

# On Janus' Day

## *for a painter*

On Janus' day you should receive  
Sweetmeats and copper coins — he's  
Surely your patron, patron of  
All beginnings, doors, gates, gateways —  
Janus' day, the year's beginning, the  
Take-off for fresh inventions. There's  
So much rubbish we have to keep  
Walking away from, so much  
Orderly rubbish not worth the time  
Taken to raid it. But, open the gate  
To make again for the wilderness —  
The guard seizes you, the city fathers  
Meet in council, and all the news-sheets  
Cry criminal and submit you to  
A long degrading trial. Can they think  
You are taking valuables of theirs with you?  
Though it was never mentioned, your  
Crime was to leave the gate open — who  
Knows what monsters might wander in,  
Abnormally tall, twin-faced, or  
Tar-stained, unrecognizable, a saviour?

**Benet Weatherhead**

## **Prepapal Influences on John Paul II's Thought**

**John M. Grondelski**

Any attempt to understand the various influences which have shaped the thinking of Pope John Paul II on the fiftieth anniversary of his priestly ordination must reckon with the 32 years of Karol Wojtyla's priesthood prior to his papal election in 1978. Indeed, in total honesty, one must also

probe the 26 years of Wojtyła's youth and early adulthood prior to his ordination November 1, 1946. Someone with even a basic knowledge of the thought of Karol Wojtyła has to acknowledge the profound degree of continuity between the prepapal thought of Karol Wojtyła and the papal thought of John Paul II. Unfortunately, Karol Wojtyła's prepapal thought remains a neglected field of study, less so among philosophers than among theologians in the United States, but still a field worthy of more attention than it has received. In this essay I want to discuss some of the influences of Wojtyła's thought during those Polish years, influences which in my judgment have left lasting marks on his thought. I identify seven such factors, though I would not claim that this list is exhaustive. These seven factors are rather convenient points around which to arrange the prepapal influences on John Paul II's thought. These seven are: (1) the interwar Polish ethos; (2) Polish literature; (3) Carmelite mysticism; (4) Neoscholastic Thomism; (5) Lublin Thomism and phenomenology; (6) interwar and postwar Catholic thought in Poland; and (7) the Second Vatican Council.

(1) The Interwar Polish Ethos: Karol Wojtyła was born in 1920, about a year and a half after Poland regained her independence following 123 years of partition. He was born at a time when Polish national consciousness was strong, a necessary element to forge one nation out of three parts of separate empires, with differing legal, social, and cultural conditions that, to varying degrees, interfered with the indigenous Polish national heritage of the imperial subjects. It was an unstable Poland, whose international situation was still not finally regulated by the Versailles and post-Versailles settlements and whose domestic political situation was volatile. Karol Wojtyła was born in what had been Austrian Poland, the partition zone where Polish national traditions were least suppressed, in a small town within the cultural orbit of Kraków, Poland's once-political and still cultural capital. He was born into a Catholic family, into a faith which for a century and a quarter was the active guardian of Polish culture and tradition. He was born into a cosmopolitan Poland, in which ten percent of the population consisted of Jews who, in large measure, dominated economic life in small towns like Wojtyła's native Wadowice. (To this day Jerzy Kluger, one of Wojtyła's Jewish boyhood friends, is a papal correspondent). Ukrainians, Germans, and Belarussians also made up significant minorities in interwar Poland and, while intergroup relations may not always have been ideal, the heterogeneity of interwar Poland exposed Wojtyła to the realities--both good and bad--of cultural pluralism and diversity. Wojtyła's Poland was a state acutely aware of the value of freedom and of the rights of small and weak nations, lodged as it was between a Russia suffering the convulsions of the Bolshevik Revolution

and what would eventually become Nazi Germany. All these factors colored Wojtyla's thinking and would significantly impact upon his future life.

(2) Polish Literature: Another important strand of influence on the young Karol Wojtyla was Polish literature. Wojtyla had, after all, completed one year of studies in 1938-39 at Kraków's Jagiellonian University, majoring in Polish philology. Wojtyla had already tried his hand at writing plays as well as at acting during high school. Even as a bishop Wojtyla continued to write plays as well as pen poems, often under pseudonyms like Andrzej Jawien. The traditional Polish gymnasium education of Wojtyla's youth would have provided an introduction to Polish literature. The 19th century Polish literary tradition, such an important vehicle for sustaining national identity during Poland's years of statelessness, contains two important literary movements of potentially great influence on Wojtyla: Romanticism and Messianism. Romantic writers like Mickiewicz and Krasinski kept alive national cultural ideals and self-image. Juljusz Slowacki's haunting poem about a coming "Slavic Pope" retrospectively might be seen as a prophecy of Wojtyla. The "Messianic Movement" in Polish literature, led by figures like Towianski and Mickiewicz, presented Poland as the "Christ of the Nations," now crucified but destined to rise again with a special role to play in Christianity. [The Congregation of the Resurrection, or the Resurrectionist Fathers, is a manifestation of that movement in the Church's religious life.] Polish literary influences can be discerned in the humanistic interests as well as the writing style of Karol Wojtyla. Though Wojtyla's formal engagement with Polish philology may have been brief, it did leave a lasting mark.

(3) Carmelite Mysticism: Wojtyla's university studies were cut short at the beginning of second year with the German occupation of Poland and the Nazi suppression of all universities. Wojtyla kept his literary interests alive by performing in the clandestine Rhapsodic Theater, but more important was keeping alive period. During World War II Wojtyla worked as a manual laborer. He also came under the influence of Cracovian tailor, Jan Tyranowski, who introduced Wojtyla to elements of the Carmelite tradition, particularly spiritual mystics like Ss. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. One testimony to the lasting influence of the Carmelite tradition on Wojtyla was that he wrote his doctoral dissertation in theology at Rome's Angelicum University on the problem of faith in St. John of the Cross.

(4) Neoscholastic Thomism: Wojtyla spent two years at the Angelicum, one of the centers of the Neoscholastic revival ushered in by Pope Leo XIII. At the Angelicum Wojtyla would have imbibed

Neoscholastic Thomistic realism of the school of R. Garrigou-Lagrange, Wojtyła's dissertation mentor. This period, coupled with the traditional Thomism Wojtyła would have learned in his underground seminary years in Kraków during the War (as well as his later work in the Thomistic renewal centered around the Catholic University of Lublin—KUL—and known as "Lublin Thomism") provides the fundamental intellectual floor for Wojtyła's thought: Thomistic philosophical realism.

(5) Lublin Thomism and Phenomenology: The imposition of communism on postwar Catholic Poland confronted the Church with the task of offering a comprehensive and alternative philosophical world-view to the official Marxist ideology of the ruling circles. The traditional Thomistic philosophy then still being taught in American seminaries simply would not have done as a philosophical rival to the Marxist *Weltanschauung*. The Church in Poland offered this alternative in the form of Lublin Thomism. Wojtyła was among the first generation of Lublin Thomists, whose intellectual inspiration owed in large part to the work of the Dominican Mieczysław Albert Krapiec, later Rector of KUL. Lublin Thomism itself is something of an umbrella, with various strands drawing inspiration from the insights of the overall movement. Krapiec focused his interests in metaphysics and anthropology, although today he has turned more towards cultural and political issues. Wojtyła focused on ethics, incorporating the contemporary "turn-to-the-subject" as a key element in his existentialist personalism. Wojtyła also brought the insights of Schelerian phenomenology to bear upon his ethics, using the thought of the German philosopher to illumine the existential and subjective moments in his ethical analyses. But Schelerian phenomenology remains an important but secondary philosophical tool for Wojtyła. Wojtyła is emphatic that any contemporary ethic, certainly an existentialist ethic, needs the permanent base of a realistic philosophy of the kind supplied by Thomism to ground a genuine personalism. Phenomenology may help illustrate human behavior and illumine its subjective aspects but in the last analysis, for Wojtyła, *operari sequitur esse*. Wojtyła is willing to mine contemporary philosophies for the contributions they can make to a richer Christian philosophy, but he insists that at the base of that philosophy must lie a philosophical realism that grounds the whole enterprise.

(6) Interwar and Postwar Polish Catholic Thought: While Lublin Thomism may have provided Wojtyła with a unifying philosophical vision, it was by no means alone in terms of new currents in Polish Catholic thought which would have influenced him. Polish Catholic social thought, for example, had a very vibrant tradition. Poland inherited a strong and vigorous tradition in Catholic social thought from German Catholicism: even during Partition, Catholic social thought from Germany

and Austria was strong in Poland, particularly western Poland. In the early years of this century, for example, Poznan was something of a center of Catholic social thinking. Czestochowa Bishop Kubina in many ways presaged the later *théologie nouvelle* of Thils and Congar as well as Vatican II's "autonomy of created things" with his writings on the value and significance of temporal goods. Already in 1932 the layman Czeslaw Strzeszewski began a long and prolific career in Catholic social thought at KUL. By the time Wojtyla was ordained a priest Stefan Wyszynski had made a name for himself as an author of Catholic social thought: his seminal theology of work, *Duch pracy ludzkiej*, would appear in that period. Prior to returning from abroad following his doctoral studies, Karol Wojtyla visited France and the Benelux countries, and one of his first published articles was on the worker-priest movement. While many Westerners know of Wojtyla's academic career at KUL, few also know that Wojtyla spent several years as a lecturer in Kraków teaching introductory Catholic social thought on political and economic ethics. While still rather traditional and strongly under the influence of Jan Piwowarczyk, it does represent the beginning of Wojtyla's work in that field.

(7) The Second Vatican Council: A final influence on Karol Wojtyla was Vatican II, a council all of whose sessions Wojtyla attended as a bishop. Wojtyla was a member of the commission which produced what finally became the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*. Several Conciliar notions, such as the integral vision of the human person, the *communio personarum*, human participation in the *triplex munus Christi*, and the autonomy of created things all become staple ideas in Wojtyla's post-Conciliar writings. Wojtyla also presented his own vision of the key elements of Vatican II's Magisterium in his book *Sources of Renewal*, dedicated to plumbing the central ideas of the Council which would necessarily have to be incorporated into any effort to implement the Council, making its vision a reality in the life of the local Church. Wojtyla also continued his involvement in the work of implementing the Council in his writings as well as through serving as a European representative on various bodies (such as the Synod of Bishops) which were intended to make the concept of episcopal collegiality a reality. These bodies, together with his other travels, undoubtedly made Wojtyla better known among the cardinal electors who chose him October 16, 1978 to be Pope.

Wojtyla was also a member of the episcopal "supercommission" which Pope Paul VI had added to the Papal Commission for the Study of Population, Family, and Natality established by Pope John XXIII. Although domestic politics precluded his personal participation in

meetings, Wojtyla did advise Pope Paul VI on questions of conjugal morality and wrote several articles in defence of *Humanae Vitae* when the encyclical was finally published. One of the permanent themes of those writings is the compatibility and continuity between *Humanae Vitae* and the doctrine on marriage and the family contained in *Gaudium et Spes*. For Wojtyla (and later for Pope John Paul II) *Humanae Vitae* represents the logical culmination of Vatican II's teaching on marriage and the family. Pace certain authors (e.g., Charles Curran, Joseph Selling, Andrew Greeley et al.) Council and encyclical do not represent a break for Wojtyla: *Gaudium et Spes* and *Humanae Vitae* represent complementary aspects of the same doctrine. *Humanae Vitae* also represents the logical outcome of the thinking Wojtyla had already articulated in the 1960s in his book *Love and Responsibility*, a compelling basis upon which a post-Conciliar Catholic sexual ethic can be based. There are many other potential strands of influence on the prepapal thought of Karol Wojtyla but the seven identified here represent the main building blocks which appear again and again in Wojtyla's prepapal corpus as well as continue to color his papal Magisterium as well. Wojtyla's prepapal thought is a rich treasure, a deposit still awaiting extended scholarly mining, but one which rewards the effort in terms of locating the key elements from the Polish roots of Karol Wojtyla that still animate the thought of this "Slavic Pope."

## **Truth, Tragedy and Compassion: some reflections on the theology of Donald MacKinnon**

**Christopher Devanny**

To read Donald MacKinnon's theology with the presupposition that he was a systematic theologian must be a great disappointment. Reading MacKinnon leaves one with the impression that his work is rather unfinished, yet this is its quality. Embodied in his work is the belief that any system cannot in the end do justice to the realm of irreducible fact. There is a sustained rigour in his writing which is so deep as to give the reader the sense that MacKinnon is involved in an interrogation so