

## *Editor's Note*

In October of the year 2000 the American Maritain Association held its annual meeting at the University of Notre Dame to discuss the theme that appears as the title of this volume. The conference brought together young and mature scholars from the United States and from abroad to discuss a topic of importance for the academy and for our world in the new millennium. While some intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century argued that scientific progress would eventually cause the demise of religion, it is evident that this has not been the case and that contemporary science is in fact not necessarily inimical to a religious worldview. So, a fruitful dialogue between science and religion has become a reality. But there is also a more fundamental question that arises, which is not simply the relationship of the sciences or of other disciplines to religion, but rather whether our faith can and should have an impact on our teaching and research as scholars.

My basic premise in organizing the 2000 AMA conference was to hold that the Christian faith provides us with definite cognitive advantages and that to leave one's faith at the entrance of the campus, thus separating faith from reason, leads to a schizophrenic view of the Christian's intellectual life. The Maritain conference thus provided intellectuals who are also religious believers—not all of whom were Christian—with the opportunity of discussing the real influence of their faith on their scholarship. In consonance with the thought of Pope John Paul II, it is my contention that a faith which imbues research and teaching will effect a transformation not only in the intellectuals themselves, but also in their students and eventually in society; hence, a faith that is fully received, thought out and lived, will penetrate culture; and there is no doubt that present-day culture stands in need of transformation. In fact, the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* attributes the secularization of the West in great part to the separation of faith from culture. Maritain himself, more than fifty years ago, recognized that modern and contemporary culture had severed its ties with the sacred and in so doing had turned its back on humanity.

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The essays that appear in this volume were thus selected from among the many papers presented at the 2000 Maritain conference; they have been arranged in four parts. Those in the first part deal with different modes of intellectual inquiry, from the classical and medieval to the modernist and post-modernist conceptions of inquiry. In order to understand the metaphysical and ethical questions that confront the human person, the authors have sought wisdom in the works of Thomas Aquinas and in Pope John Paul II's Christocentric conception of intellectual inquiry. The essays of the second part are concerned with education and with the need for good moral dispositions, faith, and prayer to enlighten reason. In the third part of the volume, faith's impact on science, bioethics, and time is evident in the authors' reflections. And in the fourth and final part, society and culture are viewed from different philosophical and theological perspectives.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the former president of the American Maritain Association, Curtis Hancock, and to Peter Redpath and Anthony O. Simon, for their encouragement and support of my initial idea for the AMA conference of the year 2000; without their vote of confidence the conference would not have taken place nor would this volume of essays have become a reality. I am particularly indebted to the Homeland Foundation for a grant that has made possible the publication of this volume in a timely fashion. A special thanks goes to the co-editor, my colleague Marie George, for her efficient help in editing and formatting the essays; her computer skills and her keen sense of appropriate linguistic usage have proved invaluable in bringing the editing process to a speedy completion. I would also like to thank all the contributors for their essays, which show that the light of faith does indeed provide the scholar with cognitive advantages in his pursuit of truth. I am very grateful to Robert Royal, founder of the Faith and Reason Institute in Washington, D.C., for his willingness to write the introduction to this volume. He clearly points out that despite the lack of coherence and truth in our culture, human beings today—as in every epoch—have a profound need for meaning and transcendence—a need which Catholic thought at its best can help to satisfy.

A final word about the cover—Rembrandt's *Philosopher in Meditation*. It portrays well what the essays in this volume convey: that the light of reason and the light of faith can work harmoniously together in the journey and ascent to the truth.