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Co-Editors

Dr. Robert Magliola, National Taiwan University (Taiwan) and Assumption University (Thailand), retired; 411 Tenth St., Union City, NJ 07087-4113 (201) 865-6519 Email: Robert_Magliola@hotmail.com

Dr. Claudia Kovach, Neumann University, Aston, PA 19014 (610) 558-5573 FAX: (610) 361-5314 Email: ckovach@neumann.edu

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HUMAN AND DIVINE FREEDOM IN THE TEACHING OF THE CHRISTIAN MYSTICS*

JAMES WISEMAN, O.S.B.**

At the very beginning of the 1990s, a wave of euphoria was sweeping over much of the world as openings toward democracy took place in one Eastern European country after another. Ways to further democratization still remain open, and those instructed by their study of history to take a long view of international affairs have every reason to remain optimistic. In the short term, however, it must be acknowledged that the euphoria of New Year's Day, 1990, was not nearly as much in evidence a single year later. A mood of sober realism, if not pessimism, had set in, a mood reflected in an address given by the former foreign minister of Hungary, Gyula Horn, on the occasion of his receiving the city of Aachen's *Karlspreis* for his efforts in making it possible for thousands of citizens of the German Democratic Republic to travel to the West by way of Hungary. After expressing his deep gratitude for the honor bestowed on him by the citizens of Aachen and by the German Federal Parliament, he went on to warn:

No one should be tempted to indulge in the illusion that the historic struggle taking place here is of no concern to them. If we are unsuccessful in bringing about democracy—a new civilized order—from Moscow to Berlin and from Sofia to Warsaw, and if the old order is able to remain intact or even strengthen its position in some places, then this will represent a fundamental threat to Europe as a whole.¹

Minister Horn added that he was proud that his fellow Hungarians had been among the first to recognize the anachronism of Stalinism and take up the struggle

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** Rev. James Wiseman, O.S.B., is a monk of St. Anselm's Abbey, Washington, D.C., and teaches theology at the Abbey School and at Catholic University. He served as Chair of the Board and President of MID [Monastic Interreligious Dialogue], has been editor of its *Bulletin* since 1998, and again serves as a member of the MID Board of Directors.

against it. “We recognized,” he said, “that the only nations which can be free are those which acknowledge the truth.” In particular, this means recognizing the truth about what it means to be a human being. There are many potential sources for insight into such truth. One thinks of classic works in philosophy and literature, of what can be learned through civilized dialogue with peoples of other cultures, of the insights offered by psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists. The purpose of this paper is simply to adduce insights available from one further source, namely, classic Christian texts, particularly those of the Christian mystics.²

Something of what Christianity has added to humanity’s understanding of freedom is noted already by George F. Mclean [in his work]. A complementary point was made some thirty years ago by Georges Gusdorf in his study of the human significance of freedom, where he observed that Christianity, in contrast to the pagan philosophies of Epicureanism and Stoicism, gave the human person a capital importance in the overall scheme of truth, inasmuch as truth itself took personal form. This brought about a radical change of perspective: Christianity affirms the primacy of anthropology. The essential values—salvation, faith, charity—are human values, tied to the spiritual history of such and such a person, whether Messiah, prophet, apostle, or one of the simple faithful.³

This is not to say that the Church has regularly been in the forefront of movements aiming to promote personal and democratic values. At times this has not been the case at all. But it *is* to suggest that such scriptural texts as those that proclaim that “the truth will make you free” and that “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom,” have in fact tended to make Christians sensitive to the value of human freedom and suspicious of doctrines and movements which would curtail or eliminate such freedom. Obviously, the present paper cannot survey the entire development of Christian teaching on freedom or even look in great depth or breadth at what some Christian mystics have written on this subject. But something relevant to the overall theme of this volume may nevertheless be gained by looking at the teaching of some important figures from three major periods of Church history: the patristic, the medieval, and the contemporary.

The Patristic Era: Gregory of Nyssa

From the patristic period, an important and generally representative author is St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335 - c. 395), one of the three so-called Cappadocian Fathers and a figure often characterized as the father of Christian mysticism. Like so many of his contemporaries, Gregory found the starting point for his theological

anthropology in the text from the first chapter of the Book of Genesis where God says, “Let us make man according to our image and likeness” (Gen. 1:26). However one interprets the plural “Let us” in this text (whether as a regal “we,” or as a reference to Yahweh’s taking counsel with his court of heavenly advisors, or, as some of the Fathers took it, as a prefiguration of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity), the passage clearly implies a free decision on God’s part and not some necessary way of acting.

As Gregory writes in his *Great Catechetical Oration*, God “has been shown by inference to be the Maker of man, not urged to creating him by any necessity, but in the superabundance of love operating the production of such a creature” (ch. 5). The freedom with which we were created is in addition something in which we, once created, participate, since “He who made man for the participation of His own peculiar good . . . would never have deprived him of that most excellent and precious of all goods, I mean the gift implied in being his own master and having a free will” (*ibid.*).

To be sure, such freedom can be misused. For Gregory, this is possible because we live in a situation of change and mutation, and so can ourselves become either better or worse. In becoming worse through sin, humanity is said by Gregory to have fallen into a state of bondage. From there, “the captive sought a ransomer, the fettered prisoner for someone to take his part,” and since “love of humanity is a special characteristic of the divine nature, . . . here is the cause of the presence of God among men” (*ibid.*, ch. 15).

Gregory’s contemporary, St. Augustine, the greatest of the Latin Fathers, often makes the same point in his voluminous writings, sometimes with special reference to the liberating work of Jesus Christ, at other times with reference to the Holy Spirit as continuing the work of Christ in the era after Pentecost. Thus, in his treatise *On the Spirit and the Letter*, Augustine writes that it is through “this Spirit of God, by whose gift we are justified, that it comes to pass that we delight not to sin—in which is liberty; even as, when we are without this Spirit, we delight to sin—in which is slavery” (ch. 28).

For both of these patristic writers, genuine Christian freedom is, therefore, not the ability to choose “this or that” in some arbitrary way, but rather the grace of being drawn in a Godward direction so that one will ultimately not even be able to sin. As Augustine writes in the well-known words of the final chapter of *The City of God*, “free will was, at first, a mere possibility of avoiding sin [*posse non peccare*],” but for the blessed in heaven (i.e., those who are truly free) this becomes “an utter inability to sin [*non posse peccare*].”

The Medieval Era: Jan Van Ruusbroec

In turning from the patristic to the medieval period, a choice must again be made as to which author(s) will be examined. A reasonable selection is the fourteenth-century Flemish mystic Jan van Ruusbroec (1293-1381), both because he was influenced by both the Greek and the Latin Fathers and because he does in fact have much to say on the theme of freedom. His longest treatise, *The Spiritual Tabernacle*, provides a convenient framework for analyzing his thought on this subject, for throughout this work the language of freedom (i.e., *vriheit* [freedom], *vrijen* [to free], and *vrilec* [free, freely]) appears very frequently.⁴ Our focus will be the mystic's understanding of God's freely going out to us in love and our free response to God.

For Ruusbroec, as for the entire Christian tradition, God's freedom is utterly transcendent. He writes, for example, of "the immovable freedom of God" (88:4), out of which God created all things in a perfect love that should evoke a corresponding love on our part: "He made all things out of his free, outflowing goodness. And so if we, with a free, outflowing love, would bring ourselves and all things back to him, then we would find blessedness in him and the true reason for our own life and that of all creatures" (319: 28-32).

God's love has been equally evident in redemption, whether in freeing the chosen people from slavery in Egypt or in sending the Beloved Son to redeem the human race from sin. Ruusbroec often emphasizes the freedom with which Christ Jesus wrought our redemption and, once more, the claim which that makes on our own free response: "His free will handed him over in a loving way to do, forgo, and suffer all that God foreknew and willed for him from all eternity. And we should have the same attitude" (138:2-5). As one would expect in a mystical treatise such as the *Tabernacle*, the ultimate aim and effect of our response to God's creative and redeeming love is union with God. We are all to live "in one will and in one love and in one freedom in Christ Jesus" (218:27-28) and thereby come to "live eternally in a single embrace of love" (137:16-17).

Although this is the way to eternal blessedness, in this life it is made possible only through following Christ along the way of the cross and of self-denial: "The greatest offering which we can make to God and which Christ can make to his heavenly Father on our behalf is the death of our own will into God's will" (230:15-18). From a purely natural point of view, such self-denial in obedience to another might appear to be a form of slavery, but Ruusbroec argues that the criteria are altogether different when it is a matter of living according to the Gospel. What in the former case would mean slavery in the latter case means genuine freedom:

The same points that make a spiritual life noble and free make a natural life ignoble and unfree. For every person who is a slave, born of a slavewoman, belongs not to himself but to his master. . . . But every good person who, through love, denies himself and gives over his own will into God's free will and the will of his ecclesiastical superior for the glory of God enters into concert with God and with all the saints, and his life and works are begotten of the Spirit of God; he is thus noble and free and master of all things. (230: 32 - 231: 12)

One of the preconditions for living freely according to God's will is what Ruusbroec calls "the natural freedom of the [human] spirit" (70:29), given us by God in our very creation. The ground (*gront*) of this freedom lies deep within us, where it "remains always empty in itself and untouched by the images of all virtuous works" (54:17-18). It is only out of this ground that our various powers, especially the understanding and will, are able to act freely: "In it they are [themselves] free, for without freedom no meritorious work can be accomplished" (44:3-4).

This is, however, not the whole picture. However essential this foundational freedom might be, Ruusbroec is quite insistent that of itself "our natural freedom cannot make us firm. Therefore we must follow God's interior working. In this way we are raised above nature and united to God in the immovable freedom of his very self" (105:24-27). Another term for this interior working is, of course, "grace," a word which Ruusbroec does in fact also use: "In grace, we live in between the influence of God's graciousness and the influence of our free will, which concurs with God and through this concurrence draws God's Spirit inward" (91:21-24).

In this passage, it might seem as though the mystic is placing God's grace and the human person's natural freedom on the same level and merely requiring concurrence on the part of each. Elsewhere, however, it is altogether clear that God's grace is first both in sequence and in importance: "His [God's] giving precedes our giving—eternally and of his free goodness. . . . His giving and our giving are thus voluntary and free, but his giving is first [*principael*], and therefore we can do nothing good without God's free help" (83: 27-33).

When thus informed and moved by God's grace, the freedom that is ours through our creation comes to the full realization of what it was meant to be. Only now can a person truly be called "free," for such a person "always has habitually within himself a freely willed inclination to God and to all virtue. And in this free inclination the entirety of the human person is encompassed. . . . [It] is caused and attained in the same moment that the person takes full possession of himself and freely determines to serve God with all that he himself is and all that he might ever do. This is what we mean by a free decision." (72: 8-17)

Although Ruusbroec does not engage in the kind of theological speculation about the relationship between God's grace and human freedom that provoked so much dispute several centuries later between the followers of Baez and Molina, he does in his own way address the question of how these two factors are mediated. His answer, fully in accord with the rest of his mystical doctrine, is that the mediating principle is love: "A living, active love will always mediate between us and God and will transform in a unifying way God's free interior working and our free response" (89: 26-28). His point is that our proper response to God's prior working is basically one of love and that it is such "oneness" love, originating in a God who is eternal Love, that effects a union between the divine initiative and our response: "In every free decision we are to embrace with our essential love all of God's working within us. That is, our love is to be so oneness . . . that in every free decision it might thoroughly penetrate all of our activity and God's working within us and all God's gifts" (88:13-19).

A final point to be made in this brief examination of what the Flemish mystic teaches about freedom is that it has both an active and a passive aspect. Inasmuch as Ruusbroec was, throughout his entire ministry, very intent on combating quietistic strains in the spirituality of his day, there is much emphasis in his work on the active cultivation of the Christian virtues. We are called to "take up and choose to exercise all the virtues" (15: 1-2). But with equal insistence, Ruusbroec notes the more passive element, namely, the Christian's call freely to accept and embrace whatever sufferings God permits to enter one's life. We are to "deliver ourselves entirely to God's free will, so that whatever he has decided from all eternity to do with us will be our greatest joy, and thus we may suffer without suffering. For whatever we might suffer in our human nature . . . will be a joy for our spirit, provided it has given itself wholly to God" (74:21-27).

Ideally, we will reach the point where both the exercise of virtuous activity and the joyful acceptance of unavoidable suffering will occur without effort on our part. Just as a shadow necessarily follows a person in every way that he or she moves, so too will the free, loving spirit follow God. There is, indeed, a kind of necessity involved here, but it is a blessed necessity that actually represents the highest kind of freedom. Perhaps Ruusbroec's most explicit statement on this point is the following sentence, so reminiscent of Augustine's *non posse peccare* as signifying the apex of true freedom: "When God's love becomes so powerful in us that it is able to kill all self-centeredness of our will, so that we cannot [*niet . . . en connen*] intend or desire or will anything other than what God wills, then is our slain will united to the finger of God, that is, to the Spirit of our Lord" (230:2-7).

It should only be noted in this respect that, in this life, such “necessity” is never absolute. Not only are minor infidelities always possible, but “if it reaches the point that this disease entirely overmasters our free concurrence with God, then we cease being touched [by God] in a spiritual way and at that very moment we become dead in sin” (93:11-14). No one, therefore, should consider himself or herself immune from falling. To be sure, our lives should be characterized by a deep confidence in God’s love and forgiveness, but this does not blind Ruusbroec to the complementary truth that our salvation is at the same time to be worked out in fear and trembling. The balance he exhibits on this point reflects the overall balance of his teaching, which has led to his being generally regarded as one of the most reliable of all mystical writers within the Christian tradition.

The Twentieth Century: Karl Rahner

Persons familiar only with some of the more technical writings of this very important German theologian who died in 1984 at the age of eighty, might be surprised to find him treated here as a mystical author. At the very least, the inclusion of Rahner is defensible because he often and explicitly spoke of the writings of the patristic, medieval, and modern mystics as important sources for all theology. For example, on the occasion of St. Teresa of Avila’s being named a doctor of the church, he wrote: “Teresa is proclaimed as a teacher of mysticism. This means first of all that a person who teaches something about mysticism is doing theology, is speaking in the light of revelation, saying something to the Church as such.”⁵

He also several times proclaimed that for his own theological development the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola (the founder of the Society of Jesus, to which Rahner belonged) was more significant than any of the philosophy or theology that he had studied either within or outside that religious order. But perhaps the most significant point is that for Rahner the entire orientation of the human person is toward that “holy mystery” which we call God. This theme is prominent already in the early volumes of his *Theological Investigations* (which will eventually come to at least twenty-two volumes in English translation) and is concisely summed up in his late work entitled *Foundations of Christian Faith* (1984; German original 1976).

A fundamental principle of all Rahner’s theology is that our knowledge and freedom always reach out beyond (or “transcend”) the individual objects of inner and outer experience and that the goal toward which such transcendence tends is the boundless mystery which Christians call God. (Rahner does not precisely try to

prove that this is the goal of our transcendent dynamism, but rather presupposes personal Christian faith in its normal ecclesial form and tries to reach an “idea” of it, to show that living according to such faith is an honest and responsible decision.)

The transcendent experience of this goal in everyday life is normally unthematic and unreflective (i.e., one does not consciously advert to it), but there are also more intensive realizations which force this experience of transcendence more clearly on the reflective consciousness as well. One way in which this might occur is when the individual objects of daily life clearly and intensely indicate the inconceivable mystery of our existence which always surrounds us. Rahner does not go into great detail about this possibility, but he seems to be referring to those kinds of unitive experience reported copiously in a work like William James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) or even to those kinds of nonconceptual experience of transcendence without imagery described by the sixteenth-century Carmelite mystic St. John of the Cross at several points in his classic texts (see, e.g., *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. 2, ch. 26).

However, Rahner also considers another possibility, which would likewise be genuinely mystical, though in the broader sense of what he calls “everyday mysticism.” Among other occasions, this may at times be provoked when “the graspable contours of our everyday realities break and dissolve; when . . . the question becomes inescapable whether the night surrounding us is the absurd void of death engulfing us, or the blessed holy night which is already illumined from within and gives promise of everlasting day.”⁶

If a person holds fast in such a situation, trying to love God even though no response seems to come from the divine silence, seeking to love others even though no echo of gratefulness is heard in return, bearing the freely accepted burdens of responsibility even when this offers no apparent promise of earthly success, then, says Rahner, “*there* is God and his liberating grace. . . . There is the mysticism of everyday life, the discovery of God in all things; there is the sober intoxication of the Spirit, of which the Fathers and the liturgy speak [and] which we cannot reject or despise, because it is real.”⁷

As regards the way in which this understanding of mysticism relates to Rahner’s understanding of human freedom, the main point to be noted is that for Rahner such freedom is not a particular faculty by which a person can do “this or that” through arbitrary choices, but rather the capacity of a person “to decide about himself in his single totality,” such that “ultimately he does not do *something*, but does *himself*.”⁸ Even if the empirical sciences cannot, by their very nature, discover such freedom, since their procedure is always and everywhere to relate one empirical phenomenon

to another, the very challenge of the acting person to take a stand vis-à-vis such studies is an inalienable sign of that core freedom, whose primary invitation is to say “yes” to God in all those ways that constitute “everyday mysticism” as described above.

That is why Rahner, like Augustine and Ruusbroec before him, would say that the most truly free persons are the saints, since freedom “is not the capacity to do something which is always able to be revised, but the capacity to do something final and definitive. It is the capacity of a subject who by this freedom is to achieve his final and irrevocable self,”⁹ and such subjects in the fullest sense are precisely the saints, those irrevocably gifted with Augustine’s *non posse peccare* (to which one might add, in a more positive vein, *semper posse amare*).

Mysticism and Democracy

In treating any individual topic within the broader subject of “Freedom and Choice in a Democracy,” one faces the temptation to exaggerate the importance of the narrower topic. This temptation will here be forthrightly resisted. However much one might profit from reading mystics like Gregory of Nyssa or Jan van Ruusbroec, it must be admitted that they say nothing explicit about democracy, while Rahner says relatively little about forms of societal life. The reading of Gregory’s sermons on the Song of Songs and Rahner’s reflections on the concept of mystery in Christian theology certainly cannot replace the study of *The Federalist Papers* or the United States Constitution for those who want to delve deeply into issues of freedom and choice in a democracy.

It should not even be inferred from the foregoing that it is the Christian mystics alone who have anything relevant to say about human and divine freedom from a religious perspective. One of the great and welcome changes of recent decades is the growth of an ecumenical spirit that not only embraces the various denominations within Christianity but also seeks a fuller understanding of the other great world religions and the mystical voices emanating from them.

With these qualifications, one might nevertheless proceed with some confidence to the claim that Christian mystics like those discussed in this paper do have something important to contribute to the general subject under consideration, “freedom and choice in a democracy.” George F. Mclean, in his “Meanings of Freedom and Choice” [in *Freedom and Choice in a Democracy*, CRVP, 2002] writes that in our day, as peoples react to the limitations of materialism as a context for human life and to the formal laws of a dialectic as interpreted by the Party

or state, “it is not enough to say that they can automatically become free if they but decree these universal laws for themselves. Instead, there is need for a spiritual sense of reality, which will provide at once for the dignity of the person, individual creativity, and social cohesion.”

President Vaclav Havel of the Czech and Slovak Republic made the same point in his widely admired New Year’s Day address of 1990, when he said that “man is never merely a product of the world around him; he is always capable of striving for something higher, no matter how systematically this ability is ground down by the world around him.” This “spiritual sense of reality” is perhaps nowhere proclaimed so forcefully as in the writings of the mystics. Moreover, the greatest among them were precisely those who drew the connections between this sense of reality and its implications for the way we live with one another. In the most sublime part of her major treatise, *The Interior Castle*, Teresa of Avila states very clearly that the entire purpose of the “spiritual marriage” which is the culmination of mystical union with God is simply one thing: “the birth always of good works, good works” (*Interior Castle*, 7.4.6).

Chief among these good works is the practice of love toward those with whom we live. Teresa, writing primarily for enclosed Carmelite nuns, may not have had the breadth of social vision found in Dorothy Day or Teresa of Calcutta or such recent popes as John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II, but the principles of concern and respect for others that she enunciated have never been surpassed: “We should go forward with special care and attention, observing how we are proceeding in the practice of virtue: whether we are getting better or worse in some areas, especially in love for one another” (*ibid.*, 5.4.9).

Likewise, Ruusbroec writes that the highest point in the mystical life occurs when someone raised to the most intimate union with God is then “sent down by God from these heights into the world,” where, “full of truth and rich in all the virtues,” he or she will “always flow forth to all in need, for the living spring of the Holy Spirit is so rich that it can never be drained dry” (*The Sparkling Stone*, conclusion). To the extent that this is truly the attitude we have toward one another as brothers and sisters under one God, a solid foundation will have been laid for the kind of trans-European democracy that Gyula Horn envisioned in his speech at Aachen.

NOTES

¹ Gyula Horn, "A Historic Decision," *Scala: A Periodical from the Federal Republic of Germany* (5 August 1990), 16.

² As regards what is meant in this paper by a "mystic," the following points should be noted: The word "mystical" is of Greek origin and referred originally to that which is in some sense "hidden" or "secret." Both in the New Testament and in early Christian authors like Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, the terms "mystery" and "mystical" refer above all to God's plan of salvation, hidden "before all ages" and made known "in these latter days" in and through the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Thus, when Origen or Gregory sought the "mystical sense" of Scripture, they were interpreting it (including the books of the Hebrew Bible) in a Christocentric sense not obvious to someone reading the same text only on the "narrative" level. The Christian sacraments were understood to be "mystical" in the same sense: Christ is truly present in baptism, the Eucharist, etc., even though in a "hidden" way. Someone approaching Scripture and the sacraments with this kind of faith will, not surprisingly, often be filled with a deep, personal sense of Christ's presence, and it is this which explains the connotation of intense awareness of union with God which usually predominates in modern understandings of mysticism. This also explains why, as Friedrich von Hugel emphasized in *The Mystical Element of Religion* (1908), there is a mystical dimension to the life of every religious person.

If it is perhaps going too far to say, as some have, that "a mystic is not a special kind of person, but every person is a special kind of mystic," it is surely correct to say that there is a definite continuum in religious experience and that "the mystical" is part of this continuum. As Thomas Merton once wrote, "To reach a true awareness of him [God] as well as ourselves, we have to renounce our selfish and limited self and enter into a whole new kind of existence, discovering an inner center of motivation and love which makes us see ourselves and everything else in an entirely new light. Call it faith, call it (at a more advanced stage) contemplative illumination, call it the sense of God or even mystical union: all these are different aspects and levels of the same kind of realization: the awakening to a new awareness of ourselves in Christ, created in Him, redeemed by Him, to be transformed and glorified in and with Him" (*Contemplation in a World of Action* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Image Books, 1973], pp. 175-76).

³ Georges Gusdorf, *Signification humaine de la liberté* (Paris, 1962), p. 80.

⁴ This treatise has not yet been published in English translation, though a critical edition (which will include such a translation on facing pages) is underway. References to the treatise in this article will be to the text edited by D.-A. Stracke, S.J.: Jan van Ruusbroec, *Werken*, vol. 2, *Van den gheesteliken tabernakel* (2nd ed.; Tiel: Lannoo, 1946). Citations will be given in the body of the article by page and line number(s) in the following format: 163: 7-12. The English translations are my own.

⁵ Karl Rahner, "Teresa of Avila: Doctor of the Church," in his *Opportunities for Faith* (New York: Seabury, 1974), p. 123.

⁶ Karl Rahner, *The Practice of Faith: A Handbook of Contemporary Spirituality*, ed. Karl Lehmann and Albert Raffelt (New York: Crossroad, 1984), p. 81.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁸ Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), p. 94.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.



A TRIBUTE TO GILBERT PAIGE

Gilbert Paige, a gifted poet who contributed many of his poems to this *Journal* over the years, passed away on May 7, 2010. A graduate of King's College, Pennsylvania, he lived for most of the years since 1991 in Jacksonville, Florida. His niece, Ms. April Hughes, has collected in one place many of Gilbert's unpublished poems, and she issues a broad invitation to Gilbert's poet-friends and to our readership to help her in the organization of Gilbert's literary estate. She knows that Gilbert wished that all his collected poems be published. If interested, please contact Ms. Hughes at the following address: 3637 Club Drive, Albany, Georgia 31721.

THE LAST DAYS OF ADAM

GILBERT PAIGE

The long tresses of my beard, soaked in fragrant oil,
 fall in luxuriant ribbons to my knees.
 The wild notes of the sea, newly made, green in my nostrils,
 tingle in this morning of the rolling world.
 The sea casts roses to the shore, air of sweetness,
 the sky moves to the movements of the earth.
 I feel in my senses the turned earth, deep, black and rich,
 essence of creation in the waning light.
 New-made bells, freshly cast, ringing new, overture
 to the music many men will make.
 This is the beginning of the world but I am at my end
 as the clouds pour down their draughts of spring.
 I smell the sweetness of the air, the fresh currents and the earth
 that came together, I feel the freshness of the world.
 Let me down in fragrance, fragrance of creation, let me down
 that I will rise again and in my senses feel again.
 She went before, I laid her down, we will have again the odors
 of the beginning and we will dance as at the first.
 I slowly stand in the congregation of the righteous, bowed
 with age, light and glory on my brow, 'The Prince of Days.'

AT THE END

GILBERT PAIGE

The sea calls to me like a harlot,
her cries are urgent, plaintive, false.
The love she professes, her beautiful voice,
the sound of her fingers grasping the beach
are no more than the carvings on whalebone,
no more than the wind through the sheets.

I am one who sailed with the “Rachel,”
who plucked the sailor out of the sea.
Thus I know that the sea does not love me
though her music says that she does.
So I stand on the hills overlooking the waves
like the tall ship resting at anchor
at the end of its days with the sea.

TERRIBLE WINGS

GILBERT PAIGE

I love you in the depth of my dreams,
waking up and not remembering my dreams.
You are in and out of my heart’s shadows
and I follow your figure around blind corners.

I do not remember all the cities of my pursuit—
there are some that have not yet been built.
The others are covered in dust.
I am alone in the aerie, waiting
for the sound of terrible wings.

You have never said that you love me
and I surmise by the noises you have made
that certain obscure roses are your passion
and I am the last on a long list of forgetfulness.

CADENCE

GILBERT PAIGE

The streets are lovely with her passing.
The eyes of heaven covet her shadow.
I watch her glissading walk in terrible fear.
I would like to speak, to tell her my soul
trembles in the Mistral of her voice.
She does not see me; I am no more than
the furniture on the lawn of her estate.
There is no hope for my arms, for my lips.
There is Campari and forgetfulness.
But I will not forget.
I will love her through the breadth of days
and the changing of the seas
and if I cannot have her, I have my dreams.



BRIGHT SEEDS

YIHSUAN TSO*

Slant rectangular sunshine,
Warm on the
Living room floor.

Crystal reflections on the glass and in the water
Diffused at the lips.

Names, nomenclature or bright seeds in the
Soil of our cycles of time.

Florence, for crisp *Florenzia*
Customs could not spell in foreign tongues.
Neighbors and friends befuddled and mute.
Struggles, doubts. Then, better:
Robert for Roberto
Tom for Thomas
Maria for a christened heart
May for plums, petals extending in snow
Sam for rhyming and
Michael for alliteration.

The commonest and most heard
To fend off evil spirits and keep them resounding.
Latinate for Latinos
Anglicized for Angel Islanders
Binominal double blessings
Not of gens, but of crowds, clubs and cliques
Where they will belong.

* Yihuan Tso, whose doctorate is from the University of Georgia, is Assistant Professor at the Center for General Education, National Taiwan Normal University. Her publications include a journal article, encyclopedia entries on contemporary American poetry, a translation that constitutes a chapter of a psychology textbook, an interview of a Taiwanese Canadian poet, poetry, and newspaper articles.

The moon and the sun in our space
 Evening coolness shades and laminated glare
 Shields parental gifts and prayers.

Over the ocean to the freshwater inland, rivers and ranges barring the
 murmured names: staccatos, short stops, undulating tones and obdurate vowels.

ENDOWED

YIHSUAN TSO

Handsome mien with a harsh voice;
 Harelip on a proud hunter;
 Hairy alabaster arms of moles;
 Adulthood cheeks with pimples, pocks and blemishes;
 Early loss of good ears of musicians and vocalists;
 Cataracts for painters;
 A huge tummy on crane legs;
 Early death of a revolutionary.

The flash before boarding the vessel
 Voyaging away from the bluebird's paradise
 On surges of waves of benedictions and curses,
 Each makes haste to grip
 One thing born endowed to this world.

Magic Cubes of Venetian-blind colors,
 Lights and shadows. Now seen. Now out of sight.
 Night lamps and stars; Detectives and Suspects, transmuting, rotating
 In ungraspable combinations.
 God, Buddha, . . .
 Take some,
 and give some.

LET THE SMOKE OF THOUGHTS MEANDER

YIHSUAN TSO

Let the smoke of thoughts meander through
The plates, tea cups, foot steps, the lifting of an arm,
The tips of hair brushing past an eye, the sunshine pouring forth overhead are

Buddha ubiquitous.

Hiking up the mountain trails of the province
Is as grueling as spiraling up the cerulean sky
On a dragon's back, like the legendary emperor when
His age is measured by his beard.

The avenue to return to nature,
Like a baby
Not teething but in accord with nature and
Human nature.

To save lives
Thinly slice the white palace into
Towers, pavilions and terraced fields.
Barbecued tofu.

Beaming Closed eyes Flower Hands.

THE TOUR

YIHSUAN TSO

Dreaming of a house as
 A slope of white tablets, in hundreds,
 threshing out behind, losing sight.
 A midway stop at the funeral house
 A boy slept right over it.
 Escalating the bus at the next funeral house
 After lunching at a dinner place.

Treading between the blooming and wizened
 English Daisies on the Golden Gate Park lawn,
Ahimsa. Spare before the Scythe could fall.

An accident between the streetcar and the department store
 Unseen by all the luxuries, porcelain plates and tall crystal glasses:
 Rather than ambling under the sun, or shopping at Macy's,
 A person with a bandaged face was swathed thrice on a stretcher.
 Shoppers through the floor, ants-like, dispersed.

The rhythm of joy, of living, must sing (*improvising*):
 Halleluja. *An. Ma. Ni. Ba. Mi. Hong.*
 Archipelagos of diverse lucks.
 Awakened, not asunder.
 Work to do.
 Work to do.
 Coffee and breakfast before the tomb.



TATTOO

JIM HARTZ*

Praying Mantis twenty feet tall
 Smokes joint rolled by Bob Marley
 Trap door opens
 And closes in the back of its head

Retro luggage or a body bag
 Opinions arranged in binary slots
 A zero sum (meaning) game
 A wart with hairs tattoo

The timer and spacer look nervous
 Working overtime to squeeze
 Something out of nothing stock option
 Hog wallow piranha elite

SPHAZZO

JIM HARTZ

He is an Admiral in the Tibetan Navy
 She is a Stalinist of the Strict Observance
 He is a gun-toting Armageddon-ready Baptist

As Dean Witter said we must never rest
 In our commitment to the individual
 Even if it kills us and everything else

* Jim Hartz was a Family Brother at the Abbey of Gethsemani, 1970-72, and a student of Chogyam Trungpa, 1972-87. He holds Master's Degrees from San Francisco State University and St. John's College, Santa Fe. He has been Executive Director of the Poetry Center and Archive, San Francisco State University, and gives poetry readings at many public venues.

Fascism is only an emergency regime
For the preservation of capital

If you didn't have something to hide
Constant surveillance wouldn't be necessary

PERFECTLY NATURAL

JIM HARTZ

If global capitalism
Is the New Leviathan
Rudra
Is imperial sovereign

The natural rate
Of unemployment perfectly
Natural a necessary
Check on
Inflation

A desert
Of sandgrain-sized
Smiling
Skulls

COPPER STUDIES, INC.

JIM HARTZ

We have no defense pact
With Kuwait
Said the Spider to a fly Vichy
Sadhakas

Spin adamantine 6-guns on
Elegant skeletal
Fingers Profound Brilliant Just
Powerful All-Victorious
Neoliberal

How did our copper get under
Their dirt
How did our oil get under
Their sand

FALLUJAH

JIM HARTZ

Red horse
Of the Apocalypse
Training
Wheels

Operation
Phantom Fury creates
Ghost
Town

Truffle pig
Nostrils
Identitylessness
Theft



FRAGMENTS OF AN EASTER GOSPEL

ROBIN STRATTON, O.C.D.*

Fish swim deep
Eight hundred eighty fathoms deep
So Melville thought.

Five times those fathoms down
We know – and more

We ply the waves, the depths,
the calm, the squall
gathering strength, growing gills
learning ways to water-breathe
(as in another womb)
the tastes of sea,
the use of fins and tail for exploration—
the shimmer of nameless beauty

Over and over again
Hooked by Christ, we surface
Ah! but to behold new mysteries:
Fish fries by Lake Tiberius
153 large fish in a great net
Fish on the right but not on the left
Grilled fish taken, eaten by Jesus
—by the apostles
—the same fish consumed by all

When next
you taste grilled fish—
remember this:

* Sr. Robin Stratton, O.C.D., is a Discalced Carmelite nun cloistered in the Carmelite Monastery, Baltimore, Maryland. She is a former Reviews Editor of *Spiritual Life*, has authored many articles and poems, and composes music.

Jesus ate fish once
And said "Come and eat"
Even now
He eats
with you—
with us—
with all the world

EPIPHANY

(for Owen)

ROBIN STRATTON, O.C.D.

Crowned
with Cornsilk
Clutching
a scepter
of daisies
bestowing
blessings
with kisses
and healing
with touch
Small hands
Outstretched
to the woman
in a hospital bed

ELIZABETH SPEAKS

ROBIN STRATTON, O.C.D.

All spring I watched my belly rising
Week by week I pondered words I'd said:
"blessed is she who has believed."
Mary proclaimed *magnificat* and
Zachary kept silent watch
And anchored us in hope
—a hope I'd barely felt till something
(still I know not what)
overshadowed him in prayer.

As solstice tipped the earth toward winter
My water broke like living springs and when the child came forth at dawn
"a son" she said and laid him on my breast.

His warmth evoked another day
some forty years ago when we were young
and gave ourselves into each others' care
promising a lifetime or maybe two
recklessly exchanging signs
finding our voice
making our way in and out of love
discovering what was and wasn't true

I rise from reverie
Remembering the dearness of his voice
Revealed more fully in the silences
Of nine long months
I look into his eyes and wonder
"Does he know my thoughts?"
He rises like dawn
And shines on me
And we are like bread and wine consumed.

(For Frannie's and Jim's 40th anniversary)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF NOMINEES FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(A mail-in ballot will be found between pages 94 and 95.)

DR. ROSEMARY BERTOCCI ST. FRANCIS UNIVERSITY, LORETTO, PA

Dr. Rosemary Bertocci has served as the Chi Chapter Advisor to DES for the last thirteen years. She demonstrates her dedication to DES and the values of the society, inviting students at Saint Francis University [SFU] to seek admission to DES, submit papers to the writing competition, and apply for scholarships, fellowships, and awards. Under her leadership, the DES students regularly lead and serve in the local community.

Dr. Bertocci, Chair of The Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at Saint Francis University, invites students to appropriate catholic (the word *catholicus* meaning “universal”), ethical, Franciscan values, principally as they relate to the U.N. Millennium Development Goals. She has led service-learning programs in Mexico, Honduras, and Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa – the epicenter of the HIV-AIDS pandemic – Jamaica, and Haiti. She has presented in areas such as, teaching on “Compassionate Capitalism: Integrated Philanthropy and the U.N. Millennium Development Goals,” for Leadership Alle-Kiski Valley, lecturing on “Values and Ethical Issues in Theology, Science, and Technology” in the Netherlands, and secured a grant from the Center for Theology and the Natural Science’s (CTNS) Science and Religion Course Program, funded by the John Templeton Foundation.

Her publications include: “A Lonerganian *Kritik* of the Evolutionary Sciences and Religious Consciousness: The Isomorphism of Structures, Activities, and Analysis” (Method: *Journal of Lonergan Studies*, Vol. 20:1), “Pedagogy for Medical Ethics in Practice: A Reasonable Approach for Health Care Practitioners,” (Perspective on *Physician Assistant Education*, Vol. 16:1).

SR. LINDA MARIE BOS, SSND MOUNT MARY COLLEGE, MILWAUKEE, WI

Sister Linda Marie Bos, SSND, is Associate Professor and Chair of the History/Political Science Department at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, where she has taught full-time since 1992. She has been a member of the Executive Committee since 2008, applying her computing expertise to an upgrading of DES’s online presence.

Sister Linda completed a Ph.D. in history from Marquette in 1994, specializing in the U.S.A. in the twentieth century, with a special interest in religious history. Her dissertation dealt with dissent and change in major religious denominations in the 1960s. She also has a master’s degree in history from Marquette, and a bachelor degree in history and art from Mount Mary College. Earlier in her career, Sister Linda was a social studies and art teacher.

Highly active in her order, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sister Linda is a past chair of the Heritage Committee for the School Sisters of Notre Dame and remains a member of the committee. She is an elected member of the SSND Provincial Assembly and has been involved in an oral history project for the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Sister Linda is the coauthor of *Journey of Faith: History of the Milwaukee Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame* and her historical research has been published in *U.S. Catholic Historian*.

She has been a presenter at a number of conferences, including presenting papers at the International Conference On Women Religious. In addition, Sister Linda is very much involved in technol-

ogy and learning, including distance education and electronic portfolios. She is a Corporate Board Member, Mount Mary College, and an elected board member of the Midwest Model United Nations.

DR. THOMPSON FALLER
PORTLAND UNIVERSITY, PORTLAND, OR

Dr. Thompson Faller is a Professor of Philosophy and of the Ethics of Health Care at the University of Portland. He received his Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Salzburg, Austria. Faller joined the University of Portland in 1964 and has been a full professor since 1980.

A noted medical ethicist, he has served on a variety of health care and education boards and committees including the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, the Providence Health System Institutional Review Boards, the Earle A. Chiles Research Institute IACUC, the Oregon Health & Science University IACUC, the National Catholic Education Association Board of Directors, The National Association of Boards of Education Advisory Committee, and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights of Oregon Advisory Committee.

Dr. Faller also has been the president and advisor for the University of Portland Chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma since 1979.

Among Faller's many awards and honors are the University Culligan Award for outstanding teaching, research and contributions to the University of Portland, an Outstanding Educator of America Award, listings in *Who's Who in American Education*, *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the World* and stints as a Fulbright Fellow, a Danforth Associate and a Heritage Foundation Fellow.

Sir Thompson was invested as Knight of the Holy Sepulchre by Pope John Paul II, also a Knight of the Sovereign Military Hospitalier Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta and received the Pilgrim Shell from the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Pilgrim Medallion from his Most Eminent Highness Prince and Grand Master of the Knights of Malta.

DR. RICHARD A. NICHOLAS
UNIVERSITY OF ST. FRANCIS, JOLIET, IL

Richard A. Nicholas joined the faculty of the University of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois, in 2003, where he has served as chair of the Department of Theology and Philosophy and was granted tenure and promoted to the rank of associate professor in 2008. He earned the Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His teaching experience of seventeen years includes secondary through graduate school levels.

A recipient of the Smith Family Fellowship and the Charles M. Ross Trust Fellowship, Dr. Nicholas specializes in systematic theology with a particular interest in the methodological implications that a covenantal prime analogate has for sacramental theology, liturgy, Christology, and moral theology. He has received two fellowships funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities for research at the University of Cambridge (summer 2006) and in Rome, Siena, and Assisi (summer 2008). This research builds upon the foundation he laid for such a methodology in his book, *The Eucharist as the Center of Theology*.

Dr. Nicholas enjoys serving students as the faculty moderator of the ETA chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma at the University of St. Francis, one of the founding chapters. His commitment to the mission, function, and well-being of DES has led him to contribute further as a member of the Executive Committee. Elected to the Committee in 2007, he has agreed to stand for a second term.

DR. JOHN A. PALASOTA
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS, HOUSTON, TX

Dr. John A. Palasota, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of St. Thomas, earned a BS in chemistry and mathematics from the St. Thomas in 1989 and a PhD in analytical chemistry from the University of Houston in 1993. He became a member of the full-time faculty in fall 2000, rising to the rank of associate professor and granted tenure in fall 2006.

His previous administrative appointments include three years as Associate Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences and six years as co-director of the University's Pre-Health Professions Program. He is currently Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Palasota is an active researcher and is the author or co-author of several publications and successful grant proposals. He has made numerous presentations in the fields of analytical chemistry, experimental design, and optimization. He is a member of the American Chemical Society and Sigma Xi and has been the faculty sponsor of the University's chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma since 2006.

DR. GARRISON SULLIVAN
AVILA UNIVERSITY, KANSAS CITY, MO

Dr. Garrison Sullivan, Dean of the School of Science and Health at Avila and the pre-health advisor, has been the faculty moderator for the Avila University Beta Theta Chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma since 1975 and served on the DES Executive Committee from 1994 to 1998. He is excited about the possibility of rejoining the Executive Committee and collaborating with other committee members on ways to enhance member benefits and to strengthen the support of student scholarship.

His degrees include a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Pittsburgh and a Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry from Case Western Reserve University. He has received numerous honors including the Governor's Award for Outstanding Teaching, the Avila Medal of Honor and the Father Joseph Walter Award for contributions to the advising community.

He has significant board experience having served as President of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP); after being over eight years on their board and President of the Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild. He has a wide range of interests including global studies, the use of technology in teaching, environmental programs, interdisciplinary studies, and the support of the fine arts. He is actively involved in efforts to increase the number of under-represented individuals in health care fields through his work with the American Dental Associations' Committee on Diversity as well as with NAAHP's Diversity Committee.

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE: AN INVITATION**

Members are invited to submit nominations for the Executive Committee of Delta Epsilon Sigma. Each nomination (including curriculum vitae) should be received by the National Secretary-Treasurer by December 1 in order to be considered at the Annual Meeting for inclusion in the list of candidates to be published in Fall 2011.

WINNERS OF THE NATIONAL 2010 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

The Delta Epsilon Sigma National Student Award has been granted to Krystal Cabrera, St. Joseph's College, Brooklyn, NYC, New York; and Russell Spangler, Neumann University, Aston, Pennsylvania. This award for outstanding student achievement is not frequently given by the Society. Our congratulations go to these two distinguished students.



THE DELTA EPSILON SIGMA NATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARD

Delta Epsilon Sigma has a national award to be presented to outstanding students who are members of the society and are completing their undergraduate program. It is a means by which a chapter can bring national attention to its most distinguished graduates.

The National Office has a distinctive gold and bronze medallion which it will provide without cost to the recipient's chapter for appropriate presentation. Names of recipients will be published in the *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal*. Qualifications for the award include the following:

1. Membership in Delta Epsilon Sigma.
2. An overall Grade Point Average of 3.9–4.00 on all work taken as an undergraduate.
3. Further evidence of high scholarship:
 - a) a grade of "A" or with the highest level of distinction on an approved undergraduate thesis or its equivalent in the major field,
 - or
 - b) scores at the 90th percentile or better on a nationally recognized test (e.g., GRE, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT).
4. Endorsements by the chapter advisor, the department chair or mentor, and the chief academic officer.
5. Nominations must be made no later than six (6) months after the granting of the undergraduate degree.

AN INVITATION TO POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS

The editors of the *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal* invite contributions to the journal from our readership. Send manuscripts (email attachments preferred) to the co-editors. Submissions to *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal* are peer reviewed by doctorally-prepared academics or specialists in the pertaining subject matter. The journal is open to a wide variety of topics and genres. Particularly welcome are submissions addressing issues of concern to Catholic colleges and universities:

- What is the impact of new technology such as the Web or distance learning on higher education, and how can we best manage its advantages and risks?
- What strategies are most useful in encouraging the development of student leadership and the integration of academic work and campus social life?
- What are the most promising directions for service learning and for the development of the campus as community?
- What is the identity and mission of the American Catholic liberal arts college in the era inaugurated by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*?
- What are the implications of globalization in relation to Catholic social and economic thought?

THE DELTA EPSILON SIGMA DISTINGUISHED LECTURERS PROGRAM

Delta Epsilon Sigma offers each year an award of one thousand dollars for a speaker at a major meeting sponsored or co-sponsored by a chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma or by a Catholic professional society. Application for this award must be filed with the National Secretary-Treasurer one year in advance. The society also offers awards to help subsidize lectures sponsored by local DES chapters. An application for one of these must be filed with the National Secretary-Treasurer thirty days in advance; the maximum award will be two hundred dollars.

THE DELTA EPSILON SIGMA WEB PAGE

The Delta Epsilon Sigma Web page is available at <http://www.deltaepsilonsigma.org>. The *Delta Epsilon Sigma Journal* is available online there, in addition to DES application forms, programs, and announcements.

THE UNDERGRADUATE COMPETITION IN CREATIVE AND SCHOLARLY WRITING

Delta Epsilon Sigma sponsors an annual writing contest open to any undergraduate (member or non-member) in an institution which has a chapter of the society. Manuscripts may be submitted in any of four categories: (a) poetry, (b) short fiction, (c) non-fiction prose, and (d) scholarly research. There will be a first prize of five hundred dollars and a second prize of two hundred fifty dollars in each of the four categories. No award may be made in a given category if the committee does not judge any submission to be of sufficient merit.

The first phase of the competition is to be conducted by local chapters, each of which is encouraged to sponsor its own contest. A chapter may forward to the national competition only one entry in each category. Editorial comment and advice by a faculty mentor is appropriate as an aid preparatory to student revision, so long as all writing is done by the student.

Prose manuscripts should be typed or word-processed, double-spaced, 1,500-5,000 words in length. Scholarly papers should attach an abstract, should include primary research, and should present some original insight. Documentation should follow one of the established scholarly methods such as MLA (old or new) or APA. A long poem should be submitted singly; shorter lyrics may be submitted singly or in groups of two or three. Moderators should send all entries to the National Secretary-Treasurer by December 1.

Final judging and the announcement of the result will take place not later than May 1st of the following year. Winners will be notified through the office of the local chapter moderator.

DELTA EPSILON SIGMA SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Delta Epsilon Sigma sponsors an annual scholarship and fellowship competition for its members. Junior-year members may apply for twelve Fitzgerald Scholarships at \$1,000 each, to be applied toward tuition costs for their senior year. Senior-year members may apply for twelve Fitzgerald Fellowships at \$1,000 each, to be applied toward tuition costs for first-year graduate work. These scholarships and fellowships are named after the founder and first Secretary-Treasurer of DES, Most Rev. Edward A. Fitzgerald of Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa. The awards will be made available on a competitive basis to students who have been initiated into the society and who have also been nominated by their chapters for the competition. Applications may be obtained from the Office of the National Secretary-Treasurer.

Delta Epsilon Sigma Official Jewelry

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THE DES NATIONAL SCHOLASTIC HONOR SOCIETY EMBLEM



The emblem of DES contains the motto, the name, the symbols, and the founding date of the society. Delta Epsilon Sigma is an abbreviation constructed from the initial Greek letters of the words in the motto, *Dei Epitattein Sophon*. Drawn from Aristotle and much used by medieval Catholic philosophers, the phrase is taken to mean: “It is the mission of a wise person to put order” into knowledge.

The Society’s Ritual for Induction explains that a wise person is one “who discriminates between the true and the false, who appraises things at their proper worth, and who then can use this knowledge, along with the humility born of it, to go forward to accept the responsibilities and obligations which this ability imposes.”

Thus the three words on the *Journal’s* cover, Wisdom · Leadership · Service, point to the challenges as well as the responsibilities associated with the DES motto. The emblem prominently figures the *Chi Rho* symbol (the first two Greek letters of the word Christ), and the flaming lamp of wisdom shining forth the light of Truth.

DELTA EPSILON SIGMA JOURNAL
University of St. Thomas
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