A PREFACE

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The authors of these essays, as their reader will discover, are united in their admiration for the tradition of St. Thomas. Many of them, in fact, are willing to give their own philosophical allegiance to it. Yet, as their essays also show, disagreement over the correct interpretation of St. Thomas can still cause discord in the ranks of philosophers who look to him for inspiration. Thomists can still be found, it would appear, who find it hard to extend the hand of fellowship to colleagues whose understanding of the Angelic Doctor differs from their own. Disagreement among Thomists, however, can be an encouraging sign. Shared devotion to St. Thomas, combined with a readiness to disagree with their colleagues over the proper interpretation of his teaching, has always been a characteristic of thinkers in the tradition of the Angelic Doctor; and if, as these essays show, lively discussion and spirited controversy can still be found in it, the tradition of St. Thomas must still retain its life and vigor.

Indeed my own historical study of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century neo-Thomistic *movement* (as part of an older and identifiable *tradition* of St. Thomas) has given support to my own confidence in the vitality of that larger tradition. The neo-Thomistic *movement* began modestly in the nineteenth century, and, after the promulgation of Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris*, developed into a leading force in twentieth-century Catholic thought. Reaching its high point at the middle of the century, the movement then found it difficult to retain its internal unity, and, after Vatican II, neo-Thomism was forced to surrender the position of leadership which it had enjoyed in Catholic philosophy and theology.

The beginning and end of the neo-Thomist movement, however, should not be equated with the birth and death of the broader tradition of St. Thomas in which it is included. Neo-Thomism, after all, was not the first revival movement within that tradition, nor is there any reason to claim that it will be the last. In the decades before and after the Council of Trent, an outstanding group of Dominicans restored the teaching of St. Thomas to its place of honor in their order. Because they had done so, the Dominicans, Jesuits, and Carmelites of the Second Scholasticism were able to draw on the resources of St. Thomas's thought to deal with the new set of problems confronting the post-Reformation church. In the

anti-religious and anti-metaphysical atmosphere of the Enlightenment, however, the Second Scholasticism lost its vitality and influence; and, by the time that Thomism was revived again in the nineteenth century, it had been practically forgotten.

The tradition of St. Thomas then is older than the organized neo-Thomist movement, and it has survived that movement's end. Significant thinkers in the tradition of St. Thomas continued their work in the second half of the twentieth century. Some of them, like Rahner and Lonergan, were theologians influenced by Maréchal; but Maréchalian Thomism was not the only late twentieth-century claimant to the mantle of St. Thomas. William Norris Clarke and Cornelio Fabro—neither of whom were Maréchalians—developed St. Thomas's metaphysics of the person, to which Jacques Maritain had helped to call attention, and inspired the personalist Thomism of Karol Wojtyla. St. Thomas's ethics, as neo-Thomists had shown, is linked to his philosophy of the virtues and connatural knowledge, a point on which both Maritain and Rousselot were in agreement. In recent years three themes have drawn the attention of Alasdair MacIntyre and suggested the new approach to St. Thomas which we find in his later work. Despite the diversity among these thinkers, St. Thomas's influence upon their thought is unmistakable; and a new generation of ethicians has begun to look to St. Thomas for the solution to problems which post-Cartesian rationalism and empiricism cannot handle.

The tradition of St. Thomas, I am convinced, would not have survived and prospered, as it has, were it not for the contribution which the neo-Thomists made to it. Although the basic positions of Thomism are identifiable, the neo-Thomist movement did not realize its early hopes of creating a unified system of contemporary philosophy. The essays in this book will make that evident. Thomists in the tradition of Gilson and Maritain remain opposed to Thomists in the tradition of Rousselot and Maréchal on a number of fundamental issues, and, if Thomism is to be looked at as a tightly woven system, there cannot be a place for all of them within it. That does not mean, however, as MacIntyre is inclined to think, that there are "too many Thomisms" and that the movement which produced them ended in speculative failure. Much more came from the neo-Thomist movement than the historical and textual research which it stimulated. Historians, like Gilson, Chenu, van Steenberghen, and Weisheipl, have indeed enabled us to distinguish the thought of St. Thomas himself from the additions and modifications made by the Commentators of the Second Scholasticism. In addition to the work of its historians, however, the neo-Thomist movement has left us an important speculative heritage. The speculative

development of St. Thomas's thought by the neo-Thomist thinkers has a lasting value in itself; and the tradition of St. Thomas would be very much the poorer if it were to be forgotten.

Contemporary Thomists, for example, can learn much from the work of Maritain. While Gilson and Chenu favored a more historical approach to Thomas, Maritain, like Gardeil and Garrigou-Lagrange, showed great respect for the tradition of St. Thomas's Second Scholasticism Commentators. Nevertheless, if Maritain was willing to work as a Thomist in that venerable Dominican tradition, he exploited his inherited resources in his own creative way. Maritain's speculative extension of Thomas's epistemology and metaphysics to the areas of speculative and practical knowledge, connaturality, aesthetics, ethics, and political philosophy remain an important part of Thomism's philosophical heritage. Years after Maritain's death, the younger ethicians and social philosophers, who have rediscovered the Aristotelian distinction between practical and speculative knowledge and, like Alasdair MacIntyre, have seen its importance for Thomistic ethics, can learn a great deal from the reading of Maritain. They will profit even more if, instead of reading isolated sections of his work, they study its whole corpus. Few thinkers of our time have been as sensitive to the richness and diversity of human knowledge and few have confronted more manfully than Maritain the problems of its integration.

In the early years of our century, when Maritain first encountered the Angelic Doctor, the possibility of a realistic metaphysics and of analogous knowledge of God had become a crucial problem for Catholic theologians. Both were required to defend the credibility of Christian revelation and the ability of the Church to make abiding dogmatic statement. Maritain, like Gardeil, Rousselot and Maréchal, endeavored to defend the possibility of both against the philosophical attacks made upon them; and, like other neo-Thomists, he did so in his own distinctive way. The neo-Thomists' remarkable defense of the philosophical foundations of the Christian faith led to disagreement among them, and the issues raised in the subsequent controversy over the epistemological grounding of metaphysics, as the essays in this book reveal, are still the fundamental issues which confront the defender of a realistic philosophy of being.

Contemporary speculative Thomism then, in many ways, is a continuation of the work begun by the great neo-Thomists. Many of its major themes, and its stress on insight, connaturality, practical knowledge and the human person, together with its use of the interplay of consciousness, concept and judgment to ground the analogy of being manifest continuity with the neo-Thomist movement. It will not be

enough therefore for a younger philosopher, anxious to acquaint himself with the speculative resources of the Thomistic tradition, to confine himself to the text of St. Thomas alone. He will have to study as well, and at some depth, the works of the great neo-Thomists.

Thomism, after all, like any living tradition, has its *Wirkungsgeschichte* or effective history. It may be bad history, as Gilson remarked, to ask St. Thomas himself to solve problems which he never faced. But his greatest disciples were asked to face a number of new problems, and, in the Second and Third Scholasticism, they extended their master's thought to deal with them. When their efforts were successful, they provided the resources for further speculative work. Maritain, who knew what it was to think in the tradition of St. Thomas, was happy to draw upon the resources provided by the Dominicans of the Second Scholasticism and develop them further in his own creative work. Contemporary philosophers, like James Ross, Jorge Gracia, and Alfred Freddoso, have remarked in their works on Suarez and Molina that the Jesuits of the Second Scholasticism—who, in their minds at least, were followers of the Angelic Doctor—might have similar resources to offer philosophy today. The neo-Thomists, who continued the tradition of St. Thomas, faced many of the problems in epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics which the contemporary philosopher must still confront. And the younger Thomist benefits by reading them. The unity of this tradition will be made manifest to him by the large area of agreement which he will find expressed in their philosophy. The issues which divided the great neo-Thomists were significant ones and, alerted by those disagreements, the young Thomist can think the basic issues in Thomism through for himself and decide where he stands as a disciple of St. Thomas.

As time goes by, however, some of those disagreements may seem less central than they appeared to be at the height of the neo-Thomist movement. Contemporary philosophers have lost their faith in the Cartesian or the Kantian starting point as the guarantor of a firmly grounded philosophical method, and Thomists, as some of the essays in this volume show, are more ready than they were during the neo-Thomist movement to link St. Thomas's philosophy to his theology. The timeless thinking mind of Descartes and Kant, philosophers now admit, is at best an abstraction and, in all likelihood, an illusion. In the changed philosophical climate of our day, Thomists no longer feel themselves obliged to debate with Descartes and Kant following the rules set down by post-Cartesian philosophy. They are less concerned than the neo-Thomists were in determining whether a Thomist can work his way from the mind to reality by consistent use of transcendental method or

whether an attempt like that must inevitably end in failure.

For the contemporary Thomist then some of the older distance between Gilsonian and Maréchalian Thomism may be bridged more easily. Contemporary personalist Thomists, like Norris Clarke and Karol Wojtyla, after all, neither begin their metaphysics with the grasp of *esse* in the phantasm nor work their way from consciousness to being by a transcendental method. Clarke and Wojtyla are both realists who encounter being in the activity of interpersonal community; and Clarke has seen, as Maritain saw many years ago, that reflection on the dynamic contribution of the mind to knowledge of being need not be linked to the use of a transcendental method. Now that reflection on knowledge is no longer associated with the Cartesian problematic, there may be more unity among Thomists in their approach to it and a greater readiness among them to extend the hand of fellowship to one another. As heirs of a great tradition, Thomists share a common heritage which belongs to them all and of which they can all be proud.