

## From the Editor

In this issue of *Integritas*, geneticist Marc Muskavitch raises a question unlikely to be found in genetic textbooks or journals: namely, whether grace has an influence on our biological destinies. He examines how growth of understanding of the human genome has engendered a kind of new deterministic framework, reminiscent of older determinisms such as those found in various philosophical and theological traditions. Yet he finds room for the “state of grace,” understood at the very least as the perception of being loved by a benevolent God, in the burgeoning science of epigenetics—the science of how environmental factors impact genetic inheritance from one generation to the next. This growing body of knowledge opens further windows into basic theological questions.

In response, theologian William Werpehowski points to the deleterious fruits of earlier forms of determinism as well as the ultimately destructive self-absorption that can result from the desire to control our destinies. In contrast, he points to Pope Francis’s recent apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel* and its countercultural call to go out from the self, toward the other in love. Such a posture, he avers, challenges the desires underneath all forms of determinism, for it acknowledges that there is a dynamism in a person’s life that trumps whatever genetic or epigenetic factors influence one’s biological destiny: namely, a love willing to enter into self-sacrifice in service to Christ.

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