

RESPONSE TO WALTER PRINCIPE (1)

Since Prof. Principe was my academic mentor, you will understand if I begin by remarking that key roles for a mentor are to challenge one's thought and to serve as a model for fruitful and respectful academic dialogue. It is a privilege to be able to thank Walter publicly for acting so ably in that capacity, a "thank you" which I am sure would be seconded by his many other students present at this convention.

The thesis of this rich presidential address is the decline of interest in our Catholic intellectual tradition, and the need for a concerted effort to retrieve it. In this brief reflection I intend to do three things. First, I will emphasize one implication of the evidence. Second, in the light of this emphasis I will suggest a friendly amendment to the thesis. Third, I will offer some concrete suggestions. This needed attention to our Roman Catholic tradition is something no doubt our Protestant colleagues here present will understand. We relate well ecumenically when we begin with fidelity to our own tradition.

First, the evidence. The review of dissertations both by CTSA members and in four doctoral programs, is, if not conclusive, at least strongly suggestive. When we view that data in relationship to the various groups whose primary concern is patristic or medieval history (inclusive of theology), an additional possibility presents itself. We are facing one result of the separation of academic fields. Separation of fields has led to distinct associations and conventions. Is it not possible that CTSA membership has a heavy concentration in systematic theology? I have not reviewed the directory, but my experience attending conventions for over twelve years suggests that this is the case. It is to our advantage as a society that specialists in such fields as history, ethics, morals, and sociology have continued to attend this convention as well as ones that focus more sharply on their own areas of interest. In fact, among members here present is the president of the American Catholic Historical Association, Gerald Fogarty. It is our loss as a society that only the rare scriptural scholar or liturgist chooses to attend. All of these scholars continue to contribute to the retrieval and interpretation of the Catholic tradition.

Think for a moment of the contribution of historical studies. There is the publication of ongoing series, like the CUA patristic series, the Ancient Christian Writers series, the Classics of Western Spirituality series. Individual translations and editions include the work of CTSA members like Suzanne Noffke, translator of the writings of Catherine of Siena,¹ and of William Thompson and Lowell

¹Suzanne Noffke, trans., *Catherine of Siena, The Dialogue, Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist, 1980); idem, ed., *The Prayers of Catherine of Siena* (New York: Paulist, 1983); idem, trans. *The Letters of Catherine of Siena 1: Letters 1-88*, vol. 52 of *Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies* (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1988).

Glendon, respectively editor and translator of Berulle.² Granted these are translations. The problem this poses is one to which I will return. First let us acknowledge that presently we have scholars capable of performing this service—and that these volumes find readers (or at least buyers!). This is a quite recent development, and good.

In addition, we can recall individual studies like those of Ysabel de Andia on Irenaeus;³ Philip Rousseau on Pachomius,⁴ Simone Pétrement on the relation of gnosticism to early Christianity,⁵ and the immensely significant work on Arian studies continued over the past decade.⁶ We can recall, too, the work of members of the society like Joseph Lienhard⁷ and Robert Daly.⁸ Furthermore, social and cultural history has developed valuable tools for refocusing the tradition and reclaiming lost areas like women's history. Here Caroline Walker Bynum's work is illustrative.⁹

The evidence indicates that there is serious attention being paid to the Catholic tradition by a large number of scholars, many of whom are Catholic: either Roman Catholic, or Orthodox, or Anglo-Catholic. Sound historical work is being done, and there is no dearth of historians. What is often lacking is the appropriate use

²William M. Thompson, ed., and Lowell Glendon, trans., *Berulle and the French School: Selected Writings, Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist, 1988).

³Ysabel de Andia, *Homo Vivens: Incorruptibilité et divinisation de l'homme selon IR-ÉNÉE DE LYON* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1986).

⁴Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

⁵Simone Pétrement, *Le Dieu séparé: les origines du gnosticisme* (Paris: Cerf, 1984); Carol Harrison, trans. *A Separate God: The Christian Origins of Gnosticism* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990).

⁶Works include Rudolf Lorentz, *Arius judaizans? Untersuchungen zur dogmengeschichtlichen Einordnung des Arius* (Göttingen: 1980); Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981); G. Christopher Stead, "The Freedom of the Will and the Arian Controversy," in H. D. Blume and F. Mann, eds. *Platonismus und christentum: Festschrift für Heinrich Dorrie, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 10 (1983) 245-57; Rowan D. Williams, "The Logic of Arianism," *Journal of Theological Studies* 34 (1983) 56-81; Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Patristics Foundation, 1985); R. P. C. Hanson, "The Influence of Origen on the Arian Controversy," in *Origeniana Quarta*, 410-23; Joseph T. Lienhard, "The 'Arian' Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered," *Theological Studies* 48 (1987) 415-37; Rowan Williams, *Arius* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1987); R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381 AD* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988).

⁷Joseph T. Lienhard, *Ministry, Message of the Fathers of the Church* (Wilmington DE: Glazier, 1984); see also his significant article on Arianism, n.6.

⁸Daly, currently editor of *Theological Studies*, has contributed two studies on the Christian doctrine of sacrifice.

⁹Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California, 1982); *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987).

of historical scholarship in much systematic work. Theologians tend to talk collaboration but to work independently of one another, let alone of specialists in other fields. In theory they accept Lonergan's advice that theological method is essentially collaborative in nature. In fact they often work alone, despite the increasing evidence that no one of us can master all that is needed. Thus I suggest a friendly amendment to Prof. Principe's thesis so that it would include not just a concerted effort to retrieve the Catholic intellectual tradition, but a concerted and *collaborative* effort. Such an emphasis would support the final section of his address.

Now let me turn to concrete suggestions. My own experience of research and writing is that the work is enriched by inviting a group of colleagues whose specialties are related to my topic to review my manuscripts-in-process. In my current project I am finding the insights of scripture scholars and specialists in spirituality to be invaluable additions to the critique of patristic scholars.

At the curricular level, many members of this society teach either in a university setting with responsibility for a doctoral program, or in a seminary with responsibility for an M.Div. program, or in both. Students in both programs need a vivid living memory of the tradition, and the gift of tongues. More specifically, for either program to function in the service of Catholic theology it requires serious attention to history. In addition, at both levels some knowledge of languages is necessary. Doctoral students will be the next researchers, translators, and teachers. One can perform none of these tasks well (if at all) without modern and ancient languages. We have not asked enough of our students here. As to the M.Div. program, in many parts of this country Spanish is a working language for pastors. Increasingly knowledge of Spanish is being either required or recommended of M. Div. students. In addition, is it not an embarrassment to realize that it is our Protestant brothers and sisters who expect of their pastors some familiarity with the biblical languages, while we Catholics are content always to rely on translations? We do need a new Pentecost.

Finally, some suggestions for the CTSA. We are in Atlanta, and I have dreams. I dream of the regular inclusion of speakers whose specialty is history—or even scripture. I dream of workshops that develop skills in collaborative work. I dream of seminars that regularly include the historical dimension of a topic. And when I really sleep well—then I dream of periodic joint or parallel meetings with one or even several other Catholic learned societies. There are many ways to begin our concerted and I hope collaborative effort at retrieval of the Catholic intellectual tradition. Thank you, Walter, for calling us to it.

MARY ANN DONOVAN, S.C.
Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley