



Return to Order

Study Guide

Introduction to This Study Guide

Since its publication, the book, *Return to Order: From a Frenzied Economy to an Organic Christian Society—Where We've Been, How We Got Here, and Where We Need to Go*, has circulated far and wide. Demand for the book prompted the publication of a second hardcover edition, two paperback editions, and a workbook format edition. The e-book and an audio book have also been popular.

Many have commented that *Return to Order* is a very intense book and needs to be discussed in depth among those of like mind. A few study groups have used the book for their discussions. Each chapter can provide a long and enjoyable evening of conversation and debate.

This study guide was created to help in the discussion of the important principles contained in *Return to Order*. Its fifty-one chapters and conclusion lend well to a weekly, yearlong study. For this reason, a chapter-by-chapter guide has been provided. However, not everyone has the opportunity to make such a huge effort. For those with less time, the readers can choose chapters out of each of the book's nine sections. Study groups might even discuss two or three related chapters at a single meeting. In a very organic fashion, those using this guide can decide how to map the material to accommodate the time they have available.

The publisher and author hope those using this study guide may benefit from the summaries and questions provided. The guide highlights issues of vital importance to the future of the nation. It will help readers understand and prepare to deal with a coming economic crisis by proposing solutions based on the timeless principles of an organic Christian society. Use this guide as a way to enrich the reading of this book and hasten America's return to order.

Those who wish to do more and join the debate over America's future can:

- Subscribe to the *Return to Order* weekly e-newsletter at www.returntoorder.org/subscribe.
- Organize a *Return to Order* study group at your church, organization, or community using this study guide.
- Buy bulk copies of *Return to Order* for your study group by contacting the author at the number, address, or email below.
- Sponsor a talk or signing for author John Horvat II for your group or parish by calling the number below.
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Introduction | Back on Course

In the introduction of the book, *Return to Order: From a Frenzied Economy to an Organic Christian Society—Where We've Been, How We Got Here, and Where We Need to Go*, author John Horvat II makes three main points:

The first is that there is a very profound yet not immediately apparent economic crisis in America. With an abundance of goods and services on display, everything appears to be working and even prosperous on the surface. To describe the state of the nation, the author employs the metaphor of a cruise ship on a never-ending cruise where everything is bustling. Without a final destination or major worry, most people are only concerned about finding ways to prolong the party on board. However, serious problems exist aboard this cruise ship. Economically, socially, politically, and morally, the nation is in crisis. There are external threats to the ship. The unity once based on God, flag, and family no longer holds. No one has the courage to suggest ending this unsustainable party.

In his second point, the author establishes his credentials for dealing with this matter. He speaks of the book as the director of the American Studies Commission, a project of the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property (TFP). The book is solidly based on social and economic teachings of the Catholic Church, natural law, and reason. Its teachings can very well serve as a lighthouse to guide the debate over the nation's future.

The final point is an outline of what the book contains. It is a road map to give the reader an idea of what to expect. It especially deals with a great imbalance in modern economy and a solution based on what he calls an "organic Christian society."

Discussion Questions

Answering the questions at the end of each chapter will help the reader understand the concepts. During this study, write down any other questions that come to mind and discuss them with the group.

- **Does the image of a cruise ship adequately describe parts of the present culture? Describe ways modern society is like a cruise ship.**

Modern society is like a cruise ship in the following ways:

- Its bigness and disproportional pleasures;
- The fantasy element of people turned inward;
- The idea of deferred payment for pleasures;
- Ease of intemperance as a result of abundance;
- The aspect of a debt party of spending and more spending;
- A climate of constant entertainment and drama, making everything a Hollywood production;
- Politics turned into a show;
- A disinterest in world events outside the ship;
- The claim of a right to be happy;
- No one feeling discriminated against;
- The right to be connected, entitlements of welfare and benefits; and
- The official absence of tragedy and sadness, which is hidden; everyone needing to put on a happy face.

- **Name the outside threats that are on the horizon that endanger the ship.**

Outside threats include Russia, Iran, China, Islam, global economic problems, the immigration crisis, diseases, the crisis in the Church.

- **Why do the past unifying factors of God, flag, and family no longer provide unity?**

These factors no longer unify because:

God, flag, and family are no longer properly defined. These things take sacrifice and commitment. They are contrary to the party atmosphere. Such things are killjoys to the party. Everyone is looking after self, thus excluding others. There is the attitude that my happiness is the only thing that matters. Idea of the common good is missing.

- **Is it possible to declare the party over? What will it take to do so?**

It will take a crisis, a reawakening, a crash, being mugged by reality, a prodigal son situation.

- **How does the ship's mentality affect you personally? List concrete ways.**

It affects individuals in the following ways:

- Spending money beyond one's means;
- Wasting time with useless diversions and internet surfing;
- Failing to assume responsibility;
- Addictions to substances used to escape;
- Video games;
- Political correctness; and
- It perpetuates a culture that denies suffering.

- **What can you do to oppose the ship's mentality?**

- Be a good Christian.
- Control spending habits.
- Assume responsibility.
- Embrace the small crosses of life.
- Control the use of gadgets.
- Read the news to be aware of what is happening beyond the ship.

Part 1 The Long Brewing Storm (Chapters 1–17)

Chapter 1 | *The Dominant American Model: A Cooperative Union*

If America is like a cruise ship, there must be a system in place whereby everyone agrees to get along. This system is what the author calls a cooperative union, which he defines in this way:

Our American cooperative union can be defined as our dominant socio-economic model consisting of a vibrant economic system that produces a great abundance and a corresponding American way of life by which we enjoy it. Those adhering to this model see our country working like a farm co-op or shareholder company full of legitimate benefits, voting privileges, and entitlements. (p. 14)

This union's key component is a general universal consensus by which everyone agrees to put aside major cultural, religious, and other differences in order to get along and prosper. This consensus is the glue that keeps the country together. It embraces both liberals and conservatives to the point of smothering radical fringe parties who refuse to get along.

This model welcomes religions as a “kind of guarantor of good order through a consensual, Christian moral code loosely based on the Ten Commandments.” There is the belief that everyone should have some kind of religion to help make America prosperous and peaceful. This religious consensus has the good effect of imprinting a sense of morality, godliness, and patriotism on the county.

This cooperative union model has always delivered benefits and is incredibly resistant to crisis. However, it is now breaking down, as can be seen in the decline of sense of trust, community, and civility. Instead of delivering benefits, it now causes anxiety, stress, and depression.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss the concept of a co-op mentality and the ways in which America is run as a co-op. What are the advantages and disadvantages?**

The advantages of the co-op:

- It keeps order and helps keep business going.
- It provides unity to the country, avoiding fragmentation.
- It provides a material abundance.
- It does provide benefits when it is working well.

Disadvantages of the co-op:

- It is materialistic—can never give full happiness.
- It is a fickle order in times of crisis.
- It results in a spiritual poverty.
- It tends to be self-centered without concern for the common good.
- It can lead to entitlements.

- **Explain the first component of the consensus: getting along. Name ways people get along inside this consensus.**
 - People do not talk about politics and religion.

- An official secularism exists where the beliefs of others are disregarded.
 - There is the presence of an optimism that all will turn out well in the end.
 - A live and let live attitude prevails—as long as one is happy and does not hurt the other.
 - There is a tendency toward conformity and toward being a slave of fashion and public opinion.
 - There is a naïve belief in the goodness of people.
 - There is the belief that freedom means doing whatever you wish—whether moral or not.
- **Name three factors that have caused the breakdown of this consensus of the cooperative union.**
Moral issues divide the country, as in the case of abortion, same-sex “marriage,” breakdown of the family, and other such issues. People mugged by reality question this consensus. Radical atheists break this consensus by asking that things like the Ten Commandments be taken down. Political correctness—the new political consensus—divides the nation. Big government takes over parts of American life that used to belong to this consensus. Both sides are breaking the rules. There is no longer any common goal. Today there are radically different ideas of happiness.
- **How do you participate in the co-operative union in your daily life?**
This is done in the following ways:
 - Taking advantage of entitlements that are necessary and not necessary;
 - Voting in elections;
 - Paying taxes—seen as insurance premiums for the good order of the country, tax cuts are dividends;
 - Sharing in the prosperity when times are good;
 - Idealizing models and times when this model delivered on expectations (ex.: the decade of the fifties);
 - Being politically correct to get along;
 - Participating in the Hollywood culture and movies—dream and fantasize; and
 - Engaging in gadgetry and the idea that technology solves everything.
- **How can you resist the temptation of the co-op? In what concrete ways can you represent something higher?**
This can be done in the following ways:
 - Be a good Christian.
 - Fight in the Culture Wars against abortion, non-traditional marriage, and other moral issues that the co-op accepts.
 - Cultivate a strong family life.
 - Embrace the crosses in your life without complaining.
 - Uphold moral values and principles, even when against your self-interest.

Chapter 2 | *Why This Model Failed: A Frenetic Intemperance*

America's cooperative union is failing because a sector of the model's vital economic system is frenzied and out of balance. The book does not blame capitalism or the free market for this economic imbalance. Rather, it makes a distinction between two economic currents.

The first current involves vibrant companies of all sizes that “engage in healthy competition and amply supply goods and services” to the nation. The activities of this sector are balanced and have cultivated such valued virtues as “diligence, moderation, thrift, and honesty.” A second current could be called that of *frenetic intemperance*. It is defined thus:

We can define frenetic intemperance as a restless, explosive, and relentless drive inside man that manifests itself in modern economy by 1) seeking to throw off legitimate restraints, and 2) gratifying disordered passions.

This current can be observed in Western economies in history under many names. The book traces the movement of this frenetic intemperance from “protocapitalist” Renaissance merchants to the Industrial Revolution to the globalism of our days.” It has led to financial frenzies, feverish speculations, and major stock market crashes.

This frenetic intemperance should not be mistaken for the “legitimate and energetic practice of business and its risk-taking that leads to true prosperity.” Rather, what characterizes it is its frenetic nature, which results in “a relentless drive to throw off restraint and seek gratification, running over anything that stands in its way.” It is above all a moral problem inside the soul of modern man.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of the first non-frenetic current inside modern economy.**

How does this current benefit society?

- Examples might include local companies, the plumber, farmer, many small businesses, family businesses, manufacturing firms, any firm with stable finances and business practices.
- This current benefits society in the following ways: stability; order; creation of stable jobs; the cultivation of the “business” virtues of honesty, thrift, and prudence; the building of trust; and contributions to charities.

- **Discuss and give concrete examples of this second current of frenetic intemperance.**

How does this current harm society?

Examples of frenetic intemperance might include:

- The 2008 subprime mortgage crisis;
- Stock market crashes;
- Bankruptcies caused by imprudence;
- Companies without sound business practices;
- Junk bonds and high risk investments;
- Hostile takeovers;
- Big media hype and its influence on economy; and
- Hollywood and its culture of intemperance.

Frenetic intemperance can harm society in that it can lead to economic crashes, destroy competition, cause monopolies, destroy longstanding companies, diminish the quality of products, incur massive debt, lead to unnecessary risks, cut the connections to localities, cause stress and destroy social ties, and lead to fads and fashions.

- **Discuss the frenetic nature of this intemperance. How does it differ from ordinary greed?**

Frenetic intemperance is excitement for the sake of excitement, change for the sake of change. It is not just the desire for more, but for the height of more simply because it is more. There is a sense of great disproportion and an overwhelming lack of restraint in dealing with frenetic intemperance. There is a willingness to take unacceptable and frequent risk and debt, which might be compared to a state of drug addiction. Frenetic intemperance is much more excited, stressful, and intense than greed. Greed still serves self-interest while frenetic intemperance feeds a desire so great that it can lead to self-destructive behavior.

- **What are some of the cultural and social consequences of frenetic intemperance?**

Some of the consequences of frenetic intemperance are:

- A desire to destroy the past;
- The breaking of ties with community and place;
- The promotion of a universal culture where everything is much the same;
- The lack of development of a local or even national culture;
- The emergence of a culture of promiscuity; and
- The triumph of individualism.

- **How does frenetic intemperance manifest itself in your daily life? Cite three examples.**

Some examples might include:

- Frantic holiday shopping;
- Hectic schedules;
- Buying into fads;
- Lack of savings;
- Misuse of credit cards and credit card debt;
- Keeping up with fashion;
- Overexposure to advertising;
- Impulse buying; and
- Excessive spending.

- **What concrete measures can be taken to stop frenetic intemperance in your daily life?**

Such measures might include:

- Being a good Catholic;
- Avoiding binge buying;
- Avoiding excessive advertising;
- Being wise in managing one's money;
- Staying out of debt;
- Not following fashions and fads;
- Slowing down;
- Taking time out for family, community, and faith; and
- Going to church.

Chapter 3 | *The Industrial Revolution: A Defining Point for Frenetic Intemperance*

The point in history in which frenetic intemperance first began to exert great influence was the Industrial Revolution (1760–1840). It was a great transformation that changed society economically, culturally, socially, and politically.

While not denying its great material progress and other benefits, the Industrial Revolution especially favored the advance of the undercurrent of frenetic intemperance and diminished the moderating influence of family, culture, and religion.

The Industrial Revolution made economics the supreme concern of society. It enthroned technocrats and businessmen as the de facto ruling elite and brought about colossal changes in social structures. It spread a prevailing attitude that was secular, materialistic, and utopian; the rhythms of life also tended to be depersonalizing and stressful.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of ways the Industrial Revolution has impacted your life in a positive way.**
It introduced improved hygiene, medical advances, abundance, and travel. It facilitated communication, and comforts like air conditioning, filtered water, and central heating. These developments extended life and reduced human misery.
- **Discuss and give examples of ways the Industrial Revolution has impacted your life in a negative way.**
This revolution spread about a worldview that values quantity over quality by producing cheap and standardized products. It sped up the pace of life and led to the mechanization of life and the exclusion of spiritual concerns. Its mechanical processes often lacked a human touch. It introduced secular and materialistic worldviews.
- **How does frenetic intemperance manifest itself in the Industrial Revolution? Describe frenetic trends in society and industry.**
This can be seen in the following ways:
 - Stock market crashes;
 - Industrial overproduction and expansion;
 - A throwaway society;
 - Fast-paced finance and stock trading;
 - Excessive globalization;
 - The depersonalization of production and business relationships;
 - The emphasis on speed in production and transactions; and
 - The tendency to make humans conform to machines.
- **Why is it wrong to condemn all technology when criticizing the Industrial Revolution?**
Technology is something good and has the purpose of serving humanity. It has brought about great progress and material comforts. The abuse of technology is the real problem. People should not be forced to operate according to the rhythms or schedules of technology.
- **Why does the Industrial Revolution help create a secular, depersonalized, and materialistic society? Give examples.**
The Industrial Revolution gives people the power to do many things themselves, giving the impression of

omnipotence and therefore insinuating that God is not needed. It introduces machine-like processes that force people to keep up with machines and therefore depersonalizes and discourages craftsmanship. The chief emphasis is on material production and mass products to the detriment of spiritual qualities like beauty or refinement. Thus, there is the promotion of ugly buildings, the creation of the masses, and over-standardization of culture. Religion has no significant role in such a society.

- **How does the Industrial Revolution manifest itself in daily life? Cite negative and positive examples.**
Negative examples might be hectic schedules, buying fads and fashions, the over-standardization of products, excessive advertisements, a lack of craftsmanship, the absence of the human element in transactions, answering machines, or an excessive attachment to gadgetry.
Positive effects might include indoor plumbing, ease of travel, medical treatments, better communication, and better hygiene.

- **What concrete measures can be taken to stop the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution in your life?**
 - Be a good Christian.
 - Do not binge buy.
 - Avoid excessive advertising.
 - Manage money well.
 - Have an appreciation of quality over quantity.
 - Give value to spiritual things.
 - Avoid excessive exposure to mass media and mass markets.
 - Appreciate or engage in craftsmanship.
 - Develop human and social activities that break up the mechanistic rhythms of life.

Chapter 4 | *The Drive to Gigantism*

The idea of growth or large-scale production can represent a legitimate desire to better oneself through the normal expansion of commerce. However, when frenetic intemperance enters into such expansion, it can destroy free markets and stifle competition. Frenetic intemperance tends to drive towards even more gigantic proportions in all fields of business and industry.

This drive towards unbalanced gigantism can be traced to the Industrial Revolution, which expanded industry on a scale never seen before. It led to the building of huge factories for mass production of standardized goods to be sold to vast markets. It relied upon a massive labor force that led to sprawling cities and empty countrysides. All this caused frenetic intemperance.

Gigantism can also be seen in the proliferation of mergers, commercial blocs of firms, and some globalizing trends. This drive to unbalanced gigantism upsets, rather than stimulates the market. It dilutes the sense of property and concentrates ownership to a few, thus facilitating confiscation by big government.

Free markets do not necessarily lead to capital concentration. On the contrary, when frenetic intemperance drives firms, conglomerates, and mergers to gigantism, they often lose focus and efficiency and become mired in bureaucracy, causing markets to be undermined. The artificiality of such companies is like that of a body-builder on steroids or an overweight person on expensive medicine.

The key to containing unbalanced gigantism lies in resolving the fundamental disorders inside men's souls, rather than limiting ownership or enacting more state regulations.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and describe characteristics of a company with gigantism and how it is frenetically intemperate.**

Such a company might be characterized by disproportional hugeness, inflexibility in production, and impersonal relationships with employees. There can be a drive for profit over everything. Everything is systematized and quantified with little human touch. The company would tend to be global with little connection with the locality. It would treat its employees like numbers. It would tend to overproduce and to flood markets. It might not follow moral practices when it uses its massive scale to discourage competition or fair practices. The company would resist attempts at restraint. It could enter into all sorts of merger deals and conglomerations.

- **Contrast such “gigantist” companies with those companies (even big ones) that are not frenetically intemperate.**

Such big companies would cultivate relationships with employees, depend upon intense personal leadership, and would not be obsessed with unbalanced growth, debt, or profits. The leadership would foster moral values within the business. There would be a willingness to connect with and consult the consumer and the locality.

- **Discuss how gigantism dilutes the sense of private property.**

The sense of private property is diluted as risk is distributed. Gigantist companies tend to make excessive use of stock reports, quarterly earnings reports, and the rapid buying and selling of stock. The investor is more a renter than an owner of stock. The CEO acts as a manager with little to lose for his failures. There is not a hands-on feeling of owning and defending a property. The sense of private property is often more acute with smaller companies who place more value on the little they have. A gigantist company can have the feel of a socialist state that is so big, it appears no one owns anything.

- **How does the gigantism manifest itself and impact daily life? Cite positive and negative ways.**

Positive ways: it provides convenience, security, good price, economy of scale, interchangeability, and abundance.

Negative ways: it can promote cold relationships; sameness; a lack of human touch with the consumer; the need for large amounts of capital, big government, regulations, anonymousness, mechanization of everything; and lack of purpose. Such a system often brings the imposition of a massive set of regulations. Gigantism facilitates hectic lifestyles, fashions, and fads; the standardization of things and processes; and the widespread use of popular gadgetry and social media. It can lead to consumer habits that cause abuse of credit and the weight of debt.

- **What concrete measures can be taken to stop the negative effects of gigantism in your life?**
 - Be a good Catholic.
 - Think before you buy.
 - Connect with employees and treat them well, not mechanically or as numbers.
 - Try to avoid buying goods (especially from communist countries) where gigantism exploits cheap labor.
 - Avoid excessive mass advertising.
 - If there is a choice, opt for the more personal and human product over the mass-produced.

Chapter 5 | *The Paradox of Mass Standardization*

Standardization normally occurs in all economies. It can be good when it provides stability to markets and helps maintain unity in production. However, people also desire diversity in products through which they can express their individuality. A healthy economy balances standardization with individuality and unity with diversity. When this balance is lost due to frenetic intemperance, mass standardization becomes the norm.

In the past, traditional markets united producers and consumers. The producer tried to satisfy and adjust to the consumer's needs. Both consumer and producer cooperated in and "co-created" the end product. This personal interaction between consumer and producer connects markets to culture. A product should be a true expression of a people, even when some standardization is involved.

Frenetic intemperance upsets this process with its drive toward expanding production and markets. Profit becomes its primary concern, and the cooperation between consumer and producer is often suppressed. The consumer must settle for mass-produced items of lesser quality because that is what is offered. The consumer is thus "standardized," and the human touch that tempers markets is lost.

Mass standardization allows production without restraint, which in turn creates the illusion of consumption without restraint. Consumers give in to fads and fashions, clever advertising, easy credit, or what others are buying. They often end up with products they do not need, bought with money they do not have. Unlimited choices do not maximize satisfaction, but often lead to anxiety and stress.

The great challenge is to reject the illusions of mass markets and look for ways to unite the producer and consumer again.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of good standardization and why this standardization helps us.**

Good examples of standardization include computer protocols, highway directions and rules, and standardized fuel and electric voltage. Certain materials needed in great number such as nails, bricks, or bullets are standardized. Standardized weights and measures can be helpful to commerce. Standardized shoe or clothing sizes help people describe what they need. Coinage should be standardized since any major change in metal affects costs and perceived value. However, even these standardized goods can have variations and be modified. It is an expression of individuality to modify standardized things.

- **Discuss and give examples of bad standardization and how it harms us.**

Examples of bad standardization might include bland, mass-produced foods; cheap clothes; and useless gadgets. Mass-market items often lack personality and distinction. Very cheaply manufactured goods tend to cheapen life and diminish the idea of permanence and beauty.

Bad standardization may harm us by diminishing individuality in production and consumption, suppressing desire to express oneself in economic production, discouraging local production in favor of volume production elsewhere, and encouraging outsourcing to areas where human-rights problems and cheap labor prevail. Producers are encouraged to cheapen products to offer a better price.

Consumers must adjust their tastes to mass markets and become "standardized" themselves. The consumer is no longer king. There is a take-it-or-leave-it mentality.

- **What are some of the bad effects of too many choices? How can it affect you and your quality of life?**

Some bad effects of too many choices might include the tendency just to buy whatever, lacking time to make good choices, bad buying decisions based on impressions or hype, lack of expertise leading to quick and superficial choices.

Producers often just change the packaging and not the substance, making it easier to make bad choices. Advertising causes people to be dissatisfied with the status quo and desire unneeded things.

- **Discuss some of the backlash against standardization.**

In what areas of economy does producer-consumer interaction still exist?

The backlash against standardization might be seen in the proliferation of micro-enterprises catering to niche markets related to wine, beer, cheese, and other such products. This can also be seen in certain services involving craftsmanship and special skills. Areas of cooperation can be found among certain tailors, contractors, cooks, jewelers, cobblers, bakers, and florists.

- **How does standardization manifest itself in daily life?**

What standardized goods do you use every day? Cite examples.

Some standardized products in daily use might include phones, cars, foods, drinks, computers, gadgets, or clothes. Look around the room and see what is standardized and what is not.

- **What concrete measures can be taken to stop the negative effects of standardization in your life?**

- Concrete measures include:
 - Being a good Christian;
 - Looking for quality in the things you buy;
 - Trying to avoid buying substandard, cheap goods;
 - Buying and collecting antique things that you can appreciate;
 - Avoiding the influence of excessive advertising; and
 - Changing and individualizing the standardized things that you do buy.

- **Bring a non-standardized object to the study and talk about its effect on you.**

Bring a standardized object and do the same.

Chapter 6 | *Breaking Down Barriers*

Besides driving frantic production, frenetic intemperance can also destroy and tear down barriers represented by monuments, traditions, and institutions of the past.

The State has always played an important role in this destruction through laws, regulations, and policies favoring “progress.” Even more effective is the pressure of public opinion and media that discourage or ridicule opposition to “progress.”

Thus, centuries-old customs, internal regulations, guild organizations, inheritance laws, and other “obstacles” have been either outlawed or scorned. Many modern thinkers consider, for example, that the Catholic Church and other institutions are obstacles to progress because their “oppressive” charity prevents people from producing and their morality restrains production. Thus, many private charitable and educational structures have been confiscated or suppressed and replaced with the cold welfare state.

“In breaking down the pre-capitalist framework of society, capitalism thus broke not only barriers that impeded its progress but also flying buttresses that prevented its collapse.” —*Joseph Schumpeter*

Economist Joseph Schumpeter used the term “creative destruction” (at times good or necessary) to describe the continual breakdown of old economic structures while at the same time creating new ones.

The Industrial Age represents a process of breaking down the barriers of local traditions of the past and putting in their place the mechanisms for the twenty-first century cooperative union. Today, the structures of the old Industrial Age have given way to a new globalized economy that is sweeping aside the cooperative union, sparking a great crisis with new global regulations and a phase of frenetic intemperance that threatens what little is left of Christian civilization.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of how the State and the culture/media were involved in breaking down traditional barriers to “progress.”**

The State has been involved as a result of:

- Laws favoring industry over community;
- Land grants and special benefits to large industries;
- Overregulation that favors big industry;
- The cult to progress found in public education;
- Funding of research promoting progress; and
- Population control, anti-family legislation, abortion, and divorce laws.

The culture/media have been involved as a result of:

- Advertising;
- Fashions;
- Hollywood and entertainment portrayals of progress;
- Celebrations of “progress” in education, science, public life, politics, and industry;
- The constant celebration of new inventions and the wonders of modern technology;
- Official atheism and the secular state relegating religion to second-class status; and
- Positions designed to ridicule the past or old customs in favor of the modern.

- **Why do you think the Catholic Church and other charitable institutions were targeted as enemies of progress? How does the Church's charity help, not hurt, the free market?**

The Church and other institutions were viewed as enemies of progress because they favored a style of life that was slower, more reflective, and full of ceremony and traditions. The Church is full of institutions that compete with the State. The Church also insists upon a moral code that restricts certain business practices. The Church and other institutions help markets by assuming responsibility for those who are weak and unable to compete in the world. They provide not welfare, but charity, and provide it in a way that governments cannot do. They also create social harmony, instilling a sense of gratitude, not entitlement.

- **What are some of the restraining institutions from pre-industrial society? How did frenetic intemperance destroy them?**

Some preindustrial institutions include: guilds; land use; inheritance laws; trade rules; old notions of the family, manners, marriage, intermediary associations, and business models. They were destroyed by legislation or regulations targeting them. Other factors include a frantic culture that opposed these institutions and accelerated the breakdown of the family, community, faith, and the loss of a notion of place.

- **Give examples of creative destruction as a good, creative process and as a destructive, harmful process.**

Creative destruction can be constructive when it improves services and replaces clearly outdated techniques and processes. Examples include advances in medicine, agriculture, hygiene, and other areas.

Creative destruction can be harmful when it promotes the wholesale destruction of historic places and neighborhoods, leads to unnecessary outsourcing and globalization, and causes superficial and wasteful fashion changes. It is especially harmful when it destroys for the sake of destroying and when there is a great joy in getting rid of the past.

- **How can you oppose this breaking down of barriers in your daily life?**

- Be a good Christian.
- Do not throw away everything.
- Fix things.
- Savor and value tradition.
- Own an antique or painting.
- Resist the temptation to upgrade when unnecessary.
- Understand and value history.
- Do all possible to promote the traditional family.
- Reject the Hollywood offensive against tradition.
- Defend tradition when ridiculed as being against "progress."

- **Find a clipping of a barrier being broken down in your area. Discuss how this affects your life and that of the community.**

Chapter 7 | *Interdependence and Complexity*

The great impetus toward interdependence and complexity is another driving force that advances frenetic intemperance.

Today's huge interdependent global networks—in communications, Internet, transportation, shipping, finance, and so many other fields—now dominate the world economy. While these networks facilitate the delivery of prodigious quantities of goods to markets, they are also very fragile.

These immense networks are fragile because things become so intertwined, their operations are so tightly coupled, and they move so quickly that there is little margin for error. The slightest maladjustment, natural disaster, human error, or socialist regulation can have dire effects upon the whole. This leads to vulnerable “neuralgic chokepoints” ranging from geographic straits to oil supply chains to Internet servers to electric grids.

The danger is augmented by the disappearing moral responsibility of people who can bring these great networks to a grinding halt when a terrorist, an irresponsible politician, or a rogue broker acts. These damages can be multiplied by the psychological effects caused by the sensational reporting of interconnected media networks.

Such a fragile situation makes it extremely difficult to employ all possible safeguards to avoid disasters and system crashes. The only way out is to exercise moral restraint.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of interdependency that can fail and have unintended consequences.**
Among the examples of interdependency might be massive government programs of complexity and interdependency, such as Obamacare, Common Core, Dodd Frank, and other such programs.
Another example might be computer systems that go down. Stock markets can pull the whole system down. Extremely fast trading, algorithms, and types of derivatives can increase the risks. Commodity markets are interdependent and affect everyone as in the case of oil. A classic case of interdependency was the 2008 subprime mortgage crisis, which had worldwide repercussions.
Huge, interconnected grids like electricity, networks like the Internet, and trade agreements are also examples of such interdependency.
- **Discuss and give examples of a good interdependency, and how it might work.**
Good forms of interdependency can be seen in the practice of subsidiarity and federalism. Organizations like the Church, community, or the family are good examples of how interdependency could be practiced in a balanced fashion. However, the key is the totality of the dependency. The more total the dependency, the more vulnerable it is.
- **Name some neuralgic chokepoints. Are neuralgic chokepoints inevitable? What can be done to protect them?**
Some neuralgic chokepoints are the Panama Canal, the Internet, the electric grid, and the oil supply lines. Neuralgic chokepoints are inevitable. These points should be protected and safeguarded for the common good. Prudence dictates that reasonable contingency plans be put in place to diminish the risks associated with these chokepoints, especially those of a local nature.
- **How can you oppose this interdependency and complexity in your daily life?**
 - Live a good Christian life.

- Have savings and reasonable stocks of things to hedge against disasters and unforeseen problems.
- Make wise investments.
- If possible and within reason, decrease one's dependence on mass networks.
- Sustain a good family life; it is a great defense against dependence on government.
- Oppose government programs that increase dependence of citizens.
- The principle of subsidiarity is a good way to avoid harmful interdependency.

Chapters 8 and 9 | *Unraveling a Way of Life and the Frustrations of Technology*

Like the economy, the American way of life has also become unbalanced. Chapter 8 of this section introduces those profound changes beyond economy that are affected by frenetic intemperance and that result in the unraveling of a way of life.

Chapter 9 deals with the modern world's immersion in technology. While technology exists precisely to serve man, its intemperate use can throw society out of balance.

This intemperance could be seen in the great expectations and enthusiasm for technology introduced by the Industrial Revolution. This utopic vision promised permanent happiness, but delivered many undesirable consequences.

Such consequences include massification—the reduction of men into insignificant equals, taking on the status of mere machines. They also lead to the mechanization of society, in which all fields of human action are modified in such a way as to impel humans to act like machines or computers.

This transformation of society resulted in a rationalized, mechanistic worldview where the whole universe is perceived as one huge machine and therefore unintelligible. This perception strips the universe of all metaphysical meaning and purpose.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of ways the intemperate use of technology promises utopic things to the point of almost being a religion. Are these things exciting to people?**

Examples of the intemperate use of technology to promote utopic notions might include:

- The abuse of advertising to present an ideal world;
- The abuse of iPhones that are presented as doing everything;
- The promotion of virtual reality that presents a different world;
- The Internet that promises to connect everything;
- The use of gadgets that supposedly solve problems; and
- The use of GPS and smart cars as portals to an automatic world.

- **Discuss and give examples of ways you are personally massified.**

How are you reduced to a number?

Examples of massification include:

- The overuse of standardized testing in education;
- The availability of fast food;
- The promotion of fads and fashions;
- The use of mass advertising;
- Cookies embedded in programs; and
- Massive Internet companies that compile data on people.

Massification might also be seen in globalized products made for worldwide masses, mass production, mass media, and the influence of mass culture as seen in Hollywood.

- **Discuss and give examples of ways you personally function in ways similar to a machine. How are you “mechanized?”**

Examples of mechanization might include:

- The drive toward self-service that plays according to the rules of the machine;
- The growing prevalence of the machine everywhere which forces people to interact with them (ex. airports);
- Filling out forms that are machine-like in their processes;
- The standardization of jobs that interface with machines;
- Rationalized processes that allow for little human touch;
- Mechanized worship services;
- The abuse of PowerPoint presentations;
- The proliferation of franchises;
- The overuse of tests and processes in health care; and
- The “McDonaldization” of the world.

- **Discuss how the world is presented as unintelligible without metaphysics and symbolism. What effect does this have on you?**

This might be seen in the following cases:

- Purely utilitarian buildings without meaning;
- Modern art that makes no sense;
- The lack of religious symbols in public places;
- The denial of the supernatural and miracles;
- Price and efficiency given prevalence over everything;
- The relativization of everything;
- The presentation of economy and history as random processes;
- Evolution;
- Drugs;
- Pollution;
- The adoration of health; and
- The denial of Divine Providence.

Chapter 10 | *The Consequences of the Abuse of Technology*

A technological society produces adverse consequences that affect the way people react. The first harsh consequence is a mania for speed and novelty that feeds an unbridled appetite for even greater speeds, sensations, and pleasures. It creates impatience with time and space and leads to a brutal and exhausting pace of life. The mania for speed causes a nausea for reflection, recollection, and true leisure.

Facilitated by social networks, another consequence is a shallowness of thought, which inhibits the ability to communicate and process information. Within this hurried pace of life, time itself becomes sterile and people experience the double sensation of having no time to do anything and doing nothing with time.

The mania for movement contributes to a loss of the sense of place, as all places appear the same. Electronic networks contribute to the destruction of place so that it no longer matters where one works, lives, and communicates.

The abuse of technology also facilitates a crushing disproportion of things big and small. The proliferation of massive, unadorned, and cold structures leads to a “cult of ugliness.” A single, universal culture without reference to place can be seen in globalized production and markets.

A powerful metaphor of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira compares pre-modern technology serving man as a horse serves its rider. Modern technology is like a galloping horse dragging its fallen rider from the stirrup.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of ways in which technology introduces a brutal pace of life into your personal life.**

Examples of a brutal pace of life might include:

- The constant interruptions of cell phones, text messages, and emails;
- The lack of intermediary phases of things (everything is on/off);
- Advertising—especially sensual and pornographic aspects that speed up life and sensations;
- The universal use of cars for everything;
- Places of rushing such as airports;
- Grueling work schedules;
- The prevalence of fast food and speed eating; and
- The fast pace caused by using self-service and drive-through services.

- **Discuss and give examples of ways you are personally encouraged to have a nausea for reflection.**

A nausea for reflection can be found in many practices of always being connected to something or having something on (such as a radio or television). This can also be seen in the lost art of relishing things—art, food, or wine—that require reflection. Hectic schedules and lack of sleep leave the person exhausted and unreflective. The Sunday rest has been all but abolished. The abuse of sports fills up leisure that might otherwise be used for reflection. The art of conversation that used to provoke reflection is all but lost. Finally, there are Internet addictions that prevent reflection.

- **Discuss and give examples of ways you personally sense a culture of shallowness of thought or the sterilization of time.**

Examples of a culture of shallowness can be found in the dependence upon computers for many basic things, Internet rumors or the constant use of Google as a source and Wikipedia as an authority. This can also be seen in the short articles found in newspapers, the brief reports on evening news programs, or “long,” three-minute YouTube videos. Other examples include extremely brief social media applications like Twitter, Yik Yak, Instagram, or Snapchat. This culture is also reflected in short attention spans and mental illnesses

associated with it.

Examples of the sterilization of time can be found in times of boredom, visiting malls without good reason, Internet surfing, overuse of social media, and the desire not to be left alone with oneself.

- **Discuss and give examples of the loss of the notion of place in modern society.**

Where do you sense this? What are its causes?

The loss of the notion of place can be seen in the following ways:

- The proliferation of franchises everywhere that make localities look the same;
- The abundance of malls with many of the same stores;
- The similar look of airports that have no local characteristics; and
- Modern suburbs and cookie-cutter developments that look the same.

Modern cities look very much the same with few real attractions. Local cuisine is often disconnected from locale, and therefore is the same everywhere. What has been called the “Walmartization” or “McDonaldization” of everything is also a result of the loss of the notion of place.

- **How can you oppose the abuses of technology?**

What concrete measures can you take to avoid them?

- Some measures that might be taken include:
- Being a good Catholic;
- Slowing down your life;
- Doing everything possible to anchor yourself in a place;
- Avoiding the Internet when not needed; and
- Using only the technology that you need.

More spiritual suggestions might include developing an interior life with meditation and prayer, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and keeping Sunday holy.

Cultural suggestions might include learning an art or musical instrument, writing a letter to someone, or developing the art of conversation.

Chapter 11 | *The Implosion of Individualism*

Individualism is the foundation of America's cooperative union. It popularizes the idea of the autonomous individual who thinks and does whatever he wishes. The only unconditional right is that of self-preservation.

There is a distinction between individuality, which develops the talents of the individual acknowledging a moral law and the common good, and individualism, which makes each one the center of an enclosed world of personal self-interest.

However, individualism is much more than just doing as one pleases. It teaches a philosophy of life, in which each individual is a totally autonomous, self-made man, the sole architect of his own freedom and destiny, with infinite possibilities, completely free to construct an eternally new self. People mistake this proliferation of choice for true freedom.

Individualism results in a paradox of isolation and conformity. The self-made man isolates himself by discarding the social anchors of family, morals, traditions, and special obligations. Without these anchors, the person is insecure and conforms to what others are doing, thus creating the masses. Individualism promises autonomy, but delivers collectivism.

One consequence of individualism is a decline in the sense of community and a proliferation of shallow associations. It also leads to hostility towards the State, which becomes the mere keeper of order and protector of property. Finally, individualism leads to a denial of a higher moral law. Law is reduced to aiding self-interest and safeguarding property or contracts. The source of law becomes the intrusive State.

This individualist order is now imploding and threatens true freedom.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of ways in which society promotes an individualism based on a proliferation of choices in which the person believes that “I can do as I wish.”**

Do these promises always prove true?

Examples of how society promotes individualism as a proliferation of personal choices might include the following:

- In matters of career choices, one is told one can be anything one wishes.
- The car frees the individual to go anywhere.
- The universal use of the cell phone promises to connect instantly with whomever one wishes.
- First Amendment rights grant the right to say anything—except if it is politically incorrect.
- The abundance of goods in shopping centers gives the impression that one has the ability to buy whatever one wants. Online choices make similar promises.
- The use of search engines like Google promise unlimited knowledge and information.
- Social media promises unlimited connections with others.

All these examples have limitations and disappointments that might be discussed.

- **In your experience, in what ways is the lack of community manifested? Discuss and give examples of ways one can be isolated under individualism.**

Ways people can be isolated under individualism might include the following:

- People often lack a sense of local and national history because they are not involved in communities.
- People are not encouraged to find out where they come from. They rarely know their genealogy.
- Americans are constantly moving, and therefore often lack local roots and feel isolated.
- Many family members are isolated because they are scattered all over the country.

- National elections display a lack of national unity since many think only of personal benefits.
- There is little cultural unity since everyone is encouraged to develop his own personal culture.
- In business and society, there is a prevailing “What’s in it for me?” mentality.

● **What pressures do you feel to conform to the fashions of the day?**

Pressures to conform to the fashions of the day can be seen in the use of slang; the pressure to dress like others, eat like others, or listen to the same music. There is a pressure for people to know about the latest movie, star, or entertainment, or to be up on the latest in sports regardless of whether one likes the sport. Technologically, there is the pressure to know about or have the latest gadget or to be engaged in social media.

● **Discuss and distinguish between freedom and choice.**

Freedom is the facility to choose the means toward a determined good. When one chooses evil, it actually enslaves one to passions. Choice is the mere act of choosing. (See the box in *Return to Order*, p. 77.)

● **Discuss and give examples of hostility to the State, especially those caused by the denial of a higher law.**

Hostility to the State can be seen in a hostile attitude towards high taxes and all taxes in general, a resentment of abusive overregulation, a disregard for politicians of all types, or suspiciousness of all government, especially when it abuses power as seen in huge government programs or entitlements. This hostility is especially present among moral Americans who blame the State for immoral law as can be seen when individuals delegate to the State the role of being the source of law, thus resulting in abortion, homosexual marriage, and conscience violation. Abusive enforcement of laws thus becomes possible.

● **How can you oppose the abuses of individualism?**

What concrete measures can you take to avoid this?

This can be done in the following ways:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Be a volunteer or fight for a cause greater than self.
- Strengthen and think in terms of cohesive groups like family, community, or parish.
- Fight for the cause of the Church and the moral law.
- Protest against abuses of higher law, especially those in which you have no direct interest.
- Be patriotic.

Chapter 12 | *Postmodern Individualism: Splitting the Atom*

Americans have not lived strictly according to classic individualist ideals. They usually compromise by claiming to be autonomous individuals while retaining attachments to family, community, and parish.

This “classical” individualism turned people into atoms. The next phase of postmodern individualism, which exploded onto the scene in the sixties, split the atom and caused great damage to countless Americans.

Classical individualism targeted exterior social structures by attacking the constraining influences of tradition, family customs, and community. It enshrined self-interest and self-preservation as the sole standard of order. Postmodern individualism attacks the internal restraints of logic, identity, and unity, and declares self-gratification as a highest “right,” even if self-destructive.

Postmodern individualism can manifest itself in three ways. The first is the “liberation” from the constraints of logic by fragmenting thought and blurring all distinctions. The second is the deconstruction of identity by questioning nationality, sexuality, or anything that might be considered an imposed identity. Lastly, all that is reasoned, structured, or systematized is replaced with a need to escape into fantasy, dreams, and ecstasy.

This postmodern individualism progresses silently through sentiments and manners in a climate of inertia, decay, and torpor. It appears less evil since it manifests itself almost with a smile. This is an illusion, since it actually enslaves and shatters man more by splitting personalities and extending the masses globally through virtual networks.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of ways that classical individualism, which compromises by still recognizing some social structures, lingers on in your daily life.**

The compromises with classical individualism might persist in the following ways:

- There is still an insistence on career choices inside the old structures of prestige in society.
- Church membership is still enormously influential.
- The nuclear family still survives in its individualist phase outside the extended family.
- People still belong to and support many modern, shallow associations.

What is left of the cooperative union is based on classical individualism. Much of the economic framework of society is still based on self-interest, not self-gratification. The educational system still retains some elements of classical individualism and its structures. The classic notion of patriotism and love of country still reflects this compromise.

- **Discuss and give examples of ways in which the postmodern individualism is part of your daily life. Highlight those that affect internal structures.**

Postmodern individualism can be manifested in the following ways:

- The family is deconstructed to mean any grouping of individuals.
- The sexual revolution and the homosexual agenda work toward blurring and blending distinctions. The transgender movement destroys the notion of permanent sexual identity.
- Fashions promote androgynous clothing and styles.
- The idea of self-identifying is an expression of postmodern individualism.
- The idea of liberalizing drug laws makes self-gratification supreme.
- The idea of micro-aggression is based on the idea that feelings and emotions are more important than logic.
- The great popularity of the fantasy and science fiction literary genres reflect this kind of individualism.
- Video games and virtual reality also reflect postmodern thought and individualism.

- Social media can be an example of postmodern individualism.

- **What are some of the effects of postmodern individualism in society?**

- **In what ways is it different from the classic mode?**

Some of the effects of postmodern individualism might include the following:

- In airports and restaurants, there is a growing disconnection with the local surroundings.
- Political correctness breaks down the barriers of common sense and suppresses the individuality of the person.
- There is schizophrenia in people who believe they have several different identities.
- There is more stress in society since there are fewer anchors upon which to rely.
- People are unaware of the news since it does not concern them directly.
- The Internet is a giant web of disconnection from internal structures.
- Social media allows lonely people to project a social life they do not necessarily have.

- **How do you oppose postmodern individualism?**

- **What concrete measures can you take to avoid it?**

Some measures might include the following:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Be logical and admire logic in daily life.
- Resist the temptation to act based on emotions and feelings.
- Dress correctly and well according to one's true identity.
- Avoid crazy fashions that often fly in the face of common sense and propriety.
- Develop a taste for definitions and learn how to define terms in explanations.
- Resist the temptation to escape reality and duty by indulging in drugs, diversions, or films.
- Affirm the traditional family as the only definition of marriage.
- Live a moral life.
- Engage in good conversation or debate.

Chapter 13 | *The Exhaustion of Materialism*

The desire for better life materially should not be mistaken for a materialistic spirit that fails to address the spiritual nature and needs of man. A materialistic society cultivates an excessive fixation on pleasures and bodily comforts, and not the ideals of Christian perfection. It embraces the common, the useful, and the mundane with little room for perfection, heroism, or sanctity.

The dangers of this system are that it tends to brutalize and narrow the horizons of people and thus change their values. It also results in a profound unhappiness since materialism cannot satisfy spiritual needs.

Among the tragic consequences of materialism is the prevalence of status buying which is the institutionalization of envy. Another is abusive advertising that does not maximize satisfaction, but only dissatisfaction by promising an unattainable material utopia and an afflictive array of choices.

Finally, materialism tries to organize life so as to banish the notion of suffering and tragedy. Thus, it exudes a natural optimism that expects a happy end to every story as seen in classic Hollywood movies, advertising, and literature. However, this materialistic society delivers only a superficial happiness that hides the frustrations of a sad and melancholic people.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of how materialism fails to address the spiritual aspect of life.**

Materialism fails to address the spiritual side of man by:

- Discouraging the arts as a most important part of daily life of most people and encouraging science and technology as the highest standard;
- The official non-recognition of religion in public places and the taking down of religious symbols;
- Advertising using sensuality to sell products;
- Using money as criteria for judging people;
- Promoting a noisy and constantly distracted hectic world without time for reflection,
- Overemphasizing the practical aspect of things; and
- Promoting a culture of promiscuity and sensuality that favors bodily pleasures.

- **Discuss and give examples of how materialism can be brutal and bland.**

How does materialism discourage perfection and sanctity?

Some ways materialism can be bland and brutal might include:

- Migration to a “cult of ugliness” where ugly things are normal;
- Buildings like modern airports that have all the ductwork and inner workings showing;
- Big box buildings with no beauty or adornments;
- Highways that are all the same and block off beauty or scenery;
- Aggressive sensuality in advertising and fashions;
- The modern disregard for manners;
- The wearing of ugly, dirty, or ripped clothing that does not consider the sensibility of others; Bland fast food that only satisfies hunger or superficial taste; and
- The practice of abortion as a brutal means to live a promiscuous lifestyle.

- **Discuss and give examples of modern advertising, its promotion of material dissatisfaction, and its failure to address spiritual satisfaction. Contrast advertising with true needs.**

Examples might include:

- A billboard that says, Happiness is a Double BBQ Sandwich;

- Beer or soft drink advertisement—quenching brute thirst versus savoring a fine wine;
- The use of an advertisement as a spectacle so as to feed materialistic frenzy;
- The promotion of gadgets and other things that must be purchased even though unneeded;
- Ads for chocolate or similar items which speak of “sinful” or “decadent” delights;
- Ads where the person is invited to imagine himself in another situation; and
- The use of speed in advertising that creates excitement and frenzy.

Contrast this advertising of instant pleasure with any kind of consumption that takes time and appreciation to enjoy.

● **Discuss and give examples of how materialistic culture tries to avoid suffering, deny tragedy, and invite people to live fantasy lives.**

Possibilities for discussion include:

- Modern funerals and funeral parlors that mask death as much as possible, even burial not being witnessed;
- Outrageous gadgets that are proposed to take care of every single need;
- A divorce culture that denies tragedy and invites people to start over again;
- Security and safety obsessions that lead to a life without risks, in which every little thing is surrounded by safety features (bicycle helmets);
- The promotion of extreme sports where one is invited to live in another world;
- Lotteries that invite people to imagine how happy they will be if they win;
- The abortion and contraception mentality that claims people can “fix” their mistakes;
- Modern liturgy and worship that turns the Mass into a meal, not a sacrifice;
- Virtual reality and video games that let people escape from reality;
- The quest for assisted suicide and suicide in general that represent the ultimate escape;
- The teaching that there is no hell and denies the reality of sin.

● **How can you oppose the exhaustion of materialism?**

What concrete measures can you take to avoid it?

Measures might include the following:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Do not be unduly influenced by advertisements.
- Meditate upon the Four Last Things: death, judgment, heaven, and hell.
- Develop an appreciation for beautiful things.
- Whenever possible, opt for the most beautiful choice.
- Admire heroism and aspire to be a hero.
- Develop a love of the cross and the small sacrifices of the Little Way.
- Criticize and analyze ugliness around you.
- Dress well and tastefully.
- Practice manners and courtesy.
- Enjoy ceremony and be ceremonial with others.
- Enjoy silence and reflection.

● **Find any advertisement from a paper or magazine and write 2–3 paragraphs on how it promotes dissatisfaction, avoids suffering, or denies tragedy.**

Chapter 14 | *The Absence of the Sublime*

Industrial society gives rise to a secular society that rejects the sublime aspects of life. Such a society is officially purged of all references to a reality beyond a naturalistic and materialistic world. There is an indifference to God and a confusion about what constitutes the meaning of life.

This outlook inevitably leaves a void inside souls that leads to frustration and desolation that Saint Thomas Aquinas calls *acedia*. *Acedia* is the term that describes a weariness for holy and spiritual things and a subsequent sadness of living.

Thus, people are unhappy when they fail to acknowledge their spiritual nature. There is now a generalized dissatisfaction with life caused by the fact that materialistic life cannot satisfy spiritual hunger. A secular, “normal” world purged of any transcendence can be stifling.

The worst effect of secularism is its rejection of the sublime. The sublime is defined as those things of transcendent excellence that cause men to be overawed by their magnificence and turns them towards higher principles and ultimately, to God. The sublime gives meaning and purpose to lives.

When the sublime is suppressed, it often sets in motion a great internal crisis that calls individuals to make choices between self-interest and sublime principles. The rebellion of the sixties was a misdirected desire for something beyond the superficial, pleasurable, and “normal.” In its absence, people thirst for the sublime, which is a solution for the problem of frenetic intemperance.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of the phenomenon of acedia and how it affects you personally.**

How has this caused the flight of happiness?

The phenomenon of acedia might manifest itself in the following ways:

- The overwhelming flood of news and information that leads one to question the meaning of things and events;
- The massive proliferation of choices that causes one to become confused and stressed;
- The breakdown of human relationships that causes anxiety and stress;
- The widespread cases of depression that lead to suicide and anti-social behavior;
- The use of drugs as a means to escape the problems of life;
- Modern addictions like that of social media and video games that occupy the lives of people;
- The use of social media to portray a life that one does not live;
- The obsession with material possessions that do not satisfy people;
- The obsession with health food and exercise to replace spiritual things;
- The widespread sentimentality that substitutes for real affection;
- The lack of religion that leaves a great void where God should be; and
- The hypersexuality of society, which focuses on sensual, not spiritual things.

- **Define and give examples of the sublime in nature, history, or the arts.**

How have you personally experience the sublime?

A working definition of the sublime can be: “That which is of such excellence that it provokes a great emotion that causes men to be overawed by its magnificence or grandeur.”

Some ways this might manifest itself might include:

- Magnificent panoramas that one can encounter;
- Beautiful material goods, clothes, and excellent foods and drinks that are temperate, beautiful, and inspiring;
- Excellent conversations that mark one’s life;
- Inspiring music that cultivates a sense of awe;

- Paintings and sculptures that inspire and fascinate;
- Works of literature that are enthralling and beautiful;
- Inspiring moments and special occasions in the life of the family;
- Heroic people that one admires;
- Acts of heroism and courage that one might feel inspired to perform;
- Philosophical and theological considerations for those who are attracted to this field;
- Liturgical acts and feasts that call one to the sublime worship of God; and
- Meditations upon God and His Creation, Mercy, and Goodness.

● **Discuss and describe how the post-war period of prosperity and “normality” failed to address the sublime and satisfy spiritual desires.**

Examples of the lack of sublimity might include:

- Overwhelming materialism and the proliferation of cheaply made goods;
- A cult of quantity over quality;
- A throwaway society that does not value things;
- The gradual loss of community in the quest for prosperity;
- The emphasis on money, career, and material acquisition over more important relationships and values;
- Inorganic ways of educating like that of a machine that frustrates the learning process;
- Mass culture in general, which is mired in mediocrity;
- The sense of isolation and emptiness inside the big cities that fails to provide social fulfillment;
- The growth of impersonal corporate structures in business, education, and society;
- The decline of the arts, especially locally;
- The ideal of material progress as the solution for everything;
- The absence of great causes; and
- A society of conformity and standardization.

● **Discuss and give examples of how the sixties was a revolt against the absence of the sublime, and of the substitutes employed to try to fill the void. How does this continue in our days?**

Discussion might include:

- The revolt against manners and social conventions that became disconnected from their roots;
- The revolt against staid manners of dress and the introduction of exotic, sensual, and nonconventional dress;
- The use of psychedelic drugs to escape materialism and go to another, more “spiritual” world;
- The adoption of music that promotes a lifestyle without restraints;
- The proliferation of promiscuous relationships and unions that seek excitement and nonconformity;
- The use of protests as a means of revolt against the perceived injustices of the establishment;
- The redefinition of morality as “doing your own thing” (usually just like everyone else);
- The revolt against corporate America, which is perceived as a machine lacking the human touch;
- The cult to nature and ecology as a reaction against the inorganic and artificial aspects of modern life; and
- The proliferation of bizarre religious cults as a reaction to materialistic, mainstream religions.

We see this continue in our days in the following ways:

- The progressive new stages of the examples listed above;
- The use of gadgetry to fill the void of the sublime;
- Designer drugs intended to “maximize” spiritual experiences;
- Extreme sports and pastimes as a means to fight boredom;
- Virtual reality experiences that will integrate fantasy into life;

- Body piercing and tattooing, which turns the body into a statement against modernity; and
- Extreme fashions.

- **How can you oppose the absence of the sublime?**

- **What concrete measures can you take to cultivate the sublime in your life?**

Measures might include:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Fill the spiritual void with daily mass, communion, and prayer.
- Appreciate music and learn to play an instrument.
- Appreciate the arts and learn to participate in them.
- Attend liturgical ceremonies as a sublime expression of the love of God.
- Meet heroes and encourage them.
- Desire to do heroic things.
- Dress with dignity, taste, and modesty.
- Celebrate sublime moments in the family.
- Study and admire events in history that are sublime.
- Learn to appreciate courtesy, which can often be sublime.
- Learn to reject the anti-sublime culture mired in materialism and vulgarity.
- Escape from the hectic schedule and enjoy the silence and reflection that is a natural setting for the sublime.
- Remember one's sublime moments even to the point of writing them down.
- Make time for the sublime.

- **Bring something or a picture of something sublime to the study group and explain why you find it sublime.**

Chapter 15 | *The Rule of Money*

Frenetic intemperance has given rise to a rule of money. This rule is the *misuse* of money that turns it from a common means of exchange into the measure of all relationships, principles, and values.

In pre-industrial times, productive activities were embedded in the social, cultural, and religious organization of society. This rule of money and its corresponding set of values puts aside these social, cultural, and moral values and assigns more importance to quantity over quality, utility over beauty, matter over spirit. Everything tends to be commercialized.

While the rule of money can stimulate the economy, it can have negative consequences by creating conditions that favor speculation, exaggerated risk, and frenetic intemperance. It can empower institutions to expand the money supply or develop complex financial products. It often leads to government bailouts and financial crashes.

The rule of money leads to a financial situation in which a supply of fast and easy credit becomes a fixture in society. Advertising often induces the urge to buy right away and incur great debt. Today, this world of finance seems to have led not only to unprecedented material prosperity, but also great debt and frenetic intemperance.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of how the rule of money has affected you personally by making money the principal concern of life.**

The phenomenon of the rule of money might manifest itself in the following ways:

- The overwhelming concern for instant profit and dividend earnings in the stock market;
- The pressure on young people to enter college regardless of their inclinations to pursue other avenues;
- The pressure to enter a career that makes a lot of money, but is not the passion of the person;
- The “time is money” mentality;
- The tendency to value the cheapness of goods over the quality of goods;
- A lack of appreciation of beauty since it does not make money;
- The lack of concern for the human element of production and the emphasis only on cost;
- The ruthlessness of money dealings that often trumps friendship;
- The use of cookies in online advertising that intrudes into the life of the consumer;
- Online buying without human relationships;
- A willingness to cheat others to make more money;
- A lack of emphasis on the practice of charity since one cannot benefit from it;
- Outsourcing of production only out of concern to save money;
- The widespread cases of depression caused by failure that lead to suicide and anti-social behavior;
- The commercialization of Christmas;
- The neglect of religion since money replaces God for some people; and
- The lack of religious vocations since this is not valued by a society that wants to make money.

- **Discuss and give examples of how the rule of money can undermine markets.**

Some ways the rule of money undermines markets might include:

- The lack of transparency in markets, making it difficult to know from where things originate;
- The outsourcing of production to places where human rights and wages are not respected;
- The outsourcing of production to places where there is no concern for the environment, and thus does not follow environmentally beneficial rules that cost other companies money;
- Investments where the only criteria is money and not concerns for the economy or the nation as a whole;

- The use of risky investment instruments that endanger markets;
 - Government policies that artificially stimulate economy and bail out failures;
 - Government policies that overregulate to oppose the abuses of those engaged in the rule of money;
 - The overemphasis of quarterly earnings reports that encourage short-term profit over long-term needs;
 - The rise of “corporate raider” investors who buy companies to empty them of value and then resell them;
 - The issuing of junk bonds and the practice of day trading;
 - The selling of house loans, knowing that the person cannot pay for it; and
 - Frenetic trading that does not consider what is being traded and can cause “flash” crashes.
- **Discuss and describe how the rule of money affects you and society by the extension of credit and a climate of easy money.**
- Such ways might include:
- A society built on credit and credit ratings and not personal qualities;
 - The ready availability of credit cards, even to those who cannot pay for them;
 - Credit card debt and minimum monthly payments that weigh down the lives of millions;
 - The use of installment plans and car payments over time that facilitate bad decisions;
 - The tendency not to save money since it appears there will never be a lack of it;
 - The promotion of mortgages among those who do not earn enough to service them;
 - The use of deficit spending by governments to finance projects;
 - The use of low-interest borrowing and other financial methods for leveraging;
 - Incurring debt of all kinds and the inability of many to service the debt;
 - The lack of interest paid on deposits that promotes the spending, not the saving, of money;
 - The emphasis on acquisition and ostentation, all paid for with debt; and
 - The allure of advertising that entices people to buy that which they cannot afford.
- **How can you oppose the rule of money? What concrete measures can you take to do this?**
- Measures opposing the rule of money might include:
- Be a good Catholic.
 - Slow down the tempo of your life and improve the quality of your life.
 - Stay out of debt.
 - Learn to appreciate arts and beautiful things that can replace the value placed on money.
 - Reject the god of money and adore the one true God.
 - Make wise and calm investments without frenzy.
 - Give special value to the family and community and invest in them.
 - Reject the vulgarity of showing off money.
 - Accept the crosses that are given to you, which might include the lack of money.
 - Value principles over money in all occasions.
 - Delay purchases for a while to see if the item is really needed.
 - Cultivate human relationships when buying or selling.

Chapter 16 | *Rejecting False Alternatives at the Crossroads*

With society in crisis, false alternatives that will greatly imperil our nation are appearing on the horizon that normally would not have any chance of success. However, a general frustration with present institutions, a hostility to the State, and a questioning of authority tempts many to seek positions in desperation that they once considered extreme.

These times call for firm principles, decisive action, and unity, not scattered activity driven by frustration, whim, and rage. The times call for calm reflection, not frantic reactions magnified by computer networks and media.

False alternatives now being proposed include an ecological revolt against civilization, consumerism, and moral structures in society; reincarnations of socialism; and anarchical libertarian models hostile to the State.

While these alternatives may appear as isolated fragments, they have common threads that unite them. They are united in their discontent, skepticism, and rejection of America's Christian heritage. They count on powerful governmental, academic, and media allies. These alternatives promote frenetic intemperance and will only make the situation worse.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of the frustrations and mistrust that people feel with present structures. How do they discourage people from pursuing the spiritual in daily life?**

Frustration and mistrust with present structures are manifested in the following ways:

- The political system is considered by many to be polarized and gridlocked.
- There is distrust in religious institutions that strayed from their missions.
- The educational system is distrusted by the millions who home school.
- Government programs cause frustration by their unwieldy size and bureaucracy.
- Some business models do not seem to be working any more.
- Alternative medicine harbors distrust towards modern medicine.
- There is distrust in financial markets that no longer instill confidence.
- The immigration problem is frustrating people who do not know how to deal with it.
- The breakdown of the family is so generalized that many have abandoned it.
- Crime, drug use, and other illegal problems are a manifestation of frustration and the need to escape.
- People question morality and adopt their own notions of it.
- International relationships and alliances no longer work as they did.

- **Discuss and give examples of how some people are embracing extreme positions that they may have never previously considered. How is this dividing the nation?**

Some examples of extreme positions might include:

- The proliferation of bizarre religious cults and New Age religions;
- The spreading of youth gangs and fads;
- The rise of Satanism and witchcraft;
- The extreme use of politically correct jargon to intimidate those who dissent from liberal opinions.
- The new interest for socialism.
- The ecological and green movements' extreme views on the earth and man's role.
- The global warming mania that is leading to every extreme positioning.
- Homosexual and transgender activism and intolerance that leads to attacks upon traditional morality;
- The rage of campus movements who call for diversity and structural reforms;
- The violence against the police and the law;
- The new racial confrontations that create class struggle; and
- The proliferation of conspiracy theories, especially on the Internet.

- **Discuss and give examples of alternatives that are fragmenting the nation.**

Such alternatives might include:

- Any of the many ecological movements;
- The anti-progress groups that are anti-consumerist and delight in simplicity and misery;
- The secessionist movements that call for states to leave the union;
- Leftist groups promoting socialist alternatives;
- Anarchical libertarians who reject the notion of government in most things;
- Those who believe in apocalyptic religions;
- NGO's that have their own agendas favoring the environment or the sexual revolution;
- Those who have a cybernetic or futuristic vision of the future;
- Islamist groups who have radical and violent philosophies;
- The so-called Benedict option urging people to withdraw from society;
- The movement merging man and robot;
- The sagebrush rebellion and militia groups; and
- #blacklivesmatter and other anti-establishment groups.

- **How are these alternatives united and helped by others in promoting discontent and amplifying the effects of these minorities beyond their numbers?**

- The use of the Internet and social media were helpful for movements like the Arab Spring.
- The whole liberal establishment unites to defend Islam against attacks by conservatives.
- The media is an essential tool to support all liberal causes.
- Academia and the university system use their prestige to help alternative views.
- Progressivist and liberal clergy are helpful in giving prestige to alternative groups.
- Government agencies often help alternative groups through money or support.
- The entertainment industry is a great source of support for liberal causes.
- Political parties give expression to alternative causes.
- Liberal intellectuals use their prestige to support alternative causes.
- Liberal business associations give money and support to alternative causes.

- **How can you oppose the alternatives that are coming?**

What concrete measures can you take to avoid this?

Measures might include the following:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Reject all kinds of unbalanced and ideological ecology movements.
- Promote good stewardship of the land and balanced use of natural resources.
- Refuse to use politically correct jargon.
- Defend the traditional family and morality as the foundation of all society.
- Be patriotic and show love of one's country; celebrate its unity.
- Show proper respect for the law.
- Take rational, not emotional, political positions.
- Think big and think long term.
- Think in terms of the common good and not only one's self.
- Oppose socialism in all its forms.
- Appeal to God and pray for the nation.

- **Pick an alternative movement and show how it is leading the country to ruin.**

Chapter 17 | *Returning to an Economy without Frenetic Intemperance*

There are four preconditions to begin a return to order. The first one is to have no illusions that the cancer of frenetic intemperance is leading the nation to ruin. Just tweaking or jumpstarting the economy will not work. The root cause of frenetic intemperance must be addressed.

The second presupposition is that one cannot give in to the temptation to write off the present system and isolate oneself from the crisis. One must unite with others and not abandon the nation in time of need.

The third measure is to defend those things that are still good in the nation. Excellent values like private property or surviving moral values must be defended during the present crisis. A “Ten Commandment America” must be buttressed.

Finally, Americans must have the courage to broaden their outlook and articulate a grand vision of an economic order without frenetic intemperance. This can be done by embracing a return to the timeless principles that once guided Christian civilization. A universe of refreshing and original applications of those principles can provide amazing solutions.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of how people still have illusions about the seriousness of the present crisis.**
 - The unwillingness of many to reform their personal lives in a serious fashion;
 - Those who invest in get-rich-quick investments and yet never get there;
 - Those who promote and advocate artificial stimulus programs to jumpstart the economy;
 - Those who believe in political solutions as the only way to solve the nation’s problems;
 - Those who propose big government programs as the solution to health care or education;
 - Those who are voluntarily indifferent to the news and live outside a complete knowledge of the crisis;
 - Those who pursue a spirituality that is disconnected from the world around them;
 - Those who make pop culture and sports the only concerns of their lives and thus refuse to perceive a crisis;
 - The “party” economy people who live as if in a party and do not think in the long term;
 - Those in the liberal establishment who believe their power will never diminish;
 - Those who only think about money and ignore the rest of the world;
 - Those who take out large debt and do not save money because they do not believe a crisis will come; and
 - The optimistic “happy ending” attitude that everything will come out well in the end, even when it doesn’t.
- **Discuss and give examples of the ways in which individuals have written off the system and isolated themselves.**

Some ways people have written off the system and isolated themselves might include:

 - The survivalist communities formed to ride out the crisis in isolated places all over the country;
 - Those who have written off the idea of government and hold to anarchical ideas;
 - Religious sects and cults that have an apocalyptic outlook, which leads them to form their own communities;
 - Those who show an indifference and apathy toward current events and live individualistic lifestyles;
 - Those who live bizarre sexual lifestyles and subcultures that isolate themselves from the mainstream;
 - Those who form illegal militia and attack government agents;
 - Those who have gone to extremes in rejecting modern medicine and adopt their own health alternatives;
 - Ecological fanatics that form communities and reject modern life in general;
 - Broken and dysfunctional families that cannot integrate into society and live isolated lives;
 - Youths that live on the fringes of society and manifest resentments and even violence toward society; and

- Islamic terrorists who pursue an agenda aimed at destroying the system and replacing it with another.

- **What are some of the good things about America (and the West)**

What must be defended and promoted?

Some of these good things might include:

- A system of ordered liberty that facilitates prosperity and also American ingenuity;
- A strong notion of private property and free enterprise that assures a free market;
- A willingness to defend life and property;
- Excellent educational facilities and universities, as well as an intellectual body of thought and method;
- A respect for the rule of law;
- A strong religious sentiment that facilitates a moral society;
- A spirit of sacrifice among Americans that has defended the West on many occasions;
- A strong military and a willingness to use it against evil;
- A strong work ethic that has long been part of the national identity;
- A kind and generous people who donate enormous amounts of time and money to the service of others;
- A strong reaction against communism and socialism;
- A bountiful land blessed by God;
- Strong reactions to abortion, same-sex marriage, and other moral problems; and
- What is left of manners and politeness.

- **Where can refreshing new solutions to the present crisis be found?**

Some sources for solutions might be found in the following places:

- America's common law tradition in the field of law;
- Reviving the notion of natural law that has been destroyed by modern theories;
- The moral teachings of luminaries like Saint Thomas Aquinas or Saint Bonaventure;
- A notion of Christendom and what it entails;
- Seeing the influence of the Church as the great civilizer;
- The reading of great counter-revolutionary authors;
- Returning to medieval roots to discover principles long forgotten; and
- Moral and theological works that address social relationships.

- **How can you work to prepare for an eventual return to order?**

What concrete measures can you take to do this?

Measures might include the following:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Be prudent in making physical preparations for a crisis.
- Develop social ties that will help in time of crisis.
- Defend God in the public square.
- Neither exaggerate nor underestimate the seriousness of the problem; be realistic.
- Seek ways to work together with family, neighbors, and friends to resolve problems.
- Praise the nation and even the government when it does something good.
- Accept the sufferings you receive as preparation for greater sufferings to come.
- Accept the crosses that are given to you, which might include the lack of money.
- Study the Great Books with a proper commentary as a means of learning lessons from the past.
- Learn to pray well and do so constantly.
- Cultivate an enormous confidence in God.

Part 2 The Road Ahead: A Return to Order (Chapters 18–20)

Chapter 18 | *A Salvific Debate: Becoming a Nation, Becoming a People*

The nation can be described as being divided into “two Americas” engaged in a salvific debate over its future. The first and more dominant America is organized like the cooperative-union model. It generally favors frenetic intemperance and frenzied lifestyles. It dominates through media, fashions, and pop culture that portray life through this prism of the maximum enjoyment of life.

The other America consists of those that resist the cold, mechanistic aspects of a super-industrialized co-op. They yearn for a calmer, more reflective pace of life, formed around vague Christian notions of God, family, and country, for which they are willing to sacrifice or even die. Those who reacted against communism and the sexual revolution are part of this America. However, these Americans do not have sufficient clarity of vision to bring about the needed transformation in society.

This second America needs to articulate a clear set of guiding principles as a rallying point. From this framework, a plan of action can be made, based not on a nostalgic revival, but a return to timeless principles.

A new consensus must be formed around a return to order. This is aided by many who express a yearning and admiration for once-rejected traditions as seen in the rebirth of certain crafts, foods, and arts. What is needed is a return to order which is “that state of things where everything functions according to its nature and end.” Russell Kirk calls order “the first need of the soul.”

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss the first “America” and give examples of people in this current.**

How does this first “America” dominate?

The first dominating current might include:

- The pop culture with all its latest fashions and trends;
- The Silicon Valley culture and liberal academia;
- Liberal members of Congress and government, Hollywood actors, and jet-set figures;
- The frenzied business sector often found on Wall Street;
- The media establishment and entertainment industry;
- Liberal clergy and progressive religious denominations;
- Those promoting the sexual revolution in all its manifestations; and
- Anywhere frenetic intemperance is found.

This current dominates more by the overwhelming impression of strength than actual power. The media and all “official” liberal establishment figures are also very important agents of this America.

- **Discuss the second “America.” Give examples of people or groupings that belong to this current.**

Why does this current not dominate?

Those belonging to this current might include:

- Evangelicals and conservative Protestants;
- Traditional and conservative Catholics;
- The “crunchy con” conservatives that live healthy lifestyles;
- The pro-lifers and those who insist on sexual morality;
- The Ten Commandment Americans that cling to moral principles;

- Those who support the Second Amendment;
- Those who admire the armed forces and heroes;
- Those who admire craftsmanship and quality;
- Homeschoolers reacting to the decline of education;
- Homebrewers and microbrewers desiring quality and not the rule of money; and
- Those who are attached to the idea of property and oppose socialism and communism.

This current does not dominate because it fails to articulate a framework of order that can move the public. It is based on vague and often nostalgic notions that make it difficult to form a movement.

● **Discuss the notion of order. Why does a notion of order enter the debate?**

Why is

this called a “salvific debate?”

Order is that state of things where everything functions according to its nature and end. When everything is doing what it is supposed to be doing, there is order “because nature is the cause of order” and “whatever does not possess order is not according to nature” (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *In Physic.*, lib. 8, lect. 3, n. 3). Order stems from the principles and priorities by which we orient ourselves.

A notion of order enters into the debate because, as the old system breaks down, people are looking at alternatives from the past. They come to long for their father’s house.

It is a salvific debate because the future of the nation is at stake. The awkward situation of two Americas can no longer be sustained.

● **How can you work to strengthen the second America?**

What concrete measures can you take to do this?

This might be done in the following ways:

- Be a good Christian.
- Study history and learn from the past.
- Revive notions of right and wrong, good and bad.
- Reject the pop culture and other manifestations of the first America.
- Favor order in everything and protest against disorder.
- Oppose all manifestations of socialism.
- Study how Christian civilization was organized.
- Base your opinion on strong convictions and principles.
- Do not be afraid to engage in the fight for America.
- Cultivate a love for quality and craftsmanship and even engage in a craft.
- Confide in and pray to God for a return to order.

Chapter 19 | *Preliminary Objections: Can Medieval Economy Be a Solution?*

A real return to order in economy means to a return to some basic premises that had once served to keep economy in balance in medieval Christendom.

The first medieval premise is that while economics is a necessary science, *it is not the most important human field*. The spiritual side of man is superior to the material side and gives rise to political, social, cultural, and religious activities and sciences that tower above economics. When economics alone dominates, man himself is demeaned.

A second premise affirms that *economics alone is limited*; it must have recourse with respect to other sciences. While economics deals with acts of wealth creation and consumption, it involves moral actions that must be guided by other normative sciences like ethics or moral philosophy.

Perhaps the most important premise of the medieval economic order is an insistence that economic activity be considered in the context of a social order bound by *general rules of sociability, charity, or justice that must govern human relations*.

The great error of modern economy is that it has become an end in itself. It separates itself from the influence of those human sciences and norms that should orient all human actions.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of how economics now dominates and is considered the most important human field.**

Examples of how economics is considered the most important field might include:

- The prevalence of technological and economic related studies at universities;
- The neglect of cultural and literary arts as superficial and unnecessary;
- The use of economic statistics everywhere as a source of guidance;
- The reduction of projects to the bottom-line benefits;
- The consideration of profession based on money earned;
- How political debate is dominated by economics, jobs, and prosperity;
- The popularity of economic journals like the *Wall Street Journal* and others;
- The “time is money” mentality;
- The idea that government actions to stimulate economy play a primary role; and
- The relegation of God and religion to a secondary place in national life.

- **Discuss and give examples of how economics alone is limited and must be guided by other normative sciences like ethics.**

Examples of how other normative sciences are needed to guide economics include the following:

- The practice of the Ten Commandments is essential in providing the proper climate for good business.
- The need for honesty and trust is especially needed for economics to succeed.
- A concept of the common good should be used to judge whether certain ventures should be undertaken.
- A person must not engage in the sale of illegal things, even if profitable.
- Trade with communist countries is immoral and should not be done.
- Workers must be treated well if economy is to prosper.
- There should be a certain quality in goods so as to uplift all society.
- Economic development requires that individuals and organizations be good stewards of property.
- Economic policy should take into consideration and respect political aspects.

- The rights of God should be respected by those engaged in economy.

- **Discuss and give examples of how economics should be considered in the context of a social order bound by general rules of sociability, charity, or justice that must govern human relations.**

Ways economics might be considered in this context include the following:

- Those involved in economics should be an integral part of a community.
 - Those in business should voluntarily donate to charity and help the poor in their areas.
 - The location of an enterprise must take into consideration how it affects the whole. It should not damage the property value of others.
 - The social and cultural life of a nation is worth much more than the economic life.
 - Good treatment of workers and employees is essential for society and economy.
 - Those involved in economy should support the Church and its works.
 - Family business should be encouraged when possible, since it is a great element of stability.
 - Just business practices are essential.
 - Social capital—social relationships—are just as important as other capital.
 - There should be links between the economic, cultural, religious, and other parts of a community.
- God and His law should be considered in business dealings

- **How can you work to put economics in its proper place?**

What concrete measures can you take to do this?

This might be done in the following ways:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Give time and support to the Church, giving God His due.
- Give time and support to one's family, even over business obligations.
- Do not make one's work one's life.
- Work in order to live. Do not live in order to work.
- Enjoy leisure and artistic pursuits.
- Recognize that time is not money!
- Insist upon honest business practices where you work.
- Do not idolize those whose only accomplishment is making money.
- Pick a profession based on one's passion, not one's wallet.
- Be generous and charitable.

Chapter 20 | *What Might Have Been, What Could Still Be*

Many claim that returning to medieval economic principles would negate the unprecedented technical progress and production of the Industrial Revolution. The charge is refuted by the fact that medieval economic principles gave rise to incredible technological and economic progress. Medieval times introduced “machinery into Europe on a scale no civilization had previously known.” It was also the first complex civilization built without slave labor.

In fact, the medieval Christian worldview favored progress by offering a “harmonious objective order intelligible to man” that gave an advantage over other less-rational civilizations that developed and then decayed.

Technology in the Middle Ages did not dominate, but was fully integrated into the culture and imbued with religious and moral meaning. Had its technology later developed normally—without frenetic intemperance—a much more advanced Christian civilization could well have arisen.

Likewise, medieval man laid the foundations of economic thought by dealing with complex problems clearly and consistently based on solid principle. Especially noteworthy were the Scholastics of the School of Salamanca (1500–1650). Had this thought developed freely, it could have resolved complex issues, and paved the way for a prosperous economic order.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of medieval inventions and the technological progress that came from the Middle Ages that we now enjoy.**

Examples of medieval technological progress might include:

- The development of architecture as seen in medieval cathedrals;
- The invention and development of windows and chimneys;
- The development of power to replace human power such as windmills and watermills;
- The invention and development of eyeglasses that extended the work life of people by twenty years;
- The development of musical instruments such as the pipe organ, clavichord, violin, and fiddle; and
- The development of agriculture—especially the plow, horse collar, and planting methods.

- **Discuss and give examples of how medieval man developed systems of thought that favored progress and provided solutions.**

Systems which medieval man developed include:

- Hospitals, which systematized healthcare for the first time;
- Legal codes and science, which systematized law for the first time in history;
- The university system that systemized learning as never before;
- The labor system, with masters, journeymen, and apprentices, that continues to this day;
- Polyphonic music and instruments to create harmonies;
- Flexible and rational theology that corresponded to reality; and
- The basics of economics, especially by the Scholastics in Salamanca.

- **Discuss what it means that medieval technology was fully integrated into the culture and imbued with religious and moral meaning. Give examples of how this might happen.**

Examples might include:

- Economic activity, which included the notion of care for the cure of body and soul;
- The practice of giving justice in the marketplace priority over profit;
- Developing technology that considered human dignity and not simply “hands with a head”;

- The introduction of many labor-saving devices to spare humans from suffering and tediousness;
- The blending of technology and beauty consistent with faith, as in the building of cathedrals;
- Any product developed according to the rhythm of life and the seasons; and
- Leisure being practiced and favored by the frequency of holy days off.

● **In what ways can you integrate medieval ideas about technology into daily life?**

What concrete measures can you take to do this?

This might be done in the following ways:

Be a good Catholic.

- Develop a love of craftsmanship that uses modern tools but keeps the human touch.
- Become a craftsman oneself.
- Be innovative in your work.
- Make technology serve man in one's work, not vice versa.
- Recognize the dignity in others and do not ask others to do things that compromise this dignity.
- Use technology to produce beautiful things.
- Use technology to make non-standard things or change standard things to adapt to needs.
- Look for labor-saving devices that save man from tediousness.
- Do not buy things made by countries using nearly slave labor.
- Reject technology and gadgetry that is used for vices and bad ends.
- Use technology that helps one practice virtue.
- Pray when you work.

Part 3 Foundations of an Organic Order (Chapters 21–24)

Chapter 21 | *Organic Society: An Unknown Ideal*

An organic society can be defined as a social order oriented towards the common good that naturally and spontaneously develops under the guidance of the principles of natural law and the Gospel, thus allowing man to pursue the perfection of his essentially social nature.

The term “organic” is used metaphorically to highlight a society’s resemblance to living organisms. The cells, tissues, organs, and systems in a living being can be compared to analogous individuals, families, and associations in an organic society. Each has its unique function, working together towards the common good.

Organic society differs substantially from mechanistic conceptions of a society. Organic society confirms man’s social nature whereby people normally perfect themselves by living in community. In an organic society, a person is treated as an integral part of society. In a mechanistic society, the individual is an interchangeable cog in an organization.

Life’s processes are very different from mechanical processes. Life brings with it choices, creativity, and varied rhythms from which spring forth systems of art, styles of life, institutions, and economic models. The mechanistic model brings forth rigid and soulless central planning.

From the concept of organic society comes the idea that all are equal in nature yet unequal in accidents, thus resulting in an ordered hierarchical society. The Church is also organized in organic fashion and uses the living metaphor of a Mystical Body with Christ as the head.

While not perfect, the analogy between a living being and a machine is helpful in explaining the differences between organic society and mechanistic forms of society.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss the definition of organic society. Can you give examples of how organic society might manifest itself in your daily life?**

Examples of organic society in daily life might include:

- The family in all its variety, exuberance, and spontaneity;
- Any kind of social life, when it favors virtue;
- Any creative process like that of music and arts that one might practice and share;
- Any art like literature and poetry that one might share;
- The development of any craft;
- The development of spiritual life and parish life;
- The development of family businesses that are full of relationships and human links with customers;
- The development of farming and work with the soil in a non-industrial way;
- A truly intellectual life; and
- A truly organic government, which by extension stresses the human element and involves governing by influence, not bureaucracy.

- **Discuss and give examples of mechanistic society.**

How is it different from organic society and how does it invade your daily life?

Examples of a mechanistic society in daily life might include:

- A workplace where a person is integrated into mechanical processes with little room for creativity;
- A university or school organized to process students through the courses and not true learning;
- Fast food that creates an identical product for all times and places;

- Franchises that market using identical systems for all places;
- Certain types of industrial agriculture that minimize the human element;
- Government bureaucracy, which is a mechanization of techniques and forms that treat all coldly and equally;
- The dominance of mass production where all things are very standardized;
- The dominance of mass media and advertising that treats people like manipulated numbers or statistics;
- Big government programs with one-size-fits-all solutions; and
- Architecture that is standardized and not adapted to individual needs of families.

● **Discuss and give examples of the social nature of an organic society.**

How does this help you develop yourself?

Ways the social nature of an organic society helps one develop might include:

- In organic society, the art of conversation is naturally developed to help social interaction.
- In organic society, the role of the teacher is to help others develop full potential, not pass tests.
- In organic society, parents play an important role in guiding the child and developing character.
- In organic society, the Church helps the individual develop a sense of morality, virtue, and justice.
- In organic society, a person develops tastes and preferences in sync with a locality and community.
- In government, the leader serves as a model of virtue.
- In organic society, people are integrated with the local history and therefore know where they come from and where they ought to go.
- Organic society helps people understand their individual roles, vocations, or functions in society.

● **Discuss and give examples of how the Catholic Church is an organic society par excellence.**

Ways the Church is an organic society might include:

- The Church develops local devotions and venerates local saints that are a part of society.
- The Church develops local hymns and music and integrates them into its worship.
- The Church is still universal, yet particular expressions of the Faith are welcome.
- The hierarchy of the Church is organically organized with the right levels of management.
- The Church is extremely personal in its approach to people as seen, for example, in Confession.
- The Church develops clergy to guide and orient people in an organic fashion, not all equally.
- The Church rewards initiatives as can be seen in those who form new orders, institutions, and congregations.
- The Church has novel solutions to old problems like education and health care.
- The Church is an organic teacher and educator as seen in her institutions.

● **How can you work to live life in an organic fashion? What concrete measures can you take to do this?**

This might be done in the following ways:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Live a very intense family life.
- Experiment with local foods that express the character of the place.
- Promote individual expression in family and work.
- Learn an art or craft that will help develop your creativity.
- Enjoy leisure and conversation as a development of social skills.
- Treat employees like family in the workplace.
- Develop a personal spiritual life according to your preferences, yet integrated into the life of a parish.
- Be part of the community where you live.
- Understand your family and local history.

Chapter 22 | *Organic Remedies and Upright Spontaneity*

Organic solutions *cannot be imposed upon people as if they were machines*. Unlike mechanistic models, organic solutions are full of vivacity, spontaneity, and unpredictability proper to man's nature. They must be *proposed*, not imposed.

Organic solutions apply universal principles to concrete circumstances. Loving parents, for example, follow universal moral principles to nurture and guide their children according to their aptitudes and the circumstances.

Once basic principles are in place, people have enormous freedom in applying them to the needs of the person or society. This solution need not be a single system, but an enormous variety of legitimate solutions.

Organic solutions naturally and spontaneously develop without rigid planning in what might be called “upright spontaneity.” This spontaneity is an upright, rational, purposeful, and moral movement in accordance with natural law and the law of God. It respects the unplanned development of life and fosters the exercise of free will, nuance, creativity, and adaptation.

Such upright spontaneity is full of common sense. It is born of the day-to-day application of principles to concrete reality, ever gauging, ever adaptive. Upright spontaneity gives a person or society a notion of a perfection toward which they tend. This facilitates the discerning of a purpose, calling, or station in life.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of how organic solutions are not imposed upon people as if they were machines. How do they respect the vivacity, spontaneity, and unpredictability proper to man's nature?**

Some organic solutions that are not imposed might include:

- The life and formation of a family life, its custom, and unique character;
- The gradual development of family recipes or regional foods through trial and error;
- The manner in which language develops over time;
- Any art that allows for the development of styles;
- True education with its many elements that adapt to the child's aptitudes;
- A personal spiritual life that adapts to the person organically; and
- The Church and her dealing with souls, necessarily following organic solutions.

- **Discuss and give examples of how organic solutions must follow certain principles and then be given freedom to develop as people wish.**

Some examples might include:

- Grammar rules allow the flowering of literature.
- Cooking rules and food combinations allow the flowering of cuisine.
- Musical theory prepares the way for musical variety.
- Moral laws in society allow for the flourishing of the family and community.
- Sports rules allow the development of a style of sport based on them.
- Laws governing commerce ensure the greatest expression of prosperity.
- Rules of manners ensure that civil society functions well and freely.
- Decorating rules allow for original and beautiful arrangements.
- Agricultural rules and practices help plants grow to their full potential.
- Discipline for children helps them control themselves and develop their potentialities.
- A responsible government takes care of the basic functions that allow the citizenry to prosper.

- **What is upright spontaneity and how does it work in organic society?**

- **Give examples of upright spontaneity.**

Upright spontaneity is an upright, rational, purposeful, and moral movement in the individual or society in accordance with natural law and the law of God that respects the unplanned development of life and fosters the exercise of free will, nuance, creativity, and adaptation.

It might be manifested in the following ways:

- In a young, innocent child that develops abilities and talents;
- In festivals and celebrations that become part of a people's tradition;
- In the spirit of a family that grows and develops naturally in accordance with moral principles;
- In the expressions mourning for a dead hero that are part of a nation's history;
- In the creative acts of an art or craft that develop over time;
- In concerts and music events that naturally become part of a locality's tradition;
- In the art of conversation that naturally cultivates manners and civilization;
- In ceremony and liturgy that give rise to traditions of worship;
- In discourse and speeches that become expressions of a people.

- **Discuss and give examples how of upright spontaneity helps individuals and nations pursue notions of a perceived perfection, calling, or vocation.**

Examples:

- A vocation to the priesthood or religious life is often found this way.
- The founding of a religious order allows the founder to discern a unique charism and perfections.
- Married life allows the couple to perceive a direction and perfection for their family.
- Upright spontaneity often gives rise to a vision or goal for a business enterprise.
- Institutes of higher learning often arise from a founder who perceives a need in society.
- Communities can develop a vision that makes their community different from others.
- Schools of thought, art, or philosophy often develop so as to discern a perceived goal.
- Nations that have sufficient unity can pursue a goal in their national lives.
- Saints who have a mission or calling follow it.

- **How can you employ organic solutions in your daily life? What concrete measures can you take?**

This might be done in the following ways:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Avoid rigid one-size-fits-all solutions that suppress upright spontaneity.
- Learn to adapt things and solutions to your own personal life.
- Live a principled life that you will not compromise.
- Allow yourself an enormous amount of freedom in applying your principles.
- Experiment in cooking, for example, by taking advantage of established rules.
- Do not be afraid of looking for a vocation.
- Acknowledge the fact that you have a vocation and try to constantly discern it.
- Learn the fundamentals of an art or craft and then express your own creativity in it.
- After establishing what must be done, allow those under you the freedom of deciding how to do it.
- Never squash a good initiative, especially if it involves upright spontaneity.
- Always listen to others and help them in their discernments needed to develop fully.
- Always challenge an unprincipled initiative, since it will usually end in failure or sin.

Chapter 23 | *A Virtuous Order*

An organic society must be a virtuous society, in which members exercise a natural inclination to act according to right reason and grace.

Modern liberal economic theories often try to channel vice and the passions of selfishness toward positive economic ends. Such efforts only succeed in feeding the spirit of frenetic intemperance and inciting the government to impose regulations to control the passions of vice. It further leads people to abandon the ideals of perfection and sanctity, considering them impractical.

A truly organic society is built upon the solid moral ground of virtue and Christian perfection, especially the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Like four towers, these virtues put everything into balance and prepare the ground for true prosperity.

Any mechanical practice of virtue or the Commandments is not enough. A passionate love of God with whole heart and soul must motivate virtue. The role of grace and the sacraments is also important. An organic order sets in place customs, habits, and institutions that encourage men to practice virtue, and fosters a fervent love for God and reliance on His grace. This supernatural life can even help people work great economic marvels.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of those who claim virtue is not necessary for society and that vice can be channeled toward the good.**

Claims that vice can be channeled toward the good might include the following:

- Those who claim that gambling can be a stimulant of an economy;
 - Those who claim that unbridled consumerism helps the economy;
 - Those who extend credit to those unable to pay, yet claim this helps economy;
 - Forced virtue favored by the Nazis, for example;
 - Those who claim the end justifies the means;
 - Those who claim that only profitable and practical occupations are important, and not religious and cultural ones;
 - Those who detest the religious life and see it as useless to the nation;
 - The followers of Ayn Rand who extol the virtues of selfishness;
 - Certain libertarians who admit no moral law and base life on self-interest;
 - Those people who only value the pragmatic;
 - Those who propose the legalization of vices like prostitution and drugs as a means to gain tax revenue;
 - Bureaucrats and regulators who see their role as the indifferent regulators of vice and virtue; and
 - Those who think self-interest is the primary motivation of life.
- **Why must virtue—and especially the cardinal virtues—be the foundation of a true economy?**
- The reasons why virtue and the cardinal virtues are needed might include:
- The cardinal virtues deal with the acts of men that affect all commerce and transactions.
 - The virtues instill character in people that helps economy.
 - The virtues are habits, and habits are necessary for stability in economy.
 - The virtues are voluntary and not mandatory like unjust regulations.
 - The cardinal virtues deal with moral actions that involve economic activity.
 - The virtues facilitate social relationships and trust that help economy.
 - Virtue keeps people honest.
 - Virtue keeps people disciplined.

- Virtue makes people look at the higher picture beyond self-interest, the good for its own sake.
- Virtue brings with it charity that tempers the justice needed for economy.

● **What is mechanical virtue and why is it not enough? Why is grace necessary for a healthy economy?**

Mechanical virtue is the practice of habits in a manner that does not consider the purpose of the habit, but merely its practical side that makes things work.

Reasons why it is not enough might include the following:

- Mechanical virtue is not lasting; it lasts as long as the compulsion and benefits last.
- Mechanical virtue is not sincere; it lasts as long as there is profit and interest.
- Mechanical virtue can be cold and impersonal.
- Mechanical virtue often does not have passion and is therefore unmotivated and lifeless.
- Mechanical virtue creates resentment towards real virtue.
- Mechanical virtue does not have the love of God as a final end.
- A prisoner practices mechanical virtue because he is forced to do so; real virtue is done out of love.

Reasons why grace is necessary might include:

- Grace multiplies our capacities for doing good and practicing justice beyond human nature.
- Grace infuses passion and love into all action.
- Grace counts on the direction of God to do that which is best.
- Grace puts all things in balance in the soul and therefore in society.
- Grace moves men to great things beyond that of mere nature.
- Grace helps us reach our salvation by our participation in society, including economy.

● **How can you practice virtue in economy in your daily life?**

What concrete measures can you take to do this?

This might be done in the following ways:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Thank people for service and aid.
- Be prudent and think in the long-term.
- Patronize companies that show virtue in business.
- Reward virtue and good service with a good tip.
- Seek to be honest in the smallest things in economy.
- Never cheat someone to make a profit.
- Avoid all occasions like gambling or other vices that promise material gains but rarely deliver.
- Keep good accounts of your transactions.
- Do not spend beyond your means.
- Develop spending and saving habits.
- Consider economic activity as a means towards a higher end.
- Use your economic gains for higher purposes or charity.
- Pray to God for counsel in your economic decisions.
- Avoid the idea that economy is the principle activity of life. One works to live, not vice versa.

Chapter 24 | *A Providential Order*

Since an organic order is vibrant, spontaneous, and resistant to rigid planning, there must be an ordering Agent that prevents it from sliding into chaos. The presence of an ordering action is found in the Creator and is called *Providence*.

Divine Providence is “the plan conceived in the mind of God according to which he directs all creatures to their proper end.”*

Just as human providence involves foresight, men throughout history have held that there is some Intelligent Being who governs the universe and directs the affairs of men with purpose and benevolence. Such references, however, were often vague and distorted. The Christian notion of Providence is much more complete. American reference can be found in the literature of the Founders. This action is so evident that even modern secular scholars try to explain Providence ascribing it to evolution, the market, or the State.

Providence provides for individual needs and social necessities endowing, for example, a society with sufficient farmers, teachers, or soldiers. Providence directs the course of events of individuals, families, and nations. Leaders should seek to work with Providence and cooperate with grace to see society progress. This is true progress. They ignore Providence at their own risks. By trusting in God’s grace and Providence, man can not only perfect, but surpass, his nature.

Discussion Questions

- **Why it is necessary that there be an ordering agent if any? Discuss and give examples.**

Some reasons and examples of why an ordering agent is necessary might include the following:

- The complexity of nature and its processes that all need to meld together into a harmonious whole;
- The complexity of life itself that depends upon a delicate equilibrium;
- The complexity of an individual’s social life that seems to be directed towards an end;
- The existence of free will, which presupposes Providence since free will opens up so many options;
- The complexity of society that finds all the necessary elements to survive and even thrive;
- The spontaneity of human nature presupposing a guiding presence to protect it from dangers;
- Man’s natural desire for freedom, presupposing a guiding force to keep it from causing destruction;
- Nations functioning together in peace, which presupposes a higher power that helps avoid friction;
- The survival of the Church despite human shortcomings, which presupposes the guidance of God; and
- The natural desire of men for God, which presupposes a God that directs them towards Him.

- **How did civilizations past indicate a belief in Providence? Discuss and give examples.**

Some examples of the past might include the following:

- Primitive cultures such as the Indians always had some belief in an all-powerful God.
- The ancient Greeks and Romans had a vague notion of Providence and discussed it in their writings.
- The literature of the Founders often speaks of God and Providence as the basis of American society.
- American history has maintained that tradition and presidents have always referenced it.
- American hymns and patriotic songs have abundant reference to God and His Providence.

- **What are some modern references to pseudo-Providence in the modern world? Name and discuss them.**

*Pietro Parente, Antonio Piolanti, and Salvatore Garofalo, *Dictionary of Dogmatic Theology*, s.v. “Providence, Divine” (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1951), 234.

Modern references might include:

- The belief in evolution as a natural process that directs history with intelligence and design;
- The socialistic belief in the State as a kind of Providence that can take care of all things;
- The belief that the blind forces of the market alone direct economy and society;
- The cult to progress and technology as a kind of Providence that will provide for all future needs;
- New-age religions and ecologists seeing Mother Earth or some kind of earth force playing a providential role in events;
- Seeing global warming as a kind of providential action of the earth;
- Those who see the Constitution as a kind of providential instrument;
- Those who see the European Union is a kind of evolving entity that has providential powers;
- Masonic groups having a belief in an Architect similar to providence;
- Nationalist organizations seeing their nations as providential beings; and
- The United Nations possibly playing this providential role in the order of society.

● **How does God and grace help in governing and directly helping society?**

Discuss and give examples.

Some examples of this might include:

- The appearance of providential men in our nation's history like Col. Ripley;
- The undeniable blessings of God in granting material prosperity;
- The providential role of American leadership during the Cold War "under God";
- The generosity of Americans who share the bounty of God's Providence;
- The cultural war that responds to God's grace and resists neo-pagan agendas;
- The Ten Commandment American who clings to notions of moral law with the help of God's grace and providence;
- The Counter-revolution; and
- God's distribution of natural resources.

● **How can you practice and observe the role of Providence in your daily life?**

What concrete measures can you take to do this?

This might be done in the following ways:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Practice human providence; foresee future needs and take measures.
- Keep savings to provide for future needs.
- Discern and follow one's vocation in life following God's grace and direction.
- Never doubt God's ability to help resolve your problems.
- Entrust and consecrate yourself and your family to God and his Blessed Mother.
- Be calm and not agitated, trusting in God's Providence.
- Have a great confidence in God and His ability to provide for you.
- Expect God to intervene in history and influence events.
- Pray to God for the nation and its future.
- Adopt the big-picture view of the world, which includes God and His Providence.

Part 4 The Heart and Soul of Economy (Chapters 25–31)

Chapter 25 | *Reviving the Heart and Soul of an Economy*

An organic social order is so vital to economic well-being that it constitutes the very heart and soul of an economy. This is contrary to the view that economics is an exact science such as physics. While economics can explain the norms needed to create wealth, it cannot determine unforeseen factors stemming from the heart and soul of men that always play a role.

These non-economic factors provide immense material and spiritual wealth, which are uncompensated, unrecorded, and unquantifiable. Examples include family, community, associations, and the Church, which enrich society physically, culturally, and spiritually, thus strengthening economy.

All these sectors also produce social capital: social networks of shared values and norms that promote trust and weave together a social fabric that strengthens economy. This essential human element makes an economy nuanced and unpredictable. It provides braking mechanisms inside the economy that prevent the rule of frenetic intemperance.

Discussion Questions

- **What are the limits of economics in determining the production of wealth?**

Discuss and give examples.

Some examples of the limits of economics might include:

- It can determine the physical costs of products, but not the cost of the mental effort involved.
- It can determine if a factory can be built physically, but not if it should be built considering historical or cultural reasons.
- It can determine the market value of a property, but not its sentimental value.
- It can determine the economic value of an act, but not if it be sinful or immoral.
- It can determine market price of art, but not the artistic or esthetic value of the work.
- It can compensate the worker for his work, but cannot determine the level of his satisfaction.
- It can explain why a product should sell, but not the psychological reasons why it does not.
- It can explain consumer trends, but cannot determine them with certainty.
- It can make forecasts, but cannot account for unforeseen factors that change perspectives.

- **What are some of those things inside an economy that are uncompensated, unrecorded, and unquantifiable, yet still have immense economic value? Discuss and give examples.**

Some examples might include:

- All household production for which family members are not paid but participate in freely;
- A mother;
- All kinds of charitable work with volunteer labor, which is extremely helpful to economy;
- Artistic works done without pay because of a person's passion, yet which provide value to society;
- Liturgical acts that render service to God, yet also provide a service of immense value to society;
- Bartering of goods and services that do not appear on balance sheets, but have great value;
- Free samples given out of kindness at markets;
- Superior customer service that impresses people by disinterested kindness;
- Homemade foods that have value because they are meant to delight, not to profit,
- Neighborly acts of kindness that create links of trust and benefit everyone;

- Friendship, which is immeasurable but gives value, and cannot be bought and sold;
- Prayer, which is immeasurably beneficial to individuals and society;
- The work of religious orders that dedicate their lives to work gratis in health or education; and
- Those who service the nation, especially the armed forces who are undercompensated for their service.

● **What are the sources of social capital: those social networks of shared values and norms that promote trust and support economy? Discuss and give examples.**

Some examples might include:

- The family and the extended family, the first and most basic social unit;
- The cohesive power of a close-knit neighborhood or community;
- The cohesive power of a school or university with ties of alumnae and tradition;
- The cohesive power of a parish and all its social ties;
- The cohesive power of a work place where relationships are valued;
- The cohesive value of certain close-knit professions like doctors, lawyers, or teachers;
- The cohesive value of the military that tend to form family-like relationships of great value;
- Being a member of the Church with its universal power and structures of trust;
- The cohesive power of a region or a nation and membership in it;
- The cohesive value of business associations;
- The cohesive value of history and one's links with it; and
- The cohesive value of an ethnic group.

● **How can you encourage and practice those non-economic processes that are the heart and soul of economy in your daily life? What concrete measures can you take to do this?**

This might be done in the following ways:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Encourage homemade things when possible.
- Volunteer to do charitable work.
- Engage in artistic pursuits and music as part of free entertainment in the home.
- Build ties of trust among family and extended family.
- Oppose divorce, abortion, and other practices that kill trust and relationships inside families.
- Join a parish and get involved in parish life.
- If possible, get involved in the community.
- Appreciate liturgy and sacred art.
- Pray and petition God for one's needs.
- Appreciate good art and decorate one's house with it.

Chapter 26 | *Autonomy, Authority, Vital Flux, and Subsidiarity*

There are certain ordering principles of an organic society that are found in the heart and soul of its economy.

The first principle is the principle of autonomy, which is a recognition that man is a rational being with free will that often develops more fully in fellowship with others. By his choices, he creates a “domain” in which he governs and projects his personality upon the surroundings. Groups can also exercise autonomy, from which authority arises.

In Christendom, an individual belongs to several orders at the same time and is at once both sovereign and subject. Such a decentralized system creates a “parceling out of sovereignty” all over society, layered with personal authority yet full of cooperation. Everyone fights for his own legitimate rights against intruding higher or lower orders.

Complementary to authority is the principle of *vital flux*. Vital flux consists of that exuberant human vitality and drive that can be channeled to useful purposes within the limits of nature. The driving force of any human group is found in that vibrant vital flux coming from below, while true authority should interpret, distill, and direct this vital flux without destroying freedom.

The final principle is that of *subsidiarity*, in which a social unit should have recourse to a higher unit only when unable to handle its problems. Thus, the State should leave to the family or community those tasks proper to it. Following this principle promotes solidarity, mutual concern, and support.

With autonomy and authority, each individual is like a local sovereign. With vital flux, each person is a dynamic part of society. With subsidiarity, all fits together in harmony. This forms a decentralized society, which is actually a nation of vibrant little nations in an atmosphere of mutual trust, loyalty, and solidarity that resembles an immense family.

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and give examples of the idea of autonomy and how personalities and abilities of an individual or social group project their mark upon a “domain.”**

Some examples of autonomy and its projection might include the mark of:

- A father upon the family;
- The farmer upon the farm;
- The teacher upon the classroom or school;
- The statesman upon the nation;
- The cook upon the restaurant;
- The scholar upon the university or class;
- The craftsman upon his shop;
- The priest upon a parish;
- A general upon an army; and
- The king upon his realm.

This might also apply to groups of people or elites who influence the whole society in their fields:

- A society of artists upon the culture;
- A society of thinkers upon the political scene;
- A society of musicians upon music in general;
- A military academy upon the armed forces; and
- A religious order upon the Church.

● **Discuss and give examples of the interplay between vital flux and authority.**

Discuss how the two are harmonic and complementary.

Some examples might include:

- A well constituted family where the parents guide and direct the natural enthusiasms and abilities of their children;
- A good teacher who knows how to find and direct the learning passions of the students;
- A priest who perceives the tendencies and needs of parishioners;
- A bishop who perceives the needs of his clergy and those in his diocese;
- A military leader who looks after and gets the best out of his men;
- An orchestra conductor who guides and gets the best out of his orchestra;
- A political leader who knows what his people need and want; and
- A businessman who treats his employees well and gets them to perform their best.

● **How does the principle of subsidiarity work in society and foster harmony?**

Discuss and give examples.

Some examples might include the following:

- The individual has recourse to the family when in need through most of his life.
- Families might have recourse to a church school, for example, to help educate their children.
- The family has recourse to the extended family when in need.
- A local community provides for the needs of a group of families by providing services like water or police protection.
- The county takes care of a local region with protection and law enforcement.
- The state is a collection of counties and takes care of larger issues of a particular area.
- The nation takes care of the issues of defense, commerce, and other major issues for the nation.
- The Church addresses the needs of the faithful aiding in the salvation of souls with the sacraments, which they cannot provide on their own.
- Military units are designed with grades in which each performs a service needed by others.

● **How can you encourage and practice the principles of autonomy and vital flux in your daily life?**

What concrete measures can you take to do this?

Autonomy:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Care for those people and things under your charge; do not be careless with them.
- Accept the responsibility of your home, job, or situation for which you are responsible.
- Make a mark on the things in your care as a sign of your personality.
- Defend your rights to those things under your care and do not allow others to infringe upon them.
- Do not adopt an entitlement mentality.

Vital flux:

- Encourage those under your care to develop themselves under direction.
- Never stifle good initiative on the part of those under your care.
- Never be afraid to follow your passion and ask for guidance.
- Do not be afraid to direct and discipline those under your care.
- Be willing to be directed and disciplined by those who are above you.
- Always channel the enthusiasm of those under your care to the right path.
- Never give in to a wrong position of those under you out of fear of offending them.
- Accept the judgment of others who are over you when it is in accordance with right morals.

- Do not complain about those who direct you.
- Listen to those under you and consider their concerns.

● **How can you encourage and practice the principles of authority and subsidiarity in your daily life?
What concrete measures can you take to do this?**

Authority:

- Be a good Catholic.
- Realize that authority is not tyranny; it must have some link to reality.
- When in authority, seek to understand the needs and desires of those under you.
- Authorities should see their role as a directive and guiding function instead of a strictly authoritarian function.
- Authorities should always try to distill and improve upon the impulses received from those under them.
- Authorities should seek to harmonize, and to destroy all pretexts for class struggle.
- Authorities should sacrifice for those under them.

Subsidiarity:

- Every effort should be made to take care of oneself without the help of another.
- Learn to serve and be served.
- Never fear to ask for the help of others, if needed.
- Those giving help should try to help others take care of themselves and be more autonomous.
- If those seeking help cannot be autonomous, those who can help should make every effort to do so.
- People should have recourse to the State only as a last resort.
- People should have more recourse to the Church as a more natural institution to help them in need than to the State.
- Those in authority should seek by all means to delegate responsibility.
- Those receiving responsibility should view those new responsibilities as a means to develop themselves.
- No one should be afraid to have recourse to God, the Blessed Mother, and the saints.

Chapter 27 | *The Spirit of the Family*

The heart and soul of the economy is first found in the family, since it guides and tempers man's natural appetites in accordance with right reason.

Family can be described as a social unit that is one and continuous, containing the whole lineage of ancestors and descendants together with those living. It unites personalities, properties, names, rights, principles, and histories. It passes on spiritual gifts of Christian sentiments, morals, and customs with impressive stability and continuity. The family is also a school of temperance and an economic powerhouse, known for both self-sufficiency and prudent use of money.

Of significance also is what might be called the *spirit of the family*, by which the family communicates temperance and balance beyond blood relations. When people establish family-like relationships, this family spirit permeates intermediary institutions like guilds, towns, or businesses. It can be found in the truly Christian State from top to bottom, since people are united in baptism. It has the effect of creating alliances uniting families, industries, regions, and nations.

The family is the seed for future restoration and involves a long and continuous process.

Discussion Questions

- **How does the family promote the virtue of temperance?**

Describe circumstances when this might happen.

- The family supports the talent of members with incentive to excel while asking for sacrifices from members to keep these talents balanced.
- The family helps suppress defects that run in the family that lead to intemperance. For example, a family might have a tendency to be lazy.
- The family provides traditions, role models, and manners of being that restrain bad tendencies and favor temperance. A family might, for example, point to the model of a relative who was a hero.
- The daily life of a family is constantly teaching and restraining bad tendency. The small child is constantly asking questions and receiving advice.
- The security and beauty of being together as a family serves as a gentle and restraining force for virtue.
- The reputation of the family is upheld and thus serves as a restraint against bad deeds.
- The stability of a family history creates expectations that limit the individual.

- **Why is it important to have continuity in the family? What are some of its benefits?**

- Continuity helps keep property in the family; it helps the children establish themselves in society.
- Continuity serves as a memory of the family's past and gives the person a sense of belonging and purpose.
- Continuity works as a social safety net in cases of disaster: A person can always go home.
- Continuity establishes a link between a family and the community, which extends the person's sense of belonging.
- Continuity favors the prolonging of traditions that help the family preserve its identity.
- Continuity ensures that spiritual values or devotions are maintained and passed on.
- Continuity preserves the name of a family, rights, properties, and even professions that run in the family.

- **Discuss the family as a factor of economic balance and stability.**

- The family can provide a stable place for economic production to take place.
- The family is a source of balanced consumption, since it usually must survive on its means.
- The family gives continuity to production when a craft or industry stays inside the family.

- The family can pass down valuable economic skills that can develop yet further as the family progresses.
- The family can practice leisure, providing rest, which is a necessary part of economic life.
- The family is the source of children, who are consumers and future producers.
- The family is a primary concentrator and also distributor of wealth through inheritance.
- The family is a valuable producer of domestic goods and services that are not on the ledger.
- The family is a source of union of economic assets.

- **How is the family spirit manifested inside a society beyond the strict limits of the blood relations of family?**

This manifestation can be seen in the following ways:

- The family spirit can be seen in certain businesses where employers and employees span generations.
- The family spirit can be found in small towns where everyone knows everyone.
- The family spirit can be found in hereditary institutions that span generations.
- The family spirit can be found in professions and guilds where relationships are very close.
- This can be seen in military families that establish bonds over the years.
- This can be seen in schools and faculty that develop bonds over the years.
- This can be seen in manifestations of patriotism that honor the nation/family.
- This can be seen in religious orders that treat their members as brothers and sisters.
- This can be seen in ruling families and monarchies.
- This can be seen in the priest, who is a father to his flock.
- This can be seen in dynasties of craftsman, teachers, and other professions.
- This can be seen in products produced by families over generations.

- **What concrete ways can be employed in your personal life to promote the notion of the family and the family spirit?**

Discussion might include the following:

- Lead a good and Christian life.
- Oppose all attacks on the family, such as divorce, abortion, and same-sex “marriage.”
- Live and be an example of a good family member in all capacities.
- Practice purity and chastity according to your state of life.
- Treat employees like family, helping them in ways beyond that of money.
- Take as an example the Holy Family to be loved and imitated.
- See all Christians as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Take Mary as our mother and look to her in times of distress.
- Reach out to those who are in need of family-like relationships.
- Be patriotic.
- Accept the restraints that the family puts upon you.
- Live up to the expectations of the family.

Chapter 28 | *The Misunderstood Feudal Bond*

While the family is an extremely vital force, it cannot adequately deal with huge problems, especially in times of crisis. The solution lies in developing strong family-like bonds throughout society and creating reciprocal social relationships.

The feudal bond was one model that provided protection, trust, and leadership to the family and could provide solutions for the present. The book develops six basic characteristics of this bond:

- It is a practical and flexible bond that is creative and highly adaptive to situations.
- It is an extremely personal relationship imbued with the family spirit, contrary to the bureaucratic structures of today.
- This bond was generalized throughout society from top to bottom. The individual could easily be both servant and master.
- It was a bond that tended to generate great friendship, not hatred.
- It was a bond of mutual responsibility with obligations on both sides. To break this bond by either party was considered a felony and freed the other from oaths of fealty.
- It was a sacred bond agreed upon before God, which, in those times of faith, both parties took seriously.

History testifies to its success. Through this bond, Europe arose from ruins with a spontaneously developed, highly decentralized, self-financed social, military, and economic infrastructure born of a strong family-like bond and religious union that could adapt quickly amid chaos.

Discussion Questions

- **In what way is the family not enough to sustain itself in the face of life's necessities and uncertainties? In what areas does it need help?**

The family needs help in the following ways:

- Education;
 - The production of a variety of foods;
 - The practice of religion and the sacraments;
 - The production of clothing;
 - Defense against invaders or criminals;
 - Health care and medical needs;
 - The maintenance of roads and transportation;
 - The establishment of money, weights, and measures; and
 - The development of a broad social and cultural life.
- **Give examples of feudal family-like relationships of service and protection that still exist today.**
- Such relationships might include:
- Internships of all sorts;
 - Apprenticeships;
 - University studies and especially graduate studies programs;
 - Military relationships;
 - Religious orders;
 - Certain business relationships with this personal tie, such as the King Ranch in Texas;
 - Relationships between a bishop and his priests; and
 - Some political relationships—a governor and state citizens.

- **How has the government replaced and destroyed the benefits of a personal feudal relationship?**
 - It has assumed many of the functions of charity without the charity.
 - It has provided a cold, impersonal relationship in its bureaucracy.
 - It has made people numbers in a system, which is no longer personal.
 - It has assumed the function of education and healthcare that is provided in a cold, mechanical way.
 - It has overtaxed citizens.
 - It legislates and takes away the idea of customary law where the people legislate.
 - It has taken affection out of governing.
 - It has taken charity out of justice.
 - It has taken virtue out of social relationships.
 - It has made morality out of society.

- **Explain how secularism destroys sacred bonds.**
 - Secularism holds that religion is a purely personal thing without real social projection.
 - Secularism does not practice true charity, but merely philanthropy.
 - Secularism holds that morality is relative.
 - The notion of doing something before God is foreign to secularism.
 - Secularism supports abortion and denies the sacred bond of mother and child.
 - Secularism destroys the notion of the supernatural in society.
 - Secularism exiles God from acting in society.

- **How could a feudal-like bond help in the present crisis?**
 - It could create bonds of trust and loyalty.
 - It could provide unity to a fragmented and polarized society.
 - It could provide channels of charity to the needy.
 - It could provide people with a voice in their own affairs.
 - It could provide representative characters to a society in need of them.
 - It could allow a person to become a real person and not just a number.
 - It could provide stability to a society.
 - It could provide security to a society in need of it.
 - It could unite the classes in bonds of charity and service.
 - It could provide an opportunity to sacrifice for another.

Chapter 29 | *A Nation of Heroes*

Everything seems to conspire against a “feudal” solution to the nation’s crisis: the breakdown of leadership and community, the dominance of extreme individualism, and the unraveling of the cooperative union.

However, similar conditions in the past called forth the flexible “feudal” bonds by which people looked beyond themselves and sought out others. They found people who were already natural leaders and others who stepped up to the plate to become part of a nation of heroes.

What is needed is what sociologists call *representative characters*. Such figures are those who take the principles, moral qualities, and virtues needed at a given time and translate them into the concrete programs of life and culture.

Representative characters have always existed and still exist. They can be found in statesmen, soldiers, clergy, businessmen, and so many others that help the nation prosper. They can be found in individuals and families over the course of generations.

Needed most are legions of these heroes at all levels of society who draw and fuse society together. There should be legendary figures in every family and society whose feats can be told and retold. These representative characters need not be saints, hold high office, or be extremely intelligent.

The harmonizing action of special representative characters can be compared to the bourdon bell of a carillon bell tower, which harmonizes and sets the tone of the other bells, which resonate when the bourdon rings.

False, *unrepresentative* characters as seen in actors, rock stars, and unprincipled politicians need to be rejected and scorned. Truly representative characters must be recognized and supported.

Discussion Questions

- **Describe the notion of representative characters. Name and discuss those who are representative characters in your own life. In your family life? In your community, parish, and workplace? In the national sphere?**

Ideal candidates are good parents, good teachers, good clergy, and benevolent employers. Representative characters also include national heroes and soldiers, great political leaders, and other key figures in the nation’s public life. Find an example of a legendary family member. Find people that are admired. They are probable representative figures. They are much more numerous than imagined.

- **Discuss and name representative characters from the nation’s past who have embodied those virtues needed at the time.**

Some figures that might be mentioned are George Washington, some of the founders, or generals like Gen. Patton or Gen. MacArthur. Search for figures that are admired and represent the era, even if you do not agree with the predominant attitudes of the era. Look for local examples.

- **What are bourdon souls and why are they important? Imagine some of the ways they influence society.**

Bourdon souls are special representative characters who exhibit a unique ability to harmonize society. They have an influence that resonates among a given social group and inspires members to greater things. Bourdon souls might be tone or fashion setters. They can be advisors, or great educators who founded a school of thought or action. They can be statesmen who left their mark on an era in the nation’s history. They can be found at all levels in society.

- **How does modern culture discourage representative characters?**

Name examples of unrepresentative characters.

There is a prevailing “I don’t want to be a hero” mentality in society, which is a type of mediocrity, spread by a culture that only cares only about material things. Populism promotes the idea that those who stand out are to be avoided, and elites are in themselves bad or harmful to society. Modern culture promotes sensuality and promiscuity that encourages a lack of the self-restraint that is essential for development of representative characters. Extreme individualism works against social relationships needed by society and provided by representative characters. Social media discourages representative figures. Bureaucracy discourages representative figures. Immorality discourages representative figures.

Unrepresentative figures often live immoral lifestyles and encourage others to live likewise, as in the case of many actors, singers, entertainers, and self-interested or corrupt officials.

- **What concrete ways can be employed in your personal life to promote representative characters, or to be one yourself?**

- Lead a good and Christian life.
- Step up to the plate and accept responsibilities that harmonize a social group.
- Be a good parent that your children can look up to.
- Take leadership roles seriously and care for those under you.
- Admire others and seek to have virtues that are admirable.
- Admire and learn about figures from history that have helped the nation, community, or family.
- Encourage others to accept responsibilities and live up to their duties.
- Avoid and stand up to the hostile culture by not admiring and criticizing the unrepresentative figures that drag society downward. Denounce the influence of these figures.
- Defend the nation when in peril.
- Offer yourself up to do all you can for the Church.
- Learn who the representative figures are in your family and family history.
- Invite a representative figure to speak at your event.
- Thank someone for being a representative character.
- Find representative figures in the newspaper.

Chapter 30 | *A True Idea of the Christian State*

The first step in discussing the Christian State is to define it. To do this, it is necessary to distinguish between terms that refer to components in the State.

A *society* is a social unit made up of informal groupings of individuals, families, and intermediary associations.

A *nation* is a cultural, social, economic, and political unity unable to be included or federated into any other one.

The *State* is the political organization and order of the nation, which safeguards the common good and facilitates virtuous life in common.

A *government* is the political system and institutions by which the State is administered and regulated.

The State is a perfect society in that it is complete in its own sphere and does not depend upon any other. In this sense, there is no more perfect *natural* society than the State. This contrasts greatly with the all-powerful bureaucratic system of legal norms of the modern State.

The organic Christian State gives unity and a framework to all the social units and intermediary associations in the nation. When authority is in this way shared, the State can govern more by influence than by command. It requires fewer people and much less money to function.

Thus, the organic State is not a necessary evil, but a necessary good. As the book concludes, “The organic State then gives unity, direction, and purpose to society—embracing but never absorbing, delegating but never concentrating, encouraging but never stifling.”

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss and make the distinctions between these social concepts: society, nation, State, government. How are these concepts confused today?**

The distinctions are noted in the book and the summary above. These concepts can be confused in the following ways:

- Recognizing all social units as societies or cooperative unions with no need to safeguard the common good;
- Confusing the State with the government and all the defects of individuals inside the government;
- Confusing all States with the absolutist or modern State that often abuses power;
- Confusing the nation with the State, and therefore assigning much more power to the State than necessary; and
- Confusing all the terms and assigning a negative value to them based on an individualist mentality.

- **How does the modern State abuse its power? How are you personally affected by this abuse?**

Types of abuse of power by the modern State might include:

- The implementation of onerous regulations that inhibit growth and economic progress;
- The growth of unwieldy bureaucracies that slow down and complicate procedures;
- The assuming of functions by the State that do not belong to it, such as that of owning industries;
- The imposition of high taxes upon individuals and families;
- The inheritance tax that penalizes death and prevents the transfer of wealth over the generations;
- The use of judicial activism;
- The overuse of executive orders, which imposes authoritarianism upon the nation;
- The passage of immoral laws that work against the common good and order of society;
- The interference of the State in the education of children; and
- The power of the State to force deficit spending upon the nation and future generations.

- **Discuss how the organic State might serve as a solution to the abuses of the modern absolutist State.**

The organic State might serve as a solution in the following ways:

- It would decentralize the powers of the State and bring governing closer to the population.
- It would allow the trades and other associations to govern and regulate themselves.
- It would return the legislative power of custom back to the people who practice these customs.
- It would allow society's representative figures a chance to step up to the plate.
- The distribution of power would help people defend themselves against the abuse of big government.
- The taxation of the people would generally be considerably less in such a society.
- The influence of the Church would be much greater and more helpful in facilitating the common good.
- It would help the institution of the family by interfering less in family affairs.

● **What concrete measures can be employed to promote the organic State and oppose the absolutist State?**

Actions opposing the absolutist State might include:

- Opposing the abuse of government through grassroots actions, especially against huge government programs;
- Opposing unjust or extremely high taxes and deficit spending;
- Opposing unjust laws like abortion, same-sex "marriage," or other such measures;
- Understanding that the State is not responsible for everything; and
- Studying history to see what happens when the State assumes too much power.

Actions promoting an organic State might include:

- Leading a good and Christian life.
- Seeking to come to know those who govern you.
- Running for office or supporting those who run for office that understand the limitations of the State.
- Defending the nation when attacked by other powers.
- Insisting upon subsidiarity by belonging to intermediary associations that limit the powers of the State.
- Taking responsibility for those things proper to your family, community, or church.
- Studying history to see how nations profits from a state that governs correctly.
- Be patriotic and love the nation.

Chapter 31 | *The Role of the Church*

The discussion of the role of the Church in society is approached from a Catholic perspective. It recognizes that the Church and the State are both independent, perfect societies with specific ends and goals. By *perfect*, it is meant that each is juridically competent to provide all the necessary means to carry out its purpose; each is sovereign in its own sphere.

The Church fulfills its purpose by safeguarding the moral order of right and wrong, maintaining Divine worship, and administering the supernatural means of grace to man. The State reaches its end by securing internal and external harmony and peace of society through the use of an external juridical order, favoring conditions for the creation of wealth, and providing for the common defense.

Some activities are shared by both spheres, since they involve moral acts that affect both sanctification and the temporal common good. The two spheres should have mutual relations and work together when possible. That is why the Church is an important part of the heart and soul of economy and culture, since She has a hallowing influence upon them. Where the Church is present, it helps the State fulfill its functions more perfectly.

Mention of such a happy concord is found in the writings of the Founders and runs counter to today's tragic antagonism between Church and State. It is foolish to claim that the Church is detrimental to economic development. All society benefits when the Church serves as a moral guide, a hallowing influence, and guardian of the law.

Discussion Questions

- **What is the proper role of the Church in society? Discuss and give examples.**

How is this role often misunderstood?

Examples of the proper role of the Church in society might include:

- Doing everything to advance the salvation of souls in eternity;
- Maintaining Divine worship;
- Administering the sacraments and means of grace;
- Providing counsel and advice to individuals and families;
- Preaching right and wrong;
- Judging cases where morals are involved;
- Denouncing sin and the lack of morals in society;
- Promoting charitable works to alleviate hunger and suffering;
- Administering health care to the needy;
- Developing education systems;
- Burying the dead;
- Developing the sacred arts in architecture, music, and liturgy; and
- Rebuking leaders who work against the common good.

This role is misunderstood by those who would reduce the Church to a purely personal institution with no projection in society.

- **How can the Church and the State share roles and work together?**

The Church and the State might work together in the following ways:

- The State can extend benefits to the Church in the form of tax exemptions and other rules.
- The Church and State might work together in education, developing school standards, and research.
- The Church and the State might work together in charitable enterprises that help the needy.
- The Church and the State might work together in safeguarding public morality.

- The Church and State might work together in public ceremonies that mark the nation's history.
 - The Church and State might work together in prayer before legislative sessions.
 - The Church and State might work together in recognizing real marriage and births.
 - The Church and State might work together in teaching justice and the cardinal virtues.
 - The Church and the State might work together in favoring balanced consumption.
 - The Church and State might work together by preventing unjust war and promoting the peace of nations.
- **Why is the modern State wrong when failing to acknowledge the Church and its role in society?**
The modern State is wrong in failing to acknowledge the Church for the following reasons:
 - It should recognize the actual reality of the Church's role, but reduces it to fiction.
 - It works against its own interest in denying itself a true ally in the ordering of the common good.
 - It imposes upon itself charitable roles that are costly and are better done by the Church.
 - It denies an incredible amount of cultural riches when it does not support the Church.
 - It fails to connect with the true good of the people who need the Church.
 - It opens the way to tyranny by failing to recognize the Church's role as guardian of the moral law.
 - It comes to see the Church as a competitor and not an ally in the fulfillment of its role.
 - It does not make use of one of the greatest promoters of justice and honesty, which help the economy.
 - When it fails to acknowledge the Church, it does not bring upon the nation the blessing of God.
 - It contributes to a secular society based on matter and ignores the essential spiritual side of man.
 - It deviates from the intentions of the Founders, who saw a role for the Church.
 - It fails to realize that all society prospers when Christians live up to the ideals of the Church.
- **What concrete measures can be employed to promote a proper idea of the relationship of the Church and the organic State in daily life?**
 - Lead a good and Christian life.
 - Be a good citizen because of your faith.
 - Defend the faith in the public square when attacked.
 - Support legislation and legislators that defend public morality and decency.
 - Always manifest your faith publicly and unashamedly.
 - Oppose all measures that tend to suppress the Church and its right to speak out against evil.
 - Oppose and protest immoral movies and films.
 - Oppose abortion and support traditional marriage.
 - Contribute to the Church and be a member of a parish.
 - Donate to good Church initiatives.
 - Support those clergymen that emphasize the existence of good and evil, heaven and hell.
 - Defend the Church when attacked by unjust laws such as breaking the seal of Confession.
 - Reject radical interpretations of the separation of Church and State that would deny the church any role.
 - Refuse to let the Church be "ghettoized" and turned into a purely personal institution with no projection.

Part 5 A Passion for Justice (Chapters 32–37)

Chapter 32 | *An Organic Economic Order: A Passion for Justice*

Any organic economic order must have a passion for justice as its unifying principle. Since “justice” is defined as rendering to each his own, it naturally deals with economic matters. Through justice, people come to own the fruits of their labor, and private property and free enterprise are established.

From this concept of justice in medieval society came a very flexible idea of the need for just price and just wage. It created a moral universe that enforced contracts and protected markets against monopoly, speculation, usury, false advertising, induced scarcity, and other practices that produce fraud or obstructions in commerce.

Commerce is a great good to society that facilitates the distribution of goods. It must be justly compensated. However, trade also presents temptations of fraud and avarice, which harms markets. Justice protects everyone and keeps markets in balance.

Prudence is the virtue whereby man applies right reason to actions. This virtue also makes the rigid demands of justice conform to the common sense application to life. Thus, all sorts of laws, customs, and usages of the markets provide refreshing solutions to keep transactions honest. Prudence also prevents frenetic intemperance while promoting and facilitating commerce.

Finally, charity has a moderating influence on economy. Although it should always be voluntary, charity serves as a binding force that brings about a true union of hearts and minds that perfects and secures justice in society.

Discussion Questions

- **How does justice specifically apply to economics, markets, and transactions?**

Discuss and give examples.

Examples of the how justice applies to economics might include:

- Making contracts between buyers;
- Compensation for labor and wages;
- Establishing or estimating a just price for products;
- Selling goods without defects and fraud;
- Development of trust so necessary for the proper functioning of any market;
- Setting norms of weights and measurements;
- Ownership and sale of land and property as founded on justice;
- Establishing and maintaining the proper role of government in economy as defined by justice;
- Binding people to their word in transactions;
- Assuring domestic tranquility of the nation; and
- Preventing usury, monopoly, and speculation.

- **What is prudence and why is it so necessary to a sound economy? Explain and give examples.**

Prudence is the virtue whereby man applies right reason to actions.

Examples of why prudence is so important to a sound economy might include:

- Prudence keeps economic policy from being strictly planned.
- Prudence gives flexibility in transactions that makes them more human and accommodating.
- Prudence keeps economics tied to reality.
- Prudence facilitates the adoption of custom in economy.
- Prudence establishes norms for economy and allows common sense application.

- Prudence encourages consultation as consultants usually are guardians of prudence.
- Prudence helps evaluate risks.

- **Why is charity so important for good economics? Why must it be voluntary?**

Charity is a unitive force in society that permits people to consider the common good. If it is not voluntary, then it is not charity.

Ways charity helps good economy might include the following:

- The practice of charity extinguishes the fires of greed. Charity helps the poor and their physical necessities.
- Charity unites people and diminishes the need for stronger regulations and more government.
- Charity encourages people to put their own self-interest aside and think of others.
- Charity promotes the practice of gratitude on the part of those who receive.
- Charity encourages the proper ordering of the common good.
- Charity diminishes the idea of class struggle.
- Charity harmonizes society.
- Charity diminishes usury and other bad practices by stigmatizing them and encouraging the contrary.
- Proper charity eventually helps people create wealth.

- **What concrete measures can you take to practice justice, prudence, and charity in economy and in your daily life?**

- Lead a good and Christian life.
- Always be exact in your financial dealings.
- Respect private property.
- Never commit fraud, even in a small way.
- Never overcharge someone for something.
- Practice common sense in your transactions.
- Do not be unscrupulous.
- Give to charity when you receive money unexpectedly.
- Consider the common good in your transactions.
- Do not invest in risky and shady deals.
- Invest in the poor.

Chapter 33 | “Finding” Law Once Again

Law and justice are basic to any society. Legal justice inclines men to render to others and society what is due to them in view of the common good. The medieval passion for justice gave rise to the rule of law.

The foundations of Western and American law are based on several legal developments. The first one is customary law based on long-accepted usages of the people, who become true legislators and handed down the law by tradition. Accordingly, law was not made but “found” in the places where God had planted it: in public opinion, the common conscience, the testimony of custom, the ancient charters, and the legal sense of the people. True law was constantly rediscovered, clarified, and purified over time.

There was also common law, based on established precedents, which made it difficult to change the law arbitrarily. Other types of law developed, such as canon law, merchant law and Roman law, that together formed the law of the land. This understanding of law made the West stand out among the nations.

Above all, the ruler was not above the law. Law was often articulated by a ruler, but it did not belong to him. The ruler had to have recourse to assemblies to seek the assent of those affected. This gave rise to representative government, parliaments, and assemblies never seen before in history.

Above all law was the concept of higher law. All law was bound to a higher, objective, moral law valid for all times, people, and places, based on God and His eternal law, summarized in the Ten Commandments. Thus, the maxim, “unjust law is not law,” was widely, if not universally, accepted. The Church naturally stood as a defender of justice to whom people could appeal against unjust rulers. American legal tradition is attached to a higher law tradition.

Helpful Quotes

“During the thirteenth century it was the general conviction that the realm was preserved by customary and constitutional law. The king was a kind of trustee whose duty it was to safeguard the laws. There was scarcely any important statute in which he omitted to claim that he had consulted advice and received assent, in other words, that he was in agreement with the legal convictions of the community.”

—Gilby, *Political Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 285.

“This law of nature, being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original.”

—Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1765], 1:41.

Discussion Questions

- **What is customary law and why is it important? Give some examples of customary law.**

Customary law consists of those long-accepted usages by the people that become the norms by which people regulate their behavior and work together in society. It is important because it is superior to statute; as Saint Thomas states, it “regulates men’s conduct by their own habits of mind,” therefore requiring less compulsion from outside authority. It is very connected to the daily reality of things and the way they work.

Some examples of customary law might include:

- Standards of measurements developed over time that later become legal standards;
- Driving on a particular side of the road as developed by custom;
- Legal expressions developed by lawyers of a certain country to express local realities;

- Election protocol developed over the years;
 - Business practices that develop over time; and
 - Family custom taking on a great importance in the governing of a family or family business.
- **Why are traditional concepts of law such as common law and custom so important?**
Some reasons why they are important might include:
 - These concepts are closely connected to the people and their manner of living and working.
 - These concepts develop organically and contain safeguards that allow people to react against injustice.
 - Rulers are forced to respect a law developed over time since it is not their law to change arbitrarily.
 - Such law is hard to change since it is intertwined with the workings of society.
 - The ordinary people by their customs and usages become the authors and legislators of traditional law.
 - When law comes from the people, it becomes loved by them.
 - **Why is the modern concept of law so different from the traditional concept of law?**
What are some manifestations of this change?
The modern concept of law is different in the following ways:
 - Modern law often becomes abstract and disconnected from the people.
 - Modern law becomes more easily unanchored from the past, just principles, or higher law.
 - Law is easily changed and manipulated by unjust rulers.
 - Positive law is a law unto itself based on no higher authority and thus easily used by unjust rulers.
 - Law becomes rigid and brutally enforced.
 - Law becomes abusive and leads to big government.
 - Modern law is not loved by the people and is viewed with hostility.
 - **What is higher law and why is it important?**
A higher law is an objective, moral law valid for all times, peoples, and places based on God and His eternal law, summarized in the Ten Commandments.
It is important because:
 - It establishes a standard from which all law can be judged.
 - It is written in the hearts of all men, and therefore can be universally understood.
 - It is based on the most stable and reasonable of all law since it comes from God, the author of life itself.
 - It is a defense against bad law and allows men to oppose laws that are contrary to it.
 - As guardian of natural law, the Church becomes a natural defender of those oppressed by injustice.
 - Natural law is something you can't not know. There is no excuse for not knowing it.
 - **What are some practical ways that you could return to an appreciation of traditional concepts of law and higher law?**
 - We can appreciate customs whether our own, our family's, or those of others.
 - We can respect traditional laws that still apply and have connection with our lives.
 - We can oppose arbitrary laws that are contrary to natural law.
 - We can uphold the Ten Commandments as the basis for all law.
 - We can support Ten Commandment monuments.

Chapter 34 | *The Two Tribunals*

The two most effective keepers of legal order are the official court of the legal system that establishes the supremacy of the law, and the internal court or forum of the conscience by which individuals judge their own actions. Both tribunals promote the common good and economic prosperity.

An official legal system attached to higher moral law promotes justice by judging external acts that threaten the common good. It helps diminish fraud, protect property, and limit government power.

The internal forum of conscience promotes justice more intimately by judging interior acts that do not directly affect the common good. This tribunal is exercised by the priest-confessor who encourages individuals to examine their actions in light of God's Law.

The Church influences both tribunals, which in turn help promote a sound economy. To the legal system, the Church provides guidelines of justice and charity that facilitate commerce. To the penitent, the Church gives valuable personal advice in his economic dealings as can be seen in its confessional and devotional literature.

During the Middle Ages, both tribunals functioned together harmoniously. This balance began to wane during the Renaissance. Later, Protestant thinkers, particularly inside Calvinism, held that the unbalanced accumulation of riches no longer presented dangers to the faith.

This sense of economic justice is referred to in this conversation between St. John Bosco and a blacksmith:

“Do you know what my biggest worry is?” the blacksmith asked.

“Surely it must be to live and die in the grace of God.”

“No, I'm not worried about death. I take care, though, to be prepared for it when it comes. My biggest worry is this: I am a blacksmith, and I am very much troubled when after finishing a job, I have to decide on the price I must charge. As I enter the charge in my book, I ask myself: Will the good Lord write down the same amount? If I charge more, won't that be a charge against me? To play it safe, I always charge 20% less than the ordinary rate.”

Discussion Questions

- **What is the first tribunal of justice and what are its functions?**

The first tribunal of justice is that of the legal system of the State that enforces the law. It is directed toward the common good and deals with all those external acts that are illegal.

Its functions include:

- Safeguarding the common good and proper function of society;
- Preventing fraud and facilitating commerce;
- Enforcing contracts;
- Protecting property;
- Safeguarding the public morals of a society;
- Facilitating transportation as in traffic laws; and
- Providing for balanced regulation when needed.

- **What is the second tribunal of justice and how does it work? What are its effects upon society?**

The second tribunal is that of conscience, also known as the internal forum, whereby men judge their own acts according to higher law, especially under the direction of the Church. It deals with all immoral and sinful acts that are not necessarily illegal. For example, a person may tell a lie with no impact on society as a whole. It is

sinful, but not illegal. The Sacrament of Confession serves as this tribunal.

The effects of the second tribunal upon society might include:

- Perfecting justice and therefore facilitating life in society;
- Making society more trustworthy and therefore more conducive to business and commerce;
- Making people much more honest and much more religious;
- Perfecting charity by removing personal obstacles that cause disharmony.

These effects lead to the formation of a moral doctrine that guides people in their actions, as can be seen in the Confessional manuals.

● **What role does the Church play in the proper functioning of both of the tribunals?**

The role of the Church in the first tribunal of justice might include the following:

- As guardian of the natural law, the Church defines situations and applications of the law that the State should follow.
- The Church deals with just and unjust law and is a powerful advocate to protest against bad laws.
- The Church can give guidance to help legislators make just laws.
- The Church should reprimand Her members who do not follow natural law and promote bad law.
- The Church can work together with the State to promote the common good in areas of shared jurisdiction.
- The Church promotes the general good order of society by advocating respect for lawful authority.

The role of the Church in the second tribunal of justice might include the following:

- To advise the penitent on spiritual matters;
- To help stop sin that has an impact on all society;
- To help resolve complicated moral problems;
- To tranquilize penitents and thus all society;
- To help people reform their lives;
- To establish penances for transgressions; and
- To help healing with mercy and charity.

● **Why does the functioning of these two tribunals help the economy?**

Give examples of why they are necessary.

The functioning of the first tribunal helps the economy by:

- Clearly stating one's economic obligations to one's neighbor;
- Facilitating commerce by uniform law and treatment;
- Punishing transgressions that destroy commerce;
- Defending the consumer against fraud; and
- Keeping the peace of society by diminishing disharmony.

The functioning of the second tribunal can help the economy by:

- Making people more honest and thus trust and have confidence in society;
- Increasing fraternity and charity that favor economic dealings;
- Taking away the frenetic intemperance of our days;
- Curtailing lawlessness by discouraging sinfulness;
- Demanding restitution in Confession for property stolen;
- Allowing the church to develop guidelines regarding just price and just wages; and
- Making economic fraud and misdealings difficult because the soul is at stake.

- **To what extent is Saint John Bosco's story of the blacksmith a practical model for modern economic life?**

It is not a perfect model since not all economy can be run on such a basis. However, it can be helpful in developing a sense of justice. It can hold back the mad desire for profit at any cost. It serves as an example of someone who tempers his desires, even legitimate desires. One can do the same in daily life by not charging as much and knowing that one is accountable before God.

- **What are some practical ways that could return us to an appreciation of the two tribunals, especially regarding economic justice?**

- Be a good Catholic
- Practice the presence of God.
- Make good Confessions.
- Make the distinction in your life between illegal and immoral acts.
- Think about economic transactions in terms of value given and received.
- Make justice, not the market, the standard that must be followed in transactions.
- Never engage in commerce that seems shifty.
- Always consider the other person in your transaction.
- Always consider God in your transactions as the blacksmith did.
- Consider the harm that unbridled pursuit of riches does to the soul.
- Consider the human element in your business contacts and create a climate of trust.
- Consider that honesty is the best policy and behave accordingly.

Chapter 35 | *The Matter of Money*

Saint Thomas Aquinas defines money as something “invented by the art of man, for the convenience of exchange, and as a measure of things salable.”

Money is a creation of law instituted by the authority of the State or ruler to facilitate the practice of commutative justice and the payment of taxes. Minting and maintaining the stability of money is one of the primary responsibilities of civil government since all contracts and agreements involve value.

Money should become the servant of man once again. To accomplish this, money should be:

- A means of exchange that facilitates the process of buying and selling,
- A stable measure of value,
- A trustworthy way to store wealth, and
- Adaptive to the circumstances of different markets

To facilitate the process of buying and selling, money must be convenient and not unduly expensive to make and use. In the past, governments used several monetary systems simultaneously—international, national, and local. There were even “ghost monies” that were never minted and used solely as measures of value on account books. Money should, above all, be the expression of the culture of a people reflecting the peculiarities of the region and nation.

Discussion Questions

- **How does the creation of money by lawful authority contribute to its stability and use?**

It contributes in the following ways:

- Government has resources to develop money that private individuals do not have.
- Government makes unified money possible by making it necessary to pay taxes.
- Government can enforce a unified monetary policy.
- The fortunes of individuals and families are more precarious than those of governments.
- Government has a unity that individuals do not have in society.
- Governments can stably deal with other nations on a level individuals and families cannot.
- A government has mechanisms of accountability and law that help safeguard money.

- **Consider money as a measure of value. How do you use this function of money in your life?**

Ways this function of money can be used in daily life might include:

- Shopping and the use of money as a measure to influence choices;
- Making a judgment of the quality of something by its monetary worth;
- Using dollar designations in determining the value of one’s labor;
- When involved in trade, using money as a measure judging the value of one thing over another;
- Translating foreign currency into the native unit to determine its value;
- Determining the future value of things in terms of present value;
- Easing planning for retirement or other such matters using dollar determinations;
- Using today’s dollars to determine the value of things in times past;
- Setting a value on sentimental things in terms of units of value;
- Determining values and needs in terms of units of value in the act of budgeting;
- Determining through evaluation if tasks are worth doing or not in allocating our time; and
- Making allowances for inflation, which changes this measure.

- **Consider money as a medium of exchange. How do you use this medium in your life?**

This function can be used in the following ways:

- Using cash as a means of buying things in normal exchange;
- Using money through currency extenders like checks, credit cards, and other substitutes;
- Using ledger books that cancel debt or transactions;
- Using money to pay taxes;
- Trading in dollar approximations in the use of barter; and
- Using money which is not ours for transactions for loans and mortgages.

- **Consider the trust needed for monetary transactions. How do you use the trust of money in your life?**

The trust of money can be seen in the following ways:

- Not physically hoarding or spending money right away because it is deemed valuable at all times;
- Saving money in accounts since it seems stable;
- Spending money freely without worrying that it will devalue quickly;
- Charging people for goods and service in currency since it is considered stable and reliable;
- Exchanging money for a foreign money, confident in the value of both;
- Taking out loans, which presupposes a trust in future value;
- Giving a loan, which presupposes a trust that the money will eventually return;
- Investing in stocks or other investments that reflect trust in the fluidity of money; and
- Buying government bonds that are considered to be safe investments.

- **How might money reflect the culture of a people?**

Money is an expression of art that reflects government, as in the design of currency and the figures found on bills or coins.

- **How concretely might you act in ways that will use money properly in your daily life?**

- Be a good Catholic.
- Do not make risky investments that inflate the real value of things.
- Do not participate in investment bubbles.
- Save money in anticipation of the future.
- Give to Caesar that which is his.
- Stay out of unsecured debt.
- Do not hoard money or be miserly in your spending.
- Do not spend beyond your means.
- Do not speculate.
- Avoid frenetic intemperance.

Chapter 36 | *Money and Credit*

Another function of money is to store wealth conveniently over time and therefore ensure the stability of trade. From this function comes saving money, forming capital, or extending credit. The danger comes from the massive expansion of credit and debt that turns money from a means to an end and throws economy out of balance.

Throughout history, there has been a universal hostility to the taking of *any interest*, which in ancient and medieval times was considered usury. The Church was particularly concerned about the dangerous effects of credit on the poor. However, the Church also recognized that moderate interest might be charged under certain conditions.

Pre-modern economy needed no huge outlays of capital. However, the Industrial Revolution unleashed a need for massive amounts of capital. Unbridled and easy credit became a fixture in modern economies, fueling speculation, inflation, deficit spending, and financial bubbles.

The problem is not the credit itself, but the frenetic intemperance by which credit is used to break away from normal restraints. An economy guided by justice and charity creates the conditions for an orderly and temperate economy. This cannot be done by law and regulation. It must be done by a passion for justice and charity that springs from deeply held convictions and a true sense of love for one's neighbor.

Discussion Questions

- **How can stored money and credit be used to legitimately expand economic opportunities?**
 - Money can be used for savings to provide for future needs.
 - Stored money can be used legitimately to provide the capital for projects.
 - Stored money can be used as collateral to secure contracts.
 - Stored money can be used as a means of making a family feel secure in the face of uncertainties.
 - Stored money is a means of securing retirement.
 - Credit can be used to expand economic production to benefit society.
 - Credit can be used to buy property or other big purchases not immediately available.
 - Credit can be used to help others in their projects.
 - Credit can be used in times of emergency to help people to recover from disaster.

- **What are some of the warning signs that money and credit are being used to fund a spirit of frenetic intemperance?**

Signs of the misuse of money and credit:

 - When money becomes the end, not the means;
 - When money is leveraged, especially in high ratios leading to high risks;
 - When credit is made too easy and thus is in danger of not being repaid;
 - When a person becomes overextended in credit and risks yet more;
 - When stocks lose their investment quality and become merely a trading commodity;
 - When money is used for excessive speculation that leads to major risks;
 - When credit options lead to deficit spending without means to repay;
 - When easy credit is misused to make excessively risky investments; and
 - When easy credit leads to excessive debt as in credit card debt.

- **Give practical ways by which you can practice the spirit of justice and limit the intemperate use of credit.**
 - Consider others as brothers in Christ, not as financial adversaries.

- Do not live beyond your means.
 - Do not accept credit that you cannot reasonably pay back in time.
 - Stay out of debt.
 - Pay a reasonable price for goods and services that you need.
 - Pay a reasonable wage to those whom you employ, which will limit their use of credit.
- **Give practical ways by which you can practice the spirit of charity and thus limit the intemperate use of credit.**
 - Treat all with charity in financial matters, even if it might cost more.
 - Christians should come to the aid of family members in need and limit their need for bank loans.
 - Intermediary associations, especially those helping the poor, can extend interest-free loans to members or to the poor.
 - The Church should play a leading role by encouraging all to give alms to the poor and free services to the needy.
 - Be grateful for goods and services received in charity.
 - **Discuss the extrinsic titles to interest that the Church has recognized whereby moderate interest might be charged.**

The Church did define circumstances when interest could be allowed, called the extrinsic titles for the charging of interest. They are as follows:

The most common titles are when the lender is in danger of losing a profit on his capital loaned (*lucrum cessans*) or cannot advance his loan of money without exposing himself to a loss or to deprivation of a gain (*damnum emergens*). Other titles include loaning to enemies, interest as a gift, interest as a penalty (*poena conventionali*), interest in case of delay, and similar cases.

Chapter 37 | *The Backing of Money*

In an economy dominated by a passion for justice, the quantity of money in circulation should maintain proportion to the economy's goods and services. Thus backed, it can remain stable.

In times of crisis or need, large infusions of money can be created and backed by tying them to a future value such as tax revenues, bonds, loans, natural resources, or even patriotism.

There is no precise formula for accomplishing this goal of a stable, backed currency. However, certain norms of justice are required for a sound monetary plan:

- Sound money must be reliable, flexible, ample in supply, and stable in value.
- Money should fulfill its functions of measure of value, means of exchange, and store of wealth issued by the state.

If norms of justice are observed, it matters little which specific monetary systems are used or which media are employed. Organic solutions dictate that money be a true expression of a people.

Bad money usually comes not only from bad theory, but from the despotic and manipulative acts of men. The integrity of any currency is based upon the level of trust in the authority that issues it. In vain does one find sound monetary policy outside of virtue. Where virtuous leaders and saintly kings rule, sound money flourishes. Every people constructs the monetary system that reflects its values. All virtue, including and especially supernatural virtue, is the best backing of money, one that far outshines the brilliance of gold.

Discussion Questions

- **What factors contribute to determining money supply in a stable economy?**

- The rate at which money circulates;
- The extent to which the public prefers to hold wealth in cash, rather than other real or personal property;
- The existence of money extenders, like bills of credit, checks, or credit cards;
- The use of barter or other money substitutes;
- The wearing out of money that needs to be replaced by re-minting or printing; and
- The physical loss of money, through fires, floods and other disasters that must be replaced.

- **What things have backed money in the past, especially in times of crisis?**

Discuss them and think of examples.

- The prestige of the State;
- Land, government assets, metals, and commodities;
- The Pennsylvania script money, which was backed by land;
- Future tax revenue, bonds, and loans; and
- The patriotism of the people in times of war accepting monies at face value.

- **What specific monetary systems have worked in the past? What kinds of media have been used to record money's value? Discuss examples of these systems and media.**

Systems that have been used in the past: international, national, and local currencies; ghost monies, commodity money, tally stick systems, or seigniorage money;

Some of the media that have recorded money's value: metals, leather, ledgers, paper, or electronic systems.

- **Give examples in history of despotic leaders that have destroyed stable monetary systems by their actions.**

Examples might include:

- Mugabe in Zimbabwe;
 - Maduro in Venezuela;
 - Castro in Cuba;
 - Peron in Argentina;
 - Allende in Chile;
 - Any communist government of the past;
 - Socialist governments of the past; and
 - Marxist African governments after independence.
-
- **How can you practically apply the lessons of this chapter in daily life?**
 - Be a good Catholic.
 - Use money according to its functions and not as an end in itself.
 - Use money for the purposes for which it is made, not as an instrument of speculation.
 - Develop and diversify assets in a variety of forms.
 - Keep personal budget proportional to the money one earns.
 - Base a personal budget and system on virtue, not just systems.
 - Insist upon personal integrity in monetary affairs.
 - Practice justice and charity in all financial dealings.
 - Avoid frenetic intemperance.

Part 6 A Corresponding Temperance (Chapters 38–45)

Chapter 38 | *A Different Set of Values*

Intemperance gives rise to a rule of money in society, in which everything is reduced to self-interest, matter, and production.

The best answer to such a rule is a rule of honor. *Honor*—the authentic esteem given to all that is excellent—affirms values that cannot be bought and sold. A rule of honor introduces quality, beauty, goodness, and charity into the culture and economy.

A rule of honor does not reject riches, goods, or money, but only prevents them from dominating a culture. Where honor rules, material goods are used to make life dignified, upright, and agreeable to body and soul. Where the rule of money holds sway, riches become the supreme measure of life and principles decay, while culture and good taste decline.

Where the rule of honor exists, money’s influence wanes, institutions become zealous of their reputations, families uphold their names, and culture flourishes. There is calm and orderly growth. There are incentives for producing goods of greater durability, lasting value, and superior craftsmanship.

Honor can be restored by filling society with good principles, ideas, and moral values. A rich and balanced intellectual life places more value on religious, literary, philosophical, and artistic values than money. The influence of true elites also favors the rule of honor since it would require them to preserve, defend, and spread Christian principles and to serve as models for all society. The overthrow of the rule of money and the defeat of frenetic intemperance requires a moral regeneration centered on the highest set of values—those of Christian civilization.

Discussion Questions

- **What is the rule of money and how does it manifest itself in your daily life?**

Give examples.

Examples of the rule of money in daily life might include:

- The glorification of big salaries and ostentation in consumption;
- The “keeping up with the Joneses” mentality;
- An obsession with economic statistics as the sole measure of progress;
- The cheapness of goods and an obsession with practicality;
- The lack of craftsmanship and beauty in products;
- Judging people by the amount of money they make;
- The lack of civility and manners, which are given an entirely secondary importance;
- The dominance of gaudiness and a lack of good taste;
- The shallowness of the ideas and principles of today’s Internet culture;
- A tendency to give value to bigness over excellence; and
- An excessive love of gadgetry and the latest fads and fashions.

- **What is the rule of honor and how does it manifest itself? Give examples.**

Examples of the rule of honor might include:

- A concern for one’s reputation and that of one’s family;
- A love of quality proportional to one’s means;
- A sense of modesty and courtesy that gives value to the spiritual side of things;
- A tendency to value the arts as an expression of the nation;

- Living in a dignified manner inside one's means;
 - An appreciation of deep thought, philosophy, and other speculative sciences;
 - A spirit of charity and detachment from money, even if one has little;
 - Honesty where a man's word is valued and trusted;
 - An appreciation of quality and craftsmanship in products; and
 - An appreciation for heroism and military valor.
- **Why do you think that the concept of honor has seemingly disappeared from modern life?**
 - Too much emphasis on economy;
 - Too much individualistic thought that does not consider such concepts;
 - Too little spiritual life;
 - Too many superficial relationships in society; and
 - Not enough love of God in all His perfections.
- **Cite examples of the ugliness caused by the rule of money.**
 - Big, ugly buildings;
 - Modern art and sculpture; and
 - Flashy advertising as in Times Square or Las Vegas.
- **How might we practically apply the lessons of this chapter in our daily lives?**
 - Be a good Catholic.
 - Develop an intellectual life by reading and questioning.
 - Appreciate or practice an art.
 - Practice charity and detachment from money.
 - Develop a craft and appreciate good craftsmanship... even craft beer.
 - Develop a strong prayer life.
 - Defend the honor of oneself or one's family against those who would dishonor it.
 - Deal with money wisely but not obsessively.
 - Practice confidence in God.
 - Develop manners, courtesy, and modesty in behavior and dress.
 - Follow one's calling and cultivate one's profession.
 - Know and love the Church and its liturgy.

Chapter 39 | *Tending Towards Self-Sufficiency*

A return to the rule of honor makes people zealous for those excellent things that belong to them, and thus they turn inward and seek a degree of self-sufficiency. This tendency to self-sufficiency begins with the individual and extends to the family, community, and nation. It differs from the individualistic notion of self-sufficiency in which individuals close themselves up in their own self-interest.

In an organic order, people delve deeply within themselves, developing a self-assurance and personality, which allows them to stand out, define, and acquire principles, certainties, independence, and dignity. Moral entities like social groups, parishes, and others can also acquire a similar expression of their unique character.

Self-sufficiency leads to healthy localism and the formation of regions that reflect the culture, needs, and preferences of a people interacting with a place. Inhabitants develop a natural preference for their setting above all others, even those that are superior in some aspects.

Authentic “local” production is more than handcrafted goods or homegrown crops. It presupposes a close interrelationship between producers, inhabitants, and the locality. People use local resources to make products suited to their tastes, yet oriented towards the perfection of their society. Producers and consumers become co-creators of goods, since demand influences production much more than production determines demand.

Obviously not everything can be produced locally, but local needs can incite creativity to use local resources to produce alternative items that enrich a culture. The possibilities for local production are practically limitless.

Localism presupposes a stable family life, reflection, tradition, local identity, and a desire for full development. Demand is guided by a people and elites zealous for products reflecting their own identity and richness. Localism requires stable links across generations between producer, customer, and locality.

Discussion Questions

- **What are some of the differences between healthy self-sufficiency and an unhealthy, individualistic self-absorption?**
 - Individual absorption closes the person to anything outside the immediate surroundings.
 - Self-absorption tends not only to be non-creative, but also is oriented only to self-gratification.
 - Self-absorption favors mass culture since individualists close in on themselves and later join the masses.
 - Self-absorption does not acknowledge the role of God and Providence, and relies solely upon self.
 - Self-absorption discourages involvement in civic and community affairs.
 - Healthy self-sufficiency defines itself in the function of society as a whole.
 - Self-sufficiency develops certainties, principles, and meaning in the individual who seeks a role in society.
 - Self-sufficiency extends beyond the individual and applies to social units, communities, and nations.
 - Self-sufficiency draws the maximum from the individual to have an impact on all of society.

- **What are some of the differences between different regions and why are they so often healthy?**
 - Different regions rely on the resources immediately at hand.
 - Different regions rely upon their own vegetation, lay of the land, natural wonders, and mysteries.
 - Different regions participate in different plans of God, unique to their own regions.
 - Different regions give rise to different people who often take on characteristics of the region: A rugged land gives rise to a rugged people.
 - Different regions become homes in which people feel comfortable and prefer their region(s) to other regions.
 - Different regions are healthy because people come to take maximum advantage of the resources of their region.
 - Different regions tend to be creative in producing things from local resources.

- Different regions force people not to accept the standard items from elsewhere, but to improvise with local items.
 - Different regions allow the people to become co-creators of the products since they participate in making the product popular or suggesting modifications.
 - Different regions come to have indefinite possibilities of development since people find hidden potential everywhere.
- **What makes local or homemade products so attractive, and what are their limitations?**
Give examples.
- Local products correspond to human nature, which takes comfort in what is known and familiar.
 - Local products convey that human touch not often found in mass-market items.
 - Local products become an expression of the people, culture, and locality.
 - Local products become a source of pride for the whole region.
 - Local products are often the product of a family over generations.
 - Local products are limited in producing large products that need huge amounts of resources.
 - Local products are limited in making large quantities. Examples include nails, bricks, or cloth.
 - Expensive products often need an area larger than a single locality or region to serve as a market.
- **What are some practical ways to encourage a return to local economies?**
- Be good Catholics.
 - Buy locally made goods.
 - Develop products of your own if you can.
 - Take advantage of personal resources to contribute to production, such as a local garden.
 - Encourage those who make local goods.
 - When possible, avoid the massive, inorganic economy.
 - Develop economic traditions inside the family and over generations, such as farming.
 - Research historic examples of local products that inspire people.
 - Patronize local products of other places when visiting.
 - Suggest improvements on local products, thereby becoming a co-creator.
 - Deplore unbalanced mass-produced products that express nothing of any culture.
 - Appreciate works of local arts and culture.

Chapter 40 | *Protective Trade and Free Markets*

Some say self-sufficiency in organic societies leads to protectionism. While some slight protectionism might occur, organic markets largely regulate themselves. They tend to encourage importing necessities and discourage exporting much needed local resources.

Healthy localism should encourage trade nationally and internationally. Because God did not distribute all resources equally, trade becomes necessary and beneficial. International trade can lead to a healthy interpenetration of cultures.

Balance is needed in international trade. It should be ample, yet should not dominate or destroy a culture. To accomplish this end, communities can adopt an attitude of self-defense when unfair trade practices endanger local trade. The most effective way to have balanced trade is when local products reflect the natural preferences of people, springing from a joy of consuming what is specific to a place. People should also be open-minded enough to appreciate occasional products from the outside, providing a legitimate diversity and spice to life. A community should avoid a false cosmopolitanism that prefers outside products simply because of their reputation of reflecting a “higher culture.” A truly free market helps individuals and families to develop their own personalities and potential.

Discussion Questions

- **Why is international trade necessary?**
 - Because of the Golden Rule: we should do unto others as we would have done to us.
 - God did not distribute all resources equally; some nations have more of a needed resource than others.
 - Certain products are needed for the general welfare of peoples—medicines such as quinine.
 - When food is scarce, there is the need to import food to care for the people.
 - Cultural trade is good for better understanding among people.
 - Cultural trade can help enrich the local culture with new ideas and better techniques.
 - Healthy international trade helps enrich the nation as a whole.

- **What is natural protectionism and how does it manifest itself?**
 - Natural protectionism manifests itself in a natural preference for local products, resulting from the joy of consuming items specific to the culture and custom.
 - It is characterized by a wariness of things foreign to one’s taste.
 - It includes a willingness to try things that belong to other cultures as a means of experiencing variety.
 - It sees local products as an expression of one’s culture.

- **What products exist in your locality that are genuinely preferred by you and your neighbors?**

Discuss some local products or even some local factory-made products or machinery that is a source of pride for the community.

- **How can you apply the principles of this chapter to your own personal life?**
 - Be a good Catholic.
 - Try not to buy goods from countries that use unfair labor or other practices.
 - Learn about the local economy and be proud of it.
 - Never be afraid to experiment with local products.
 - Frequent local rather than chain restaurants when possible.

- Enjoy things of quality from other cultures, but do not let them dominate or replace one's own culture.
- Appreciate and love those things that are imported because they are not available locally, such as jewels or certain foods.
- Avoid a false cosmopolitanism whereby a person adopts a culture different from one's own simply because it is fashionable and faddish.
- Support balanced international trade, which should be ample and common.

Chapter 41 | *The Restoration of Dependency*

Individualists hate the idea of dependency because they believe it hinders one's full development. Dependency, however, has a role in binding people together in community. It makes trade necessary. It further aids personal development, as people cannot perfect themselves alone. God did not give all gifts to all men, but gave different gifts to each so that all would need others.

In an organic society, dependency is limited and complementary. When there is a harmonic interplay of self-sufficiency with dependency, an economy develops that is complementary, not competitive. Dependency involves religious fervor since it depends upon a love of neighbor as self. Mutual dependency is contrary to rivalry that leads to friction and hatred.

When self-sufficiency, dependency, and Christian charity flow together, the effect is a love of neighbor that leads people to extend charity and to accept it from others. People admire others for their qualities and are able to properly accept the admiration of others. All these qualities are seen as reflections of the Divine Perfections of God as seen in others.

Given man's fallen nature, this desirable state of being will remain imperfect. However, this dependency, when practiced, creates an atmosphere of trust and temperance that keeps society and economy in balance.

Discussion Questions

- **Reflect upon the following quotations. How do they support the idea that self-sufficiency and dependence are complementary?**

“Any kind of seclusion from the fullness of community life ultimately means for the individual a personal loss, a self-mutilation, an atrophy, a defect in self-realization.”

—Heinrich A. Rommen

“When God could have made all men strong, wise, and rich, He was unwilling to do so. He wished instead that these men should be strong, those weak; these wise, those foolish; these rich and those poor. For if all were strong, wise and wealthy, one would not be in need of the other.”

—Ralph of Acton

- The quotes show how the various qualities among men are complementary, desirable, and deliberate.
 - The quotes show how God in His wisdom created us as social beings.
 - Without shortcomings, we would not naturally tend to be social.
 - We reject dependency at our own risk, since dependency provides enormous benefits for us.
 - The quotes show that rejecting dependency is not an option for the full development of a person.
 - A person is harmed by rejecting dependency.
 - All need dependency, without exception. Even those who are blessed with many positive qualities need the opportunity to share those qualities with others.
- **What are some of the ways the concept of the self-made autonomous man can harm the development of the individual and society?**
 - The self-made man often does not understand or recognize his limitations and overextends himself.
 - The self-made man does not want to recognize his weaknesses or tends to make excuses for them.
 - The self-man often does not ask for help when he really needs it.
 - The self-made man often harbors resentment towards those who question his abilities.
 - The self-made man often prefers to deal with mechanical systems rather than humans.

- The self-made man likes self-service because he feels in control of the situation.
- The self-made man tends to see himself as the source of his own law, independent of natural law; he determines what is right and wrong.
- The self-made man tends to be proud and exaggerates his accomplishments.

● **In what ways can dependency help the development of the individual and society and promote the practice of Christian charity?**

From the point of view of the one who gives:

- It teaches the giver to be patient with those who need help.
- It teaches the giver to think beyond self-interest and work to help others.
- It can build character since it forces the individual to practice self-domination.
- It highlights the value of relationships as opposed to the mechanistic view of life.
- It builds in the person's charity and fervor since a person helps another out of love of God.
- It diminishes cutthroat competition and other practices that take place in a society of self-interest.
- It develops a sense of compassion in society.

For those who receive:

- It helps keep them humble since they realize limitations and ask for help.
- It cultivates a sense of gratitude to others that is needed for society to run well.
- It allows people to take delight in the qualities of others out of admiration and contrary to the vice of envy.
- It creates an atmosphere of trust in relationships.
- It tempers society since all is not in competition but rather is complementary.
- It gives the person the means to develop freely and with charity.

● **What are the concrete ways in which you might practice dependency in your own life?**

- Be a good Catholic.
- Give alms to the needy.
- Ask for help and advice when needed.
- Look for representative characters who can help you develop yourself.
- Help the less fortunate with patience and strength.
- Cultivate the human element in your dealings with others, which is the foundation for dependency relationships.
- Do not use self-service when a human relationship is possible.
- Accept the help of others when needed or offered.
- Admire the qualities of others without desiring to acquire them for yourself.
- Practice gratitude to those who help you.
- Respect hierarchy.
- Develop a dependency upon God and the Blessed Mother.

Chapter 42 | *Addressing Production and Standardization*

While some standardization is needed for adequate production, exposure to large amounts of mass-produced products can harm the individual's personality to the point of feeling “standardized” and “massified.” Each person reacts to standardization differently and needs to determine at what point one's personality is adversely affected and becomes, for example, a slave to fad or fashion.

The goal of production should be to fill both material and spiritual needs. Material needs alone do not satisfy certain human desires. The spiritual appetites for beauty, excellence, or refinement are also needed to satisfy human needs.

That is the problem with mass standardization. It seeks to maximize efficiency at the expense of the spiritual. The machine is the chosen means as it can endlessly replicate the production process. Mass production does provide goods that are convenient, plentiful, and inexpensive. However, the more human and spiritual dimensions are lost. Many consumers simply end up adjusting their tastes to the mass-market goods—deadening their own spiritual appetites.

In pre-modern times, items were not considered finished until they had some clear marks of the human spirit. By focusing on this more important spiritual dimension, production maintained an admirable balance between efficiency and beauty. Pre-industrial production was further integrated into cultural institutions and thus prevented frenetic intemperance—and mass standardization.

The challenge is not to return to some primitive economy, but rather to develop an advanced, inexpensive, and efficient system that maintains this balance and reconnects the broken link between producer and consumer.

Discussion Questions

- **How can standardization be harmful to people by “standardizing” them?**

Discuss and cite examples.

- When everyone dresses the same and the person does not stand out or even want to stand out. For example, jeans and t-shirts are a kind of official “uniform” of the modern world.
- When people use iPhones in an airport and do not try to exert their individuality by conversation.
- When fast food becomes a norm of eating without expressing a culture.
- When mass media tend to standardize people by presenting the same things to everyone.
- When mass-produced Hollywood movies seen all over the world tend to take away personality or expressions of a culture.
- When products are mass-produced without input from consumers and, as a result, force people to adapt their tastes to the standardized product.

- **Why is the spiritual element necessary in production?**

Give examples of how the spiritual element enriches production.

The spiritual element satisfies the insatiable appetites for the good, true, and beautiful. When we experience these transcendental aspects, it causes us joy. By mysterious affinity, forms, sounds, colors, and perfumes can express states of spirit of man. Therefore, they must reflect virtuous states of spirit, so that man finds the necessary means of his sanctification in his surroundings. They should be reflections of God that speak to the senses and show man the attractiveness of virtue, and thus stimulate him to know and long for the uncreated beauty of God that he will only see face to face in the glory of heaven.

Examples of the spiritual element in production include the following:

- The beauty of color, form, and shape in fashions and materials that enriches useful clothes and makes

them delightful beyond their utilitarian purpose.

- Food is needed to nourish us, but taste in food enriches the experience and makes it delightful; spices are especially “spiritual” in this sense.
- The world of smells can delight the soul, whether they be in foods or perfumes.
- The sense of touch also has a spiritual side. ▪ Something smooth delights the senses. Something rough can also delight by its robustness and strength. We might also enjoy something that is cool or hot.
- The world of sounds has its delights beyond its mere use for communication. Beautifully spoken dialog is delightful. Music is delightful.
- The world of tastes is self-explanatory since it embellishes the nutritional value of food.
- All the senses can convey spiritual values of beauty and truth.
- There are also intellectual values that add to the beauty and truth of plain reasoning.
- Religious liturgy and ceremonies are material manifestations of the spiritual, and can have this same effect.

● **Why are beauty and utility often seen as being at odds with each other? Give examples of how an emphasis only on utility is harmful.**

Beauty and utility need not be at odds. In fact, they should be complementary. However, when mass production becomes a goal, then the logical sacrifice is in the adornment, the beauty, or the spiritual elements in products.

Examples:

- Houses produced in certain developments all look the same; they have no individual characteristics.
- Certain schools of architecture only emphasize the useful and deliberately ignore beauty.
- Fast food necessarily will sacrifice the appearance of the food and even the taste to produce food faster and more profitably.
- Mass media caters to the audience of the least common denominator to gain ratings and revenue.
- Certain consumer items, such as the iPhone, allow little variation in design so that the consumer must adapt to the product rather than the other way around.
- Every shopping mall looks the same, with the same stores and the same products.

● **How can a balanced economy help to repair the break between the goals of beauty and utility?**

A balanced economy can help repair this break by:

- Marking everything with something of the human element, however small;
- Placing more emphasis on the needs of the consumer rather than the convenience of the producer;
- Providing for quantity and quality, making the necessary adjustments;
- Integrating into the cultural life of the community, thus enriching products;
- Allowing craftsmanship to flourish by opening up space for craftsmen to work and produce; and
- Seeking beauty, truth, and good that bring with it the practical and the useful.

Such efforts would give rise to a much more diverse marketplace, making it more delightful and interesting.

● **What are some practical ways that you can restore balance to your personal economic and spiritual lives and combat standardization?**

- Practical ways include the following:
- Be a good Christian.
- If you must use standardized things, put your mark on them and change them according to your needs.
- Prefer products that are marked by the human touch.
- Look and ask for beauty in products, even in those mass-produced.

- Find the level of standardization which you can bear and do not go beyond that point.
- Seek to put the mark of your personality in all that you do.
- Develop the arts in yourself.
- Respect and cultivate craftsmanship.
- Buy the best and most “spiritual” product that you can afford.
- Avoid fad and fashions that tend to massify the person.
- A calm, temperate family life is the best way to avoid the dangers of standardization and cultivate an economic life with meaning and purpose.

Chapter 43 | *A Proportional Scale Economy*

Criticizing gigantism does not mean that smallness is the ideal scale of things. What is needed is a proportional scale economy that corresponds to human nature.

The problem with gigantism is not its bigness, but its disproportional aspect. Even smallness can be disproportional. Uneasiness towards disproportion arises from the instinct of sociability. Man becomes uneasy when there is no point of reference and things appear unfamiliar, unknown, mysterious, and faceless.

One example of this uneasiness is massive and disproportional immigration. It destroys points of reference and overwhelms society's ability to absorb new elements into a unified culture.

In the medieval world, every necessary institution was familiar and often was within walking distance. Each resident had a familiar role that was clearly understood. Both farm villages and city neighborhoods created an organic sense of community for those who dwelt and worked there.

This sense of proportion and the points of reference are what must be restored. While monstrous proportions must be rejected, there can be proportion in bigness. Economic endeavors can involve greatness and grandeur without disorienting and disturbing an economy. Likewise, the capacity of people to respond to proportion differs greatly. The ideal arrangement is a proportional and harmonious representation of large, medium, and small holdings that form a unity with mutual protection.

Arbitrary limitations of size or wealth will not resolve the problem. Rather, the truly crucial elements are proportion and points of reference.

Discussion Questions

- **Provide examples of how disproportion and lack of reference cause uneasiness in economy and society.**
 - Man is naturally reassured by the familiar and homemade.
 - When something has no reference, there is no guarantee the product is good or backed up by the producer.
 - Strangeness of a product or influence is something that needs to be learned over time. This learning curve causes uneasiness.
 - The global is very vague and not reassuring. One is not sure where it comes from.
 - The use of products produced by questionable labor practices and human rights violations like that of China rightly causes uneasiness among those who are moral.
 - Not knowing the producer can be a source of uneasiness, especially if dishonesty is suspected.
 - When things are too big we become lost and disoriented by the mere bigness of it.

- **Why and how can bigness disorient? Why and how can smallness disorient?**

Bigness disorients:

 - When something is so huge that we cannot comprehend its operations.
 - When there is overregulation.
 - When it is so huge we cannot understand how it is governed as in the case of big government.
 - When it is so huge that it cannot make agile decisions, as in the case of companies that lose the ability to make these decision because of top-heavy management or bureaucracy.
 - When it is so huge that it has no connection with a locality or a people; there is no point of reference. For example, a big factory in the middle of an industrial park often has no link with a locality.
 - When it is so huge that it works like a machine and turns the person into a cog.

Smallness disorients:

- When something is so small that it becomes stagnant by its lack of movement or action as in a small office with little dynamism.
- When a company or village becomes a den of gossip and intrigue.
- When the lack of new blood stifles the introduction of new ideas or products.
- When smallness causes a lack of admiration for grand horizons and ideas.
- When smallness leads to pettiness.

● **Why and how can bigness be proportional? Why and how can smallness be proportional? Give examples.**

Bigness is proportional:

- When it conveys an idea of grandeur and wide horizons to a population: A great cathedral is proportional.
- When something is not monstrous but is big enough to be absorbed by the human intelligence such as a big project like a dam.
- When something reflects the soul of someone capable of handling big things such as a governor of a large state or a bishop of a diocese.
- When something reflects the immensity of God yet does not crush, such as the ocean or sky.
- When bigness is associated with virtue as in the case of charity, which can be immense yet human.
- When bigness exposes a person to new ideas and is a window to other perspectives, as at a university.

Smallness can be proportional:

- When it conveys the idea of the familiar and homemade, filled with affection and ingenuity.

When it conveys the idea of intimacy, as in a family.

- When it conveys the idea of solidarity within a group, as in a guild.
- When it conveys the idea of transparency, by which a person understands a group's workings and governing mechanisms.
- When smallness conveys an idea of ownership and autonomy that is healthy to the individual or family.

● **Describe concrete ways that you and your family can introduce elements of proportionality to your own economic life.**

- Be a good Catholic.
- Within a big family, help develop the spirit of the family that in turn helps people develop big and small relationships.
- Develop a balanced sense of the local and be proud of it.
- Develop a balanced sense of bigness as an expression of a culture.
- Look for points of reference in your economic choices that link you to things, such as investing in those companies that you know and in which you have an interest.
- Own property proportional to your abilities, whether it be big or little.
- Avoid false localism which buys simply because something is small or nearby.
- Develop healthy, small relationships that are intense and turned inward.
- Develop healthy, big relationships that are turned outward and more universal.

Chapter 44 | *A Missing Fortitude*

Fortitude is the virtue by which appetites and passions are guided by the rational soul with courage and constancy. Fortitude helps one brave the greatest dangers and resist intense persecution and obstacles so as to achieve one's goals. It is perfected by the divine gift of fortitude, a supernatural habit strengthening the soul and giving a relentless vigor and superhuman energy when practicing virtue.

Fortitude brings forth magnanimity, which inclines one to perform great and splendid acts worthy of honor, and also magnificence, which leads one to undertake splendid and great projects without being discouraged by their magnitude, difficulty, or expense. Society and man's fallen nature throw up many obstacles to fortitude, including:

- The hope that some technological utopia will someday cure all social problems;
- The search for a comfortable and easy material existence;
- The optimism that problems can be solved without struggle, suffering, or tragedy.

All of these are illusions since there will always be those who seek to subvert God's Law. The moment that the fight for Christian culture ceases is also the moment of defeat.

In times past, Christians knew that this struggle comes from within man's sinful natures as well as from outside threats. They acknowledged their weaknesses and called upon God to strengthen them. Special, self-sacrificing souls who practice fortitude to a high degree are always needed. Their spirit of fortitude then permeates all society. Frenetic intemperance destroys fortitude by removing traditional restraints and promoting a life of ease.

Discussion Questions

- **In what moments of your life did you display fortitude? In what moments of your life do you wish that you had displayed fortitude? Why were you able to show fortitude in one situation but not in another?**

Answers vary according to personal experience.

- **Explain the virtues of magnificence and magnanimity. How do you see them practiced in society and why are they important?**

Magnanimity is practiced:

- When one is victorious in battle and treats the other with dignity;
- When one is inclined to practice heroism in battle militarily and does so with magnanimity;
- When one is inclined to practice acts of sacrifice for the good of society;
- When one is inclined to practice protest against the abuses of the culture;
- When one is inclined to publicly manifest support for good causes and charities; and
- When one is inclined to heroic action in defense of holy Mother Church.

Magnificence is practiced:

- When one is inclined to undertake difficult projects for the common good;
- When one is inclined to build and maintain splendid things, such as a cathedral;
- When one does a great intellectual work that involves a lot of study and research; and
- When one thinks big in dealing with things that help others, as can be seen in economic projects.

- **In what concrete ways can you increase your own practice of fortitude?**
 - Be a good Catholic.
 - Reject the Hollywood mentality that tragedy should not exist.
 - Accept the sufferings that come to you with courage and resignation.

- Acknowledge the existence of sin and its bad effects on society.
 - Reject the idea that perfect happiness is possible on this earth.
 - Face suffering head on without postponement or delay.
 - Practice abnegation and sacrifice to a high degree.
 - Pray when filled with suffering and in need of strength.
 - Never develop a defeatist mentality to problems that have solutions.
-
- **How can you effectively encourage others to practice fortitude?**
 - Be an example for others.
 - Encourage people to practice virtue; never discourage a person involved in fighting himself or the culture.
 - Join together with others to fight more effectively and efficiently.
 - Ask others to pray with you for help against discouragement.
 - Point out to others the value of suffering for our salvation and the formation of character.

Chapter 45 | *Setting the Stage*

The path to a return to order is not an easy one. However, events, forces, and circumstances are converging to set the stage for some kind of major change. There are three changes that might provoke conditions for a return to order or a contrary alternative.

The first change is the very real possibility of an economic collapse of massive proportions. The second is a massive social failure coming from the failure of the American cooperative union that traditionally solved problems. The final change involves the tensions of modern life, which is a result of the polarized nature of a country divided into two Americas: one defined by a failing cooperative union; the other by the willingness to sacrifice for God, family, and country. As the two Americas become more separate, it becomes harder to work out a consensus.

Now is the time to reflect and debate the course that must be taken. It is not a matter of *if* but *when* the present crisis will force the country to change. Articulated principles and ideas are needed to rally around, especially in light of socialist alternatives. Only a new vision that goes beyond frenetic intemperance can help forge a new consensus for the future.

Discussion Questions

- **What evidence exists that one of these three circumstances—or some combination—are presently threatening our society?**

Signs of an economic collapse of massive proportions:

- The great burden of government, business, and consumer debt upon society;
- The demographic implosion that threatens the nation's entitlement programs by the lack of young people to pay for older people's benefits;
- The frenetic intemperance of modern economy and its bubbles;
- The sluggish global economy that does not seem to be able to grow sufficiently;
- The dangers of unfunded liabilities and pension funds; and
- The dangers of deflation and gluts in the market.

Signs of the breakdown of our cooperative union:

- The political polarization of the nation over many moral and other issues;
- The breakdown of the political system that is gridlocked;
- The breakdown of religious liberty that once was a very strong component of the co-op;
- The breakdown of institutions such as education and the military that once untied the nation; and
- The economic breakdown that aggravates the failure of the co-op system.

Signs of internal tensions in modern life:

- The moral polarization that is creating major problems around issues like abortion and homosexual marriage;
- The moral breakdown of the family that is tearing the country apart;
- The appearance of reactions favoring the family and morality that reflect this tension and a desire for solutions;
- A willingness to sacrifice for God and family that reflects a great affliction for the state of the nation;
- The expansion of drug use and Satanism, unhealthy alternatives that reflect internal tensions in modern life.

- **How are some people in our society preparing for the possibility of collapse? What kind of false alternatives are they adopting? What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of their preparations?** There are a variety of ways people are preparing. We list some here and leave it to the study group to discuss

strengths and weaknesses.

Benedict Option: those who think we should strategically withdraw from society and leave the Culture War in order to prepare spiritually for the breakdown of society;

Preppers: those who believe society is breaking down and people need to prepare materially by stockpiling foods and supplies in rural retreats;

Survivalists: more radical versions of the preppers who form little communities with stockpiled supplies; and

Leftist solutions: preparing to deal with the situation by advocating more and bigger government to take care of people.

● **What are some concrete ways that you can encourage yourself and others to adopt the sound ideas that will create a return to order?**

- Be a good Catholic.
- Encourage others to stay engaged in the fight, especially the Culture War.
- Develop a strong family life.
- Develop a strong spiritual life.
- Adopt all legal means to prepare; do not go outside the law.
- Take providential measures to be secure by avoiding debt and have some kind of financial security.
- Develop a willingness to sacrifice for God, family, and country; do not be an individualist.
- Look for organic solutions that appear on the horizon and avoid simplistic and easy fill-all solutions that are not really solutions.

Part 7 The Search for Meaning (Chapters 46–51)

Chapter 46 | *Returning to the Wellspring*

A new vision of life that can unify our nation is needed. This can be done by repairing to the wellspring of Christian culture from which the West came forth.

Modern society resembles a horizontal line without any fixed point of focus. This causes society to become scattered and polarized, thus favoring frenetic intemperance, expanding markets, and gigantism.

In the wellspring, society has a vertical perspective. People are drawn upward to a single point, like the lines of a steeple draw gazes toward the cross at the top. This elevates minds to transcendent values and ultimately to God.

This vision corresponds to the fundamental desires of the human heart that naturally tend toward all that is good, true, honorable, and beautiful. These desires the Greeks called the *to kalon*. They inspire self-sacrifice and bring out the best in individuals.

God's grace further perfects human nature with His grace. Thus, those who searched for God were inspired out of charity to make great sacrifices for others. Their influence permeated the culture, established a rule of honor, and gave birth to cultures and civilization. Returning to the wellspring is the best way to weather the coming storms.

Discussion Questions

- **What are the fundamental differences between a horizontal and vertical society?**

A horizontal society has these characteristics:

- It is full of distractions with no single focal point, goal, or vision for society.
- It is fundamentally egalitarian where no single interest is more important than any other.
- It is oriented toward expansion for expansion's sake.
- It is full of superficial links but with no vital connection between different parts of society.
- It is fundamentally materialistic, highlighting quantity over quality.

A vertical society has these characteristics:

- It draws our attention upward toward things that are more spiritual.
- It is transcendent and metaphysical in its orientation.
- It is a hierarchical society with a layering of orders.
- There are profound links between all parts since it all fits into a vision of the universe.
- At the height of such a society is religion.

- **Explain the importance of the good, true and beautiful (the *to kalon*) in the life of a Christian.**

The good, true and beautiful are important because:

- They correspond to the deepest and most fundamental desires of the soul.
- They represent the spiritual core of each human being.
- They awaken in us movements of dedication, devotion, and sacrifice.
- They inspire us to high standards of perfection, sanctity, or excellence.
- They give rise to heroes and saints.
- They inspire civilizations.

- **What is the importance of the supernatural and grace as a wellspring of Christian civilization?**

The supernatural and grace are important because:

- They are the principles of all beauty and the true wellspring from which Christian civilization flows.
- They perfect our nature and open up new possibility and efficacy to all our actions beyond that of which we are naturally capable.
- They bring about selfless acts of virtue that transform all society.
- They create the ideal cultural conditions for an organic Christian society.
- They cause our actions to become proportional to the attacks against us.

- **What are some concrete ways that we can inspire ourselves to return to the wellspring of our Christian values?**

- Be a good Catholic.
- Cultivate a respect for the vertical vision by being attentive to spiritual and metaphysical values and ideas.
- Do not give value to the horizontal vision that has no focus and scatters our attention.
- Seek after beautiful things because they are beautiful; do the same with the true and the good.
- Appreciate good art and music that reflect these three values of the good, true, and beautiful.
- Do not attach yourself to that which is ugly and vulgar.
- Develop manners that reflect this attitude.
- Develop a strong and deep spiritual life based on the sacraments.
- Use the inspiration of the good, true, and beautiful to practice heroic acts.
- Follow the grace of God to where it leads you.

Chapter 47 | *The Quest for the Sublime*

The wellspring awakens a natural desire for plentitude that cannot be satisfied by modernity. The object of this universal human desire must come from the sublime. The sublime consists of those things of transcendent excellence that cause souls to be overawed and captivated by their magnificence.

The sublime can captivate individuals when they experience the grandeur of great panoramas, liturgy, or works of art. Civilizations can also serve to promote a love of the sublime among its members. This can be seen in splendid and sublime works of art, architecture, political achievements, or religious devotions. Transcendent excellence also creates the greatest of masterpieces: great men and elites who produce sublime works and practice self-sacrifice in the service of God.

The highest expression of the sublime is the supernatural. God created men with an appetite for sublime things because those things speak most about Him. By knowing the sublime, men are invited to know, love, and serve God more fully. To appreciate the sublime on earth is to anticipate the Beatific Vision of Heaven in which the desire for plentitude will be fulfilled.

The practical result of the sublime is the ordering of a society according to this transcendent order. The world becomes intelligible—bristling with meaning and purpose. From wonder and the sublime come those philosophical, religious, and aesthetic reflections upon which a civilization can best be built. If an economy was based on the premise of the quest for the sublime, it would be much better—spiritually and materially.

Discussion Questions

- **Define sublimity and describe a time when you felt yourself in the presence of the sublime.**

Personal response.

- **Describe objects, masterpieces, panoramas, objects, peoples, or civilizations that you think are sublime and give reasons why you think they are sublime.**

Remember that these things must overawe the person by their beauty.

- Panoramas: Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, the oceans, grandiose mountains, overwhelming plains.
- Masterpieces: Beautiful pieces of art, beautiful music, Gregorian chant, Shakespeare, the classics, the Great Books.
- Objects: the flag, a beautiful jewel.
- People: Patton, saints, war heroes, great teachers, great leaders.
- Civilizations: Christian civilization, individual nations at the height of their glory, certain elements of oriental civilizations.

- **How can the sublime help us know and love God through an appreciation of creation?**

Give examples of how you have experienced this.

We can know and love God through creation in these ways:

- Through being overwhelmed in wonder and coming to know God in his unfathomable grandeur;
- By contemplating the immensity of the ocean or sky and seeing God's immensity;
- By contemplating beautiful things like jewels or colors and imagining God's immense beauty;
- By contemplating the order of the universe and coming to know God in His operative wisdom;
- By finding joy in practicing or receiving goodness and imagining God's unlimited goodness;
- By discerning the marvels of souls and knowing the harmonies of souls in heaven with God; and
- By coming to see our own weaknesses and finding plentitude in God who satisfies us completely.

- **What concrete steps can you take to seek the sublime in your own life and assist others to find it as well?**
 - Be a good Catholic.
 - Appreciate those excellent things that you find in life.
 - Be a lover of beauty wherever it is found, but especially when it is sublime.
 - Make an effort to appreciate those sublime things that take time to fully understand.
 - Look for the symbolism in things and how this makes the universe understandable.
 - Enjoy good liturgy.
 - Admire, do not envy, those who have sublime things—a magnificent house for example.
 - Seek out those things in you that incite a sense of wonder.
 - Acknowledge your own weaknesses and find plentitude in God.

Chapter 48 | *When Men Dream*

Sublime ideals are among the most practical things that exist. They provide material for putting dreams in motion.

The quest for the sublime requires two conditions. The first is establishing a consensus around higher values. The second is devising new ways of expressing and manifesting these values in daily life.

Dreams happen when people envision ways of doing things that will make life better. They constitute the very principle of all progress. While such dreams will not always be completely attainable, they generally point in the right direction, as does a compass.

Dreams can lead to disillusion and false utopias, because man's fallen nature often leads to evil. However, true dreams are informed by the teachings of the Church and the Ten Commandments. Then, by God's Grace, dreams can reach great heights and even become foretastes of Heaven.

There is an unfortunate tendency to separate the idealist and the pragmatist. For dreams to happen, a delicate balance is needed between these two tendencies. Thus, the true artist both envisions a masterpiece and acquires the skills to create it. This is the key to authentic progress in history. When dreams are united to a supernatural ideal turned towards God, it creates conditions for what seems impossible to become possible.

Discussion Questions

- **Consider and cite examples from history or family experience when dreams became reality. How did dreams and reality combine to create those changes?**
Cite personal incidents.
- **Why are good dreams in which we envision a better future needed for any true progress?**
They are necessary for the following reasons:
 - Dreams evoke a vision of perfection, which serves as a goal toward which we might work.
 - A dream provides a spiritual bond of unity to a community.
 - Dreams help harmonize a group which has reached a consensus.
 - Dreams are timeless inventions from which we can borrow at any time, even from past generations.
 - Dreams are a source of inspiration for other dreams.
 - Dreams inspire us to find better ways to do the things we do.
 - Dreams point us in the general direction toward which we should go, even if we do not get there.
 - Good dreams are rooted in virtue and bring us to God.
 - Good dreams allow us to think about and visualize heaven.
 - They help us trust in God to provide us with inspiration and grace to realize our dreams.
- **What are false dreams or utopias and what makes them false? Cite examples.**
 - False dreams are not rooted in reality but rather in fantasies.
 - False dreams can be linked to sin or illicit pleasures.
 - False dreams can be based on things that are not good, true, or beautiful and therefore must be rejected.
 - False dreams can be very egotistical and do not benefit the common good.
 - False dreams can lead to spectacular failures in our lives.
- **What are the two driving forces necessary for dreams to be true?**
 - The first is the impulse toward our sense of admiration, wonder, and marvelousness that inspire us to

seek the ideal.

- The second is common sense that allows us to evaluate the practical means by which we might realize our dreams. It gives balance and tempers the imagination to conform to reality.

- **What are some concrete ways by which we can cultivate good dreams in ourselves as a means to progress spiritually and materially?**

- Be a good Catholic.
- Think big in making your plans; do not be a minimalist.
- Always think about how things might be made better, more beautiful, and more conducive to virtue.
- Look for inspiration for your dreams in the dreams of others.
- As a member of a group, participate in the dreams of that group.
- Trust in God to inspire you to dream well.
- Unite with family and other groups of consensus as the foundation of dreams.
- Look for inspiration in the Church and always in the line of virtue.
- Learn to appreciate the dreams of history and be inspired by them.
- Never engage in fantasies that are completely out of reach.
- Be practical in realizing your dreams by knowing your limitations.
- Realize that at times you will not be able to obtain your dreams, but that your dreams point you in the right direction.
- Unite yourself to the Church, which is the most audacious dream imaginable.

Chapter 49 | A “Way of the Cross” Society

Dreams become nostalgic and romantic fantasies if not linked with the reality of suffering and tragedy. Therefore, dreams must be based upon the model of the Cross.

The disordered passions unleash a tyranny upon souls. The only way this can be resisted is through self-sacrifice and restraint. This in turn gives rise to a “Way of the Cross society.”

In medieval times, this was manifested in many ways. One way was by offering God the best fruits of one’s labor. Thus, man “immolated” his best products in the service of the God who immolated Himself for man. Another way was the pursuit of excellence for the sake of excellence. Doing everything excellently meant that even the most modest objects had a certain splendor. Medieval man saw this quest for excellence as a path to God, by making creation better reflect God. An act of labor thus became a veritable prayer.

When this spirit permeates everything, all society grows in quality and excellence. Such arduous effort was rewarded with a flowering of education, books, art, music, charity, and culture that gave value, meaning, and beauty to all things human.

Quidvis recte factum: quamvis humile praeclarum. Whatever is rightly done, however humble, is noble.
—*Inscription on the mantelpiece of Sir Henry Royce, co-founder of Rolls-Royce*

Discussion Questions

- **Why is a Way of the Cross society so necessary?**
 - A way of the cross society is necessary because:
 - It anchors us in reality and the fact that bad things can happen to us.
 - It helps us keep our passions under control.
 - It helps us deal with tragedy and suffering that inevitably come upon us.
 - It helps civilize society by permeating all society and keeping things under restraint.
 - It makes frenetic intemperance impossible.
 - It keeps the passions from exercising a tyranny over the person.
 - It rewards effort and labor with excellent results.
 - It ennobles work and gives it meaning.

- **How might you exercise that first manner of practicing the Way of the Cross by offering the best of what one has to God?**
 - By giving alms to God and charity;
 - By thinking of ways to give materially that which is the best of your daily work to God, e.g., including the giving of wheat or wine for Consecration by a farmer.
 - By giving the first and best fruits of one’s labor to God.
 - By giving a part of your day in prayer.
 - By giving happily of all that one has.
 - By giving of your time to activities dedicated to God, such as singing in choir or similar Church activities.
 - By interiorly offering small daily sacrifices to God.
 - By consecrating oneself to God or Our Lady.

- **How might you exercise the second manner of practicing the Way of the Cross by offering the cross of excellence?**

This might be done by:

 - Doing the things we do more slowly and deliberately;

- Doing the things we do more organically and less mechanically;
 - Loving excellence for excellence's sake;
 - Not seeking praise for the good things that we do;
 - Seeing all our efforts as a means to make God more well known by the excellence reflected in them;
 - Including a little splendor in all that you do;
 - Seeing what you do as an art and presenting your work with beauty.
-
- **How would society benefit from a Way of the Cross society?**
Society could benefit in the following ways:
 - It would be less frantic and hectic.
 - The quality of life would definitely increase.
 - The beauty of things would be more apparent.
 - We would see the flowering of the arts.
 - It would destroy the individualistic mentality that is in everything.
 - God would be enthroned again in society.
 - Things would take on more meaning.
 - People would care more for others.
 - People would accept suffering much better.
-
- **What concrete steps could you take to implement a Way of the Cross society in your life and with others?**
 - Be a good Catholic
 - Offer up your sacrifices for sinners.
 - Accept all crosses that come your way, no matter how big or small.
 - Lose no opportunity to seek after excellence in what you do.
 - Appreciate the excellence of others.
 - Admire the excellence of others.

Chapter 50 | *The Secret of the Middle Ages*

The “secret” of the Middle Ages was medieval man’s ardent love of Christ. There was a remarkable understanding of His perfections—His wisdom, His goodness, and His justice—that permeated and unified all society. Our Lord was the point of reference for all things. What touched the medieval heart most was the Incarnation in which God became flesh and dwelt among men.

The signs of this tender love could be seen everywhere as medieval man sought to express the infinite perfections of Christ through tangible symbols. The ideal was to be like Our Lord Jesus Christ, to be linked to Him, and lose oneself in Him.

Hence, medieval man imitated Christ by embracing his own suffering, especially the hardest part of his situation, which led to perfection and sanctification. Such an attitude differs so much from today, when people flee hardship and pursue fleeting happiness.

Indeed, medieval man did not plan the Middle Ages; he merely desired to be like Jesus Christ, and the Middle Ages resulted. The secret of the Middle Ages is this lively and loving idea of Jesus Christ.

The Medieval Spirit of the *Anima Christi*

Saint Ignatius of Loyola’s cherished prayer *Anima Christi* conveys the intense medieval desire of union with Christ.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
 Body of Christ, save me.
 Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
 Water from Christ’s side, wash me.
 Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
 O Good Jesus, hear me.
 Within Thy wounds hide me.
 Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.
 From the malicious enemy defend me.
 In the hour of my death call me.
 Bid me come unto Thee,
 That I may praise Thee with Thy Saints and with Thy Angels
 Forever and ever. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- **Carefully read the *Anima Christi* above. What words does Saint Ignatius of Loyola employ to indicate the reality of Christ’s Life, Death, and Passion that should orient the lives of all Christians?**
 - He uses imagery of the body: flesh, blood, wounds.
 - He uses powerful actions that apply to a person’s life: inebriate, wash, strengthen, defend.
 - He makes the words extremely personal applying it to “me.”
 - He uses words that call to mind a great union: “not be separated”, “come unto Thee”, “within Thy wounds hide me.”
 - He uses words that remind us of an eternity together with Christ.
 - He makes Christ an ally against our enemy.
 - He calls Christ good as a sign of tenderness and affection.

- **Discuss how medieval man expressed the tenderness he felt for Christ in his daily life.**
 - Symbols and art represented all aspects of the life of Christ.
 - The liturgical year and seasons were all oriented to the life of Christ.
 - The architecture of the churches dominated the towns, showing the affection of the people that made Him the center of their lives.
 - The poetry, music, and expressions of the people reflected their tenderness toward Christ.
 - The medieval man took God as father, Christ as son, and Mary as Mother, all reflecting the family.
 - Medieval men welcomed the angels and saints to live together with them and help them on earth.

- **Discuss medieval man's identification with Christ's suffering and how he applied this to his daily life.**
 - He embraced the hardest part of his daily work with joy and resignation.
 - He saw his crosses as participation in the Cross of Christ.
 - He foresaw the sufferings of the future and embraced the ones he could not avoid with love and tenderness for Christ.
 - He worked diligently, unhurriedly, and calmly without extreme emotion or agitation.
 - He imitated Christ and sought out sanctification and perfection as a goal in all his works.
 - He produced masterpieces that reflected this spirit of Christ.
 - He took things to their final consequences and did not leave things undone.

- **What are some concrete steps that you can take to develop this personal and tender link with Christ in your life?**
 - Be a good Catholic.
 - Do not look upon religion in an abstract way, but see it as personified in Christ.
 - Pray much to Our Lord in a very personal way.
 - Look for symbolic representation of God in creation, such as the sun and moon.
 - Consider the love of God, especially during the Passion.
 - Seek to imitate Christ in all things, imagining how He would do things.
 - Practice the presence of God.
 - Learn to love Holy Communion and the Eucharist as an extremely intimate link with God.
 - Develop a tender devotion to the Blessed Mother.
 - Make God the point of reference of your life.
 - Embrace the Cross as Christ did: every day as the opportunity arises.
 - Thank God for all He has done for you, especially for your salvation.
 - Ask God for all that you need, as a son would ask a father.

Chapter 51 | *Applying the Principles of This Book*

All thought should lead to action. However, formulating a single one-size-fits-all plan of action violates the organic order that has been proposed. What must be established are basic operating principles from which will come a wide variety of concrete applications.

The first step of this process is to take personal measures to root out the frenetic intemperance in one's life. This might include looking at the fads, fashions, and frenzied consumerism of today's debt-driven economy. Individuals should see how they have been massified and influenced by marketing and public opinion. They might analyze how they have put the rule of money before family, community, or religion. Such an analysis can then lead them to change their lives.

A second task is to take positive steps to apply the principles of an organic order in one's personal life. Such organic remedies include gaining habits of reflection and introspection; striving to practice the virtues; serving as an example for others in the way one dresses, speaks, and leads. It involves embracing duty, responsibility, and sacrifice. It also includes an appreciation for wholesome intellectual development, the sublime, and what is excellent and lasting.

The third step is to understand the crisis and engage in the debate over the future course of the nation. Withdrawal from society is not an option. Rather, this step calls for engaging in the fight for the culture and economy. It involves working with similar ideas and joining in on the debate.

The final step involves a disposition to make sacrifices. It calls for foregoing one's own legitimate self-interest and search for personal happiness for the sake of the nation. Further, there is a need to inspire a nation of heroes and propose an organic Christian society as a standard rallying point.

Discussion Questions

- **How have you personally been affected by frenetic intemperance and how can you adjust your life accordingly? When can you find time to examine this in depth?**

Look at these questions raised in the summary: How have we been caught up in the fads, fashions, and frenzied consumerism of our debt-driven economy; how have we been massified and influenced by marketing and public opinion; how have we put the rule of money before family, community, or religion?

Some ideas of how one is affected by frenetic intemperance were discussed in prior chapters. The emphasis here should be on concrete measures to limit the influence of these factors on your personal life.

- **How can you apply the principles of an organic order to your personal life?**

Again look at the summary above: Such organic remedies include gaining habits of reflection and introspection; striving to practice the virtues; serving as an example for others; embracing duty, responsibility, and sacrifice. It includes promoting appreciation for what is excellent and lasting, the development of a wholesome intellectual life. It calls for an appreciation of the sublime.

- **How can you better understand the crisis and engage in the debate over the nation's future?**

This might be done in the following ways:

- Keep informed with the news and the crisis around us, even if it is disagreeable or stressful to do so.
- Do not withdraw from society, but engage in promoting the principles of a return to order.
- Look for ways to network with others, for there is strength in unity.
- Protest and debate when your principles are in danger.
- Encourage others and do not discourage them.
- Be willing to lead in the fight for the culture.

- **How can you sacrifice for the common good and be leaders and beacons in the modern darkness?**
 - Be a good Catholic.
 - Never be afraid to speak your mind and stand up for your principles.
 - Give to those who fight for right.
 - Volunteer to help in organizations that are engaged in fighting the culture.
 - Take responsibility for tasks involved around the fight for the culture.
 - Engage in good conversation about the state of the nation.
 - Pray much for the nation.
 - Lead and be led by others.
 - Never give up or give in to discouragement.

Grand Return Home

There will be no return to order without a great moral conversion of some kind. As long as a framework of frenetic intemperance remains in place, the nation will always carry within it the seeds of its own destruction. This calls for moving outside this framework.

The model for conversion is the parable of the Prodigal Son. The Prodigal Son recognized his errors, abandoned a life of frenetic intemperance, and returned to his father.

The path of the Prodigal Son consisted of four steps:

He recognized his sin.

- America must also realize its errors and be sorry for them, especially those in the line of frenetic intemperance.

He longed for his father's house.

- So also modern man should long for the order of Christian civilization. This calls for dreaming of order where economy rests on honor and society's laws are based upon the Commandments. The path to success must be the Way of the Cross and the point of reference must be Our Lord Jesus Christ.

He clashed with a misguided culture.

- Modern man must rise up and begin the journey away from the present culture of frenetic intemperance that has led to ruin. This calls for leaving behind the rule of money.

He responded to the father's love.

- God desires the grand return home of modern man much more than modern men wish to return. God will not be outdone in His generosity to those who make an effort to return. To the solicitude of a father, there is also the affection of a mother, Our Lady, who also intensely desires the good of those who wish to return.

All this must be seen in the context of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima. In 1917, she warned men about the errors of these times. She spoke of a coming crisis and extended an invitation to dwell in a Christian order where her Immaculate Heart would triumph—a return to order.

Discussion Questions

Read the parable of the Prodigal Son. Reflect upon its similarities to our days (St. Lk. 15:11–32).

● **What are the errors of our ways that should lead us to consider the house of the Father?**

Errors of our ways include frenetic intemperance, materialism, individualism, technological utopianism, pragmatism, and the lack of the sublime. List other problems that plague society.

● **What should we long for in the Father's house?**

We should long for:

- Organic Christian society and all the joys and sufferings that it brings;
- Order in a time of disorder;
- The satisfaction of our desire for the good, true, beautiful, and the sublime; and
- The Way of the Cross and the doing of one's duty, with Christ as the central point of reference.

- **How might we clash with the culture as the Prodigal Son did?**

This can be done by:

- Realizing the party is over;
- Rejecting other parties that might arise to replace the present one;
- Clashing with the rule of money that cheapens and orients everything;
- Looking for companions in the struggle;
- Rejecting all the empty pleasures of modern life and denouncing their emptiness; and
- Talking about the marvels of the Father's house as an alternative.

- **How can we react to the Father's Love?**

We can react by:

- Realizing that the Father loves us more than we love ourselves.
- Realizing that He desires our good more than we do.
- Realizing that He gave us His own Mother who shares in His love and solicitude.
- Praying to them, and honor and praise them.
- Throwing ourselves into God's hands, asking for His mercy.
- Thanking God for all His Blessings.
- Taking to heart the promises and warnings of Our Lady of Fatima.
- Uniting our desire for an organic Christian society with that of others to bring about the reign of the Immaculate Heart promised at Fatima.

Conclusion

This concludes the study guide for the book, *Return to Order: From a Frenzied Economy to an Organic Christian Society—Where We've Been, How We Got Here, and Where We Need to Go*. Hopefully it has proven helpful for the study of the book and its applications to society.

However, this study is not the end of a process but the beginning. The goal of this book is to provide the framework for a national discussion about the nation's future. In a climate where everyone proposes economic solutions to moral problems, this book emphasizes the contrary: economic problems can only be resolved by a moral regeneration.

As long as the present cruise ship economy exists, an immediate return to order cannot be expected. It is when the storm arrives and everything is disoriented that the principles of this book will be the most helpful. They will provide guidance and inspiration to a nation in need. That is why it is important that *Return to Order* be studied now. The publisher and author hope that this study guide has helped readers find ways to apply its principles. May it encourage those engaged in the great fight for America's return to order. May it also help those outside America to understand the present crisis and apply these same principles to their own situations.

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Any questions and commentaries about this study guide or *Return to Order* are most welcome. Anyone who would like to help promote the ideas and principles found in *Return to Order* are asked to contact the author at the address below.

All the efforts are dedicated to Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom. May she guide our nation in the times ahead. ■

Those who wish to do more to join the debate over America's future can contact the Return to Order campaign and the author at the address below:

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