, 1996.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

exclude, presupposing full ascertainment of the identity and responsibility of the offender, recourse to the death penalty, when this is the only practicable way to defend the lives of human beings effectively against the aggressor.”⁴⁷ Church teaching gives authority to governments and nations in making the decision to employ the death penalty and trusts that the utmost care and prudence will guide their sentencing. In the new version, an additional sentence now closes the paragraph:

Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm—without definitively taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself—the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity ‘are very rare, if not practically non-existent.’⁴⁸

This addendum more effectively puts the death penalty into the modern context. The death penalty is not completely rejected, but it is clearer that it has to meet certain strict criteria to be allowed. In a developed country like the United States, “as a result of steady improvements in the organization of the penal system,”⁴⁹ there is practically no reason to enforce the death penalty.

⁴⁷ Catholic Church. “Capital Punishment,” in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016. p. 2267.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*. (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), 56.

Conclusion

Christian Americans must “help build a culture of life in which our nation will no longer try to teach that killing is wrong by killing those who kill.”⁵⁰ We are called to defend life in all ways, from conception until natural death. All must remember that “no act, even an execution, can bring back a loved one or heal terrible wounds. The pain and loss of one death cannot be wiped away by another death.”⁵¹ This violent cycle further ingrains a culture of death into our society. We must extend mercy, however undeserving, to those who have sinned against humanity and against God. There is always the hope of conversion and repentance in Jesus’ redemption of our sins.

⁵⁰ *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*, 6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The Spiral

My Credo

Miguel Alejandro Marquez

I believe that man has intellect, but is ignorant to the world around him and the world stored within himself.

I believe that man must pursue a world without ignorance, but I know that man will always be consumed by the spirals of life that leads him to disillusion.

I am aware of my own disillusion and my inability to know all knowledge pertaining to myself and others. I believe that it is man's greatest pain. That its ignorance that leads to death, destruction, the rise and fall of countries, and man's disinterest of the truth.

The truth being that man knows both nothing and everything, that we are made in a grey world with grey problems.

That the black and white nature that man both constricts and creates laws by is in itself a concept made by few truths and many disillusion.

The spiral of morality and the grey matter it inhabits will always be seen as either truth or ignorance; it is the great enigma of the human soul and it is something that torments us all.

The Universe Within Me

Gabriela Rocio Fuentes Barahona

I am not usually impressed very easily. But, man, I have to admit this past year has been full of “wows” and “aha” moments. Coming to terms with the fact that time equals space, accepting the particle/wave duality behavior of the subatomic level, beginning to understand the energy released during the fusion of two hydrogen atoms, was so important in figuring myself out. It might seem a little odd, I know, “what does time-space have to do with you and your feelings?” or “what does light acting as both a wave and a particle have to do with your thoughts?” you might wonder. Honestly, a lot more than you think.

Never had I experienced such a deep sense of order and belonging until I realized that the very laws of nature are written in our own bodies. Attraction and vibration, polarity and rhythm, relativity and causation, gender and gestation, transmutation of energy... can all be revealed by observing our own bodies. It amazes me that the truths

about the universe can be found within ourselves. It amazes me that we bear the essence of the universe in our existence. It completely blows my mind that everything that exists acts with intentionality; from the rocks eroded by the wind to the spider that builds its web, from the flower that relies on photosynthesis to the pressure of the waves, absolutely everything in the universe acts with intentionality. That is merely speaking in a physical sense, though. The metaphysical reality intrigued me even more.

Coming to discover that my humanity was the one thing that allowed me to reason and to think sparked in me a deep sense of wonder. Not even the smartest animal could even begin to fathom the reality of existence the way that a human being can. Not even the most complex plant could ever perceive energy the way that a human being can. Not even the most sophisticated structure, living or nonliving, could ever have the potentiality to gather, analyze, and interpret data the way a human being can. There is, therefore, something truly special in the reasoning capability of human beings that elevates their existence in the sense that they are the only ones that in addition to acting with intentionality within the universe can also know and understand that force of intentionality.

After contemplating these thoughts, it became obvious to me that although I had the capacity to explore the universe, I would not ever fully know it with certainty. I would have to rely on belief. It was necessary for me to believe that humans came to be in a different way than the rest of the beings in the universe. It was necessary for me to believe that humans truly reflected the image and likeness of the One Eternal Source of all that is. It was necessary for me to believe that the universe that I had discovered within myself revealed a great purpose and was not just a mere matter of chance. Needless to say, I am not only impressed but in deep awe with the discovery of this knowledge.

A Voice for the Voiceless

Anonymous

There are two major controversial marches, both of which claim to champion women, yet there is only one that truly does. These opposing marches are the Walk for Life, which is against abortions, and the other is the Women's March, in which one of the agendas is for the legal rights to have an abortion. Ever since *Roe vs. Wade* in 1973 abortion has been legal. Norma McCorvey who is the Jane Roe of the *Roe vs. Wade* case explained, "I was persuaded by feminist attorneys to lie; to say that I was raped, and needed an abortion. It was all a lie. Since then, over 50 million babies have been murdered. I will take this burden to my grave." Just because something is legal does not make it right, and just because a baby is in the womb does not make it any less human.

The Walk for Life has bipartisan speakers of each party, one of which belonging to the niece of Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Alveda King, and democratic speaker, Katrina Jackson. Ironically, the Women's

March discourages pro-life women from attending, but considers itself to be for women. The March for Life fights against pursuits of discrimination by including people to join their walk no matter their gender, race, economic status, or stage of life. The Women's March claims that they condemn racism, when one of the sponsoring partners of the Women's March, Planned Parenthood, accepted donations to fund abortions of black babies, specifically because those babies were black. The Women's March also claims that women are incapable of handling a surprise pregnancy, yet the Walk for Life tells women there are no circumstances in which a woman is not capable of excelling, even if it is a surprise pregnancy. There is a choice, and the logical decision is to be pro-life.

Many combat pro-life with the claim that it is uncertain when human life begins; it is simply an ethical question that cannot be answered. However, work from prominent scientists such as Dr. Keith L. Moore's text on embryology, Doctors J.P. Greenhill and E. A. Friedman in their work on biology and obstetrics, and even the medical textbook *Biology of Gestation* written by Dr. Louis Fridhandler all conclude that conception is the beginning of life. At conception, the unborn is already complex with a staggering amount of genetic information sufficient enough to control the individual's growth and

development for an entire lifetime as stated by Dr. Christopher S. Baird. Even during some of the earliest first-trimester, the unborn already has every body part they will ever need according to Standford's Children Health Page. Society considers someone who no longer has a heartbeat and brain waves dead, whereas someone with a heartbeat and brain waves is considered alive. Abortions terminate both heartbeat and brain waves, thus killing the baby, and yet, pro-choice supporters do not consider this to be murder like they would with an already-born individual. The proof that the unborn child is an individual human being is there, and people should not be considered less than based on their stage of development or residence, let alone be killed. Besides, if there is uncertainty on terms of when human life begins, the benefit of the doubt should go to preserving life.

Not only are abortions killing an unborn child, but the woman's health and well-being suffer as well. Statistics show that childbirth causes more death than the procedure of abortion. However, what makes abortion-related deaths hard to trace is that the majority of deaths occur after the surgery. A pierced uterus caused by an abortion can lead to blood poisoning and death. However, the cause of death will not be listed as abortion even though that is where it originated from. Abortion also increases the chance of maternal deaths, ectopic

pregnancies, pelvic inflammatory disease, future spontaneous abortions, secondary infertility, dyspareunia, chronic pelvic pain, and placenta previa, which can threaten the life of both mother and child. Abortion is also the only surgery a surgeon is not obligated to tell the patient of the possible risks of the procedure, or even the exact nature of the procedure. Sadly enough, there are also surgeons who perform abortions without a surgical degree or any medical history at all, claimed by former clinic director of a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic Abby Johnson. Abortions provoke harmful effects on women and leave many wounded.

Additionally, not only is the physical health of the women and children at risk, but also the mental health. Post-abortion support and recovery groups such as Rachel's Vineyard, Victims of Choice, Hope After Abortion, Project Rachel and many others prove the emotional needs of women who have had abortions. Post abortion stress syndrome [PASS] is a real psychological affliction. The most notable symptoms for PASS are guilt, anxiety, depression, flashbacks, and suicidal thoughts. PASS does not discriminate against an individual's philosophical, religious, or political views on abortion.

Any civilized government restricts the individual's freedom to choose whenever that choice harms an innocent person or themselves,

so why is America not restricting abortion, which terminates a life and harms the woman who is getting an abortion? Even if the child is born under terrible circumstances, there is not one single person who has ever existed that has not had a problem within their life. To say that someone should not be born because they might be given a bad life is unfair because even if they were born in the perfect situation, no life is perfect. The one time choice of abortion robs someone else of a lifetime of choices and prevents them from exercising their right to life.

Out of the Cave



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Diego A. Ruiz

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Out of the Cave

Beauty

Mia Schaller



Out of the Cave

Camera in Hand

Andrew Koltuniuk



Andrew Koltuniuk

Out of the Cave

An Evening Smoke with Tim and Tom

Justin Daniels



Justin Daniels





Out of the Cave

Mission Basilica de Alcala

Michelle Regello



Mr. Foster

Mia Schaller



Oka

Diego A. Ruiz



Oka is the name of our family dog. Her name means something in Japanese, but results are conflicting. Nothing bad, we hope...

Painting of Carter Hart

Christina Chaiban



Inspired by the simple urge to paint and capture detail. Based on the NHL's Philadelphia Flyers' goaltender, Carter Hart.

Out of the Cave

Revealed Through Fog

Andrew Koltuniuk

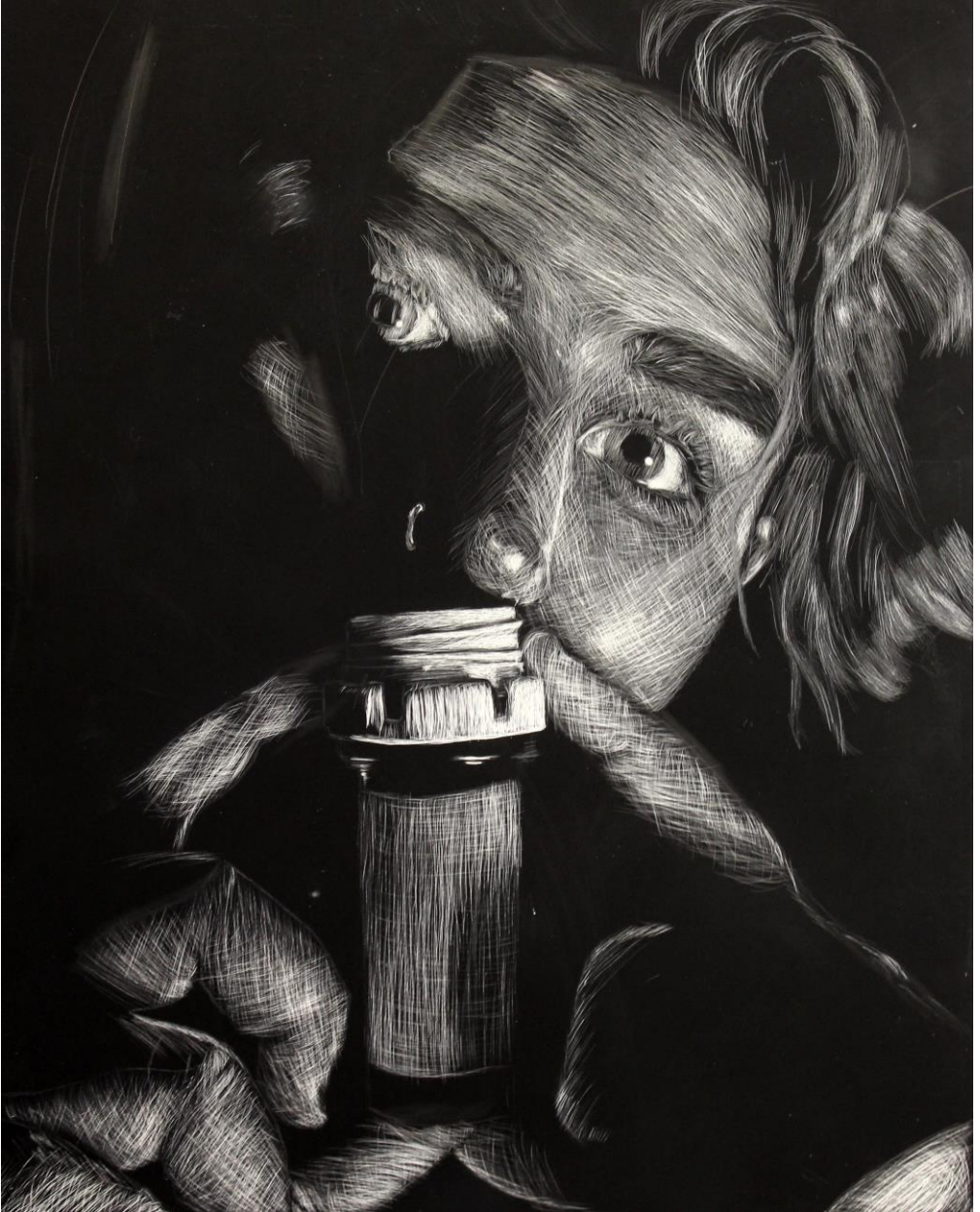


Andrew Koltuniuk

Out of the Cave

Silence

Audrey Marie Daniels



St. Joan of Arc

Ruvianne Dela Cruz Mercado



ST. JOAN of ARC

Out of the Cave

The Bridge

Andrew Koltuniuk



The Fat Alien

Diego A. Ruiz



Aliens are a really fun concept to draw from. I thought it would be funny to have a flabby alien since alien civilizations are supposed to be much more advanced than we are, and probably all the more sedentary.

Out of the Cave

The Solemn Stare

Anthony Cooper



Out of the Cave

Waves

Mia Schaller



Out of the Cave

About the Artists

Erik Arvidson

Author of *A Mouse Goes for Milk*

Erik is not too certain that writing is what's best for him. But if his grades are showing it, might as well give it a try!

Gabriela Rocio Fuentes Barahona

Author of *The Universe Within Me*

Rocio, which means 'morning dew' in Spanish, is an international student currently in her sophomore year at JPCatholic. She was born and raised in Honduras and hopes to go back to start a recycling business there. She is passionate about her faith in God, social justice, and music. Her life motto is "gratitude is the key to happiness." During her free time, she enjoys doing community service, writing blogs, playing her guitar, singing, spending time with kids, and talking with family and friends.

Christina Chaiban

Painter of *Painting of Carter Hart*

Christina Chaiban is a senior studying screenwriting as her major and business as her minor at John Paul the Great Catholic University. However, she has been drawing for as long as she can

remember. She uses her drawing talent to help develop characters for her stories, pay attention during class, and relax. She also plays ice hockey as a goaltender for the San Diego Ice Arena's women's league. View more of her aesthetic sketches and other drawings at art-and-the-hockeys.tumblr.com

Anthony Cooper

Artist of *The Solemn Stare*

Anthony is a photographer, hard surface modeler, and writer... His past works are films such as *Fallen*, a WW2 Story, and *To Hunt the Hunter...* poems such as *An Old Man's Musings*, and photograph series such as the ashtrays and desolate Marcos on his Facebook. Writings such as *The Waiting Game*, a novel that everyone must wait for... Chapters 1 and 2 can be found on his Facebook page. This edition features part of his newest photography series... *The Eye of the Pelican*.

Justin Daniels

Photographer of *An Evening Smoke with Tim and Tom*

Justin Daniels is a young, fresh, and aspiring photographer.

Nick Haren

Author of *To Love Without Touch: A Meditation for Men*

Paula Heine

Author of *"Ode to My Schoolbooks"*

Paula is a screenwriting emphasis at John Paul the Great Catholic University and is learning other aspects of the film industry. She enjoys reading, drawing, singing, and many other activities, but she often expresses herself the best in writing.

Andrew Koltuniuk

Author of *Revealed through Fog, A Camera in Hand, The Bridge, and Regarding Argument in Marriage*

Andrew Koltuniuk is a Communications major at John Paul the Great Catholic University. Originally from Colorado, he really enjoys being on set, taking photos, and spending time with his friends.

Miguel Alejandro Marquez

Author of *The Spiral: My Credo*

Miguel Alejandro Marquez is a surrealist filmmaker with the aspiration of becoming the next Luis Buñuel. Marquez believes that his work is centered around the concepts that fill the day to day life of the average American.

Ruvianne Dela Cruz Mercado

Author of *Descartes in the Matrix* and *St. Joan of Arc*

JPCatholic was not Ruvianne's first choice. In fact, it was her last choice. If no other college would take her, she'd go to JPCatholic. And now, here she is. (TAC wouldn't take her off the wait list and then

decided to accept her when she committed to JPC as a last resort, but that's okay because JPC has Wi-Fi). When she doesn't spend her time playing the same three songs on the guitar over and over again, she's writing papers for classes because that's what you do in college.

Shayla Millman

Author of *The Penalty of Death in a Culture of Life*

Shayla Millman is from Colorado and is currently a senior and post-production major at John Paul the Great University. She enjoys editing, writing, and spreading joy through comedy and conversation. She hopes to do at least one of those things professionally after she graduates in 2020.

Joshua Peck

Author of *Notes Leading Towards a Definition of Story* and *A Wretch Goes For Milk*

Joshua Peck is a senior studying Humanities in the hopes of becoming an author and teacher. He has already published one short story through a national contest and is currently working on two short novels which he hopes to finish within the year. He is an outdoorsman and a regular hiker in addition to his writing career. He writes mostly fantasy and realistic fiction and enjoys weaving complex themes from philosophy and theology into his stories.

Michelle Regello

Author of *A Guy Goes for Milk* and *Mission Basilica de Alcalá*

Michelle is finally following the call received many years ago to become a writer and illustrator of children's books. She loves being at JPCatholic!

Timothy Rodriguez

Author of *The Divine Name and the Prognosticate of the Incarnation found in Exodus 3:13* and *Ratzinger's Ideas of the Liturgy: Essence, Sacrifice, Time and Space, Form & Ars Celebrandi*

Timothy Rodriguez is a current Humanities student attending John Paul the Great Catholic University. His passions include Campus Ministry, Liturgical Ministry, and studying Sacred Scripture. He plans to pursue further studies in Theology in the fields of Biblical and Systematic Theology. His other theological interest includes Liturgical, Sacramental, and Church History. His patron saints are Pope Saint Pius X and has a Marian devotion to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

Diego A. Ruiz

Creator of *The Fat Alien*, *Oka*, and *Opening Prayer*

Diego A. Ruiz is a sophomore at JPCatholic studying Communications Media. He believes his time at school is bearing good fruit for himself and others, for the glory of God. He enjoys drawing and cooking.

Mia Schaller

Author of *Mr. Forester, Beauty, and Waves*

Mia Schaller is an artist who loves to explore the beautiful creation of this world. Art has always been her passion, and she enjoys every minute she spends with it. Mia finds joy in the quirky things and the things that make you smile. So she hopes her art brings a smile to you!

Katherine Thayer

Author of *Darth Vader and the Problem of Evil*

Katherine is a freshman at John Paul the Great Catholic University and is eager to write for the student journal. She enjoys reading books, video games, and hanging out with friends in her free time.

Meet the Editors

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Ruvianne Dela Cruz Mercado

Shayla Millman

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Editors of Non-Fiction

Timothy Rodriguez

Shayla Millman

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Evelyn Watkins

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Out of the Cave

"Now consider," I said, "what their release and healing from bonds and folly would be like if something of this sort were by nature to happen to them. Take a man who is released and suddenly compelled to stand up, to turn his neck around, to walk and look up toward the light; and who, moreover, in doing all this is in pain and, because he is dazzled, is unable to make out those things whose shadows he saw before. What do you suppose he'd say if someone were to tell him that before he saw silly nothings, while now, because he is somewhat nearer to what is and more turned toward beings, he sees more correctly; and, in particular, showing him each of the things that pass by, were to compel the man to answer his questions about what they are? Don't you suppose he'd be at a loss and believe that what was seen before is truer than what is now shown?"

—Plato

From *The Republic of Plato*,

Translated by Allen Bloom,
(Basic Books, 1991), 193.

Out of the Cave