

# HORIZONS

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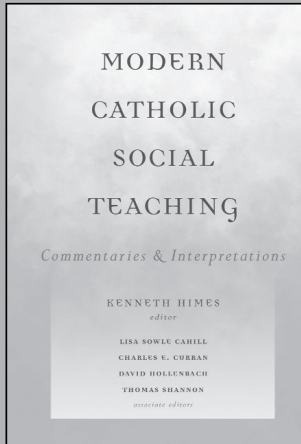
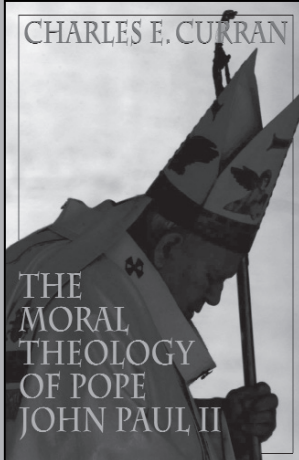
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# HORIZONS

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The purpose of the College Theology Society is to improve the quality of the teaching of religion: by stimulating and sharing scholarly research; by developing programs of theology and religious studies which meet student needs and interests; and by exploring, evaluating, and encouraging effective ways of teaching which are interdisciplinary and ecumenical.

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## ***From the Editor***

By all accounts, Pope Benedict XVI's recent visit to the United States was a rousing success—indeed, my local paper (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*) judged it “a transforming event” that “casts Benedict in a new, warmer light.” While Joseph Ratzinger is hardly unknown to Catholic theologians, you may have been as surprised as I to hear the pope address the clerical sexual abuse crisis head-on throughout his visit, revealing how he had been affected personally by the scandal and its fallout. His private meeting with abuse victims was a warmly-welcomed (and, to the public, unexpected) exercise of pastoral care that almost overshadowed the announced focus of his visit, his challenging address to the assembly at the United Nations.

Not to be lost among such important events is Benedict's address to Catholic educators at The Catholic University of America. His assertion that “God's desire to make himself known, and the innate desire of all human beings to know the truth, provide the context for human inquiry into the meaning of life” describes the Catholic educational task in terms that should encourage those of us who regularly contend with instrumentalized, business-model depictions of our colleges and universities. I especially welcomed his affirmation of academic freedom along with his emphasis on the university's essential mission to point to God's truth which “invit[es] us to respond with our whole being.” But (as Robert Mickens pointed out in *The Tablet*, 28 April 2008) there was an evident ambiguity as well: support for academic freedom was immediately followed by the restriction that it not be used “to justify positions that contradict the faith and the teaching of the Church.” Ratzinger has addressed the issue of academic freedom before (in *The Nature and Mission of Theology*). But it would have been instructive to have heard a bit more on his recent thoughts regarding how the much-discussed relationship between freedom and Catholic mission might be successfully negotiated by both Catholic and non-Catholic faculty, especially since the dialogue of different cultures with Catholicism—and thus the responsibility to both identity and difference—has become a prominent issue during his pontificate.

That the Christian view indeed looks for God's truth in every aspect of life is a point with which all readers of *Horizons* can agree. This wide purview is evident in the current issue which contains essays on the self, agency, and conversion (John Edwards), metaphors in ecclesiology (Brian Flanagan), religious pluralism (Mara Brecht), catechesis (Robert Brancatelli), and persons in community (Joseph Bracken). The book review symposium highlights John Piderit and Melanie Mory's recent book on Catholic identity in Catholic higher education; their argument elicits sharp analyses from our distinguished panel of reviewers. Our book review section, with its expected wide range of topics, provides this issue's coda.

I wish to point out two changes in our masthead and thereby recognize the contributions of two fine scholars who have served the readers of *Horizons* faithfully for many years. William Thompson-Uberuaga, recently retired from his professorship at Duquesne University, has also retired from our editorial board. We wish Bill all the best as he returns to the Idaho that he loves. On a sadder note, Anne Carr, professor emerita of the University of Chicago Divinity School and best known for her work on Rahner, Merton, and her ground-breaking book *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience* (1988), died on 11 February 2008. In the next issue of the journal we will publish the homily that Fr. Leo O'Donovan, SJ delivered at her funeral. A *précis* of her career is available on the University of Chicago website ([http://news.uchicago.edu/news.php?asset\\_id=1272](http://news.uchicago.edu/news.php?asset_id=1272)). *Requiescat in pace.*

—Anthony J. Godzieba