

INTRODUCTION: PEACE AND *HOMO VIATOR*



The Fall–Winter 2018 issue of *Communio* explores the two themes of “Peace” and “*Homo Viator*.” Of his own task in the world, Jesus says, “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Mt 10:34). Opening the path to heavenly rest through his death, Christ simultaneously presents in his own perfect fidelity to the Father the standard against which every deception and betrayal is to be judged (Jn 12:47–48). As St. Augustine was fond of contemplating, the Gospel’s promise of salvation brings to light that man’s passage from conception to death is a pilgrimage to his true homeland. If the Christian goes to the Father on the Way that Christ is, what form does the Church’s confrontation with the world’s restlessness, strife, and persecution take? Can the present life offer any foretaste of peace to the wayfarer, and how does the Church’s hope in heaven bear on her responsibility to the passing age?

We first present several essays on “Peace.” **Glenn W. Olsen**, in “The Role and Dignity of the Christian Soldier,” considers the Church’s vision of the knight, attending to how the novelist Georges Bernanos took up this vision. Olsen shows how knighthood, epitomized for Bernanos by St. Joan of Arc, represents a way of life in the world refined according to Christian charity. For Bernanos, the laity carry on the role of the knight in our own day by humbly undergoing the risk of Christian mission in a society that has defined itself by its rejection of the Church. Bernanos thus “finds that the role and dignity of the Christian soldier is such that while participating in one of the

lowliest forms of life, the soldier advances—can advance—the coming of the Kingdom.”

Andrew Willard Jones, in “The End of Sovereignty: An Essay in Christian Postliberalism,” proposes that Catholics must seek a discourse that transcends liberalism’s opposition of Church and state. Jones contends that the supposed peace conceived in the liberal regime is premised on the Hobbesian claim that human relationships always remain self-interested and competitive. Here, the sovereign State is merely the most powerful arbiter in a universal conflict. Whereas this ideology is unable to make sense of the most fundamental human relationships, especially those of the Church and the family, a Christian social order can recognize that the concord of a community seeking happiness together is that which is most natural. “This, then, is the decisive difference between the two approaches. Is violence a disordered peace or is peace a mere tactic of violence? Are all wars fought for peace or is peace a continuation of war?”

The Church’s apocalyptic struggle with the powers of the world does not contradict, but rather confirms and communicates, the peace toward which she looks and from which she already lives. **William T. Cavanaugh**, in “‘A Twice-Told Tale’: The Wars of Religion as Girardian Myth,” presents the view that religion is inherently violent as a “myth” that hides the violence of the modern state. According to Cavanaugh, this founding myth of modernity invents the very opposition between private religion and public reason that the state claims to reconcile. “Just as religion was not a cause but a product of the wars that founded the state, so reason, as the Enlightenment came to use the term, and the reason/violence dichotomy, are not the cause but the products of the state’s securing a monopoly on legitimate violence.” In conversation with René Girard, Cavanaugh discusses how this scapegoating of religion is itself a religious claim, one that deprives the public order of the one sacrifice that offers lasting peace: the Cross of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

In “Making Peace through the Blood of His Cross,” **Gil Bailie** develops Girard’s theory of religious scapegoating, arguing that the ritualized victimization that was at the center of all pagan cult, despite the cruelty and idolatry it expressed, served as a prefiguration of the Paschal mystery. “For the myths, rituals,

and taboos that aboriginal man hastily cobbled together in order to sustain the fragile social solidarity can most generously be seen as the proleptic effort of our ancient ancestors to huddle for protection at the foot of the Cross." As Christ's unique sacrifice liberates human worship from its perversions and violence, Golgotha reveals the fulfillment toward which all human religion always aspired, thus saving that which was holy even in sacrifice outside Israel.

"For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph 2:14). In accord with Paul's profession, **Douglas Farrow**, in "Blessed is He Who Comes in the Name of the Lord: Jews and the *Parousia* of Jesus," meditates on the priority of Christ's mission to the Jewish people. Farrow contends that this mission remains crucial for the whole economy of salvation and for the life of the Church now. Affirming the Church's hope in the reconciliation of Israel and the Church in the New Jerusalem of the eschaton, he recalls that this very hope demands the Christian's present work of proclaiming the Gospel to the Jews as first their own. "The Church exists to testify to the parousia that *was* while the Temple still stood; to the parousia that in the Eucharist *now is*; and to the royal parousia that *is soon to come*."

Next, we present a pair of essays on the wayfaring theme. In "Bound in Freedom: Odysseus at the Mast as Archetype of the *Homo Viator*," **Jan-Heiner Tück** explores Christian exegesis, from Clement to Claudel, of the encounter between Odysseus and the Sirens in Homer's *Odyssey*. Taking up and transforming allegorical readings from the Greek philosophers, the early Church Fathers found in the episode a genuine typology of the Paschal mystery, as well as of the trials of the Christian who has fastened himself by faith to the wood of the Cross. Tück shows how this typology, even in pointing to the need to overcome dangerous allurements in the voyage home to God, encourages the Christian's reception of the world's enduring wisdom. "The charms of the world are not entirely separable from the extensive wealth of Greek culture, and thus, directly adjoining the advice to bind oneself in freedom to Christ in order to withstand the temptations of the world stands the invitation to examine the literature and thought of Athens in order to use it for the true explication of the faith."

The Christian conception of life as a pilgrimage toward heaven celebrates not only the goodness of the destination and even of the journey itself, but also, as **D. C. Schindler** observes in “*Homo Viator, Puer in Patria: On Ferdinand Ulrich’s Philosophical Anthropology of Childhood*,” the goodness of its beginning. “The destination is not something simply new, but the rediscovery, we might say, of what was given *already*.” This comes distinctly to light in reflection on childhood, which Ulrich holds possesses ineradicable significance for mature human life, offering a privileged revelation of the trustworthy givenness of being and of the abiding positivity of dependence. It is, moreover, the joyful rest of the childhood home, wherein man discovers in being-loved that the task of being is gratitude, that frees the wayfarer to entrust himself in hope to the promise of an everlasting homeland to come.

In “The *Indissoluble Nexus* of Nature, Body, and Person: 50 Years After *Humanae Vitae*,” **Nicholas J. Healy Jr.** evaluates the legacy and reception of Pope Paul VI’s seminal encyclical, whose fiftieth anniversary was marked in 2018. In response to objections raised against *Humanae vitae*, Healy reflects on the metaphysical principles implicit in the document’s affirmation that the unitive and procreative significances of marriage are perfectly inseparable. He shows that the meaning of the conjugal act is obscured by modernity’s de-sacramentalization of the material cosmos and hence of the human body. In the end, the recovery of the natural as a sign of God’s generosity is crucial in order to sustain the connection between spousal love and the gift of fruitfulness. “It is precisely the reality of the child, a new person, that reveals the deepest potentiality and meaning of sexual intercourse, even as it opens the union of man and woman to the common good of society.”

Robert Spaemann, renowned German philosopher and friend of Benedict XVI, passed away on December 10, 2018. To honor the achievement of this great thinker, **Anselm Ramelow** offers an overview of the major themes in Spaemann’s philosophy as they developed over his long career in “Teleology and Transcendence: The Thought of Robert Spaemann.” As Ramelow explains, a central aspect of Spaemann’s thought is his distinctive notion of the person. According to the German philosopher, the self-transcending character of wayfaring man in his

pursuit of well-being is positively rooted in his bodily life, so that there is a genuine analogy between personal freedom and the being of lower organisms. However, Spaemann sees that man's capacity to relate to himself finally means that the human person can only be himself perfectly in a common world of shared experience with his fellow man. "There are no persons without other persons in so far as each person anticipates its subjectivity to become objective to the view of the other; every 'I' implies a 'Thou.'" Indeed, this "external perspective" of seeing myself through another's eyes suggests how the finite person is ordered from within toward the happiness of being encountered by and sharing an everlasting communion with the tri-personal God.

In *Retrieving the Tradition*, we publish two of **Robert Spaemann's** works. First, in "What Makes Persons Persons?," Spaemann begins from the paradox that the dignity of the person as irreducible to any other, or as "end-in-himself," is manifested above all in his self-offering service of his community. The reason why this is so, he argues, is that the reference to another belongs to the ontological wholeness and distinctiveness of each person, for persons "can understand themselves as part of the world of another." On this basis, he reflects on our primitive sense of our neighbor's worthiness to be loved, disclosed in an exemplary way by the mother, before whom the child learns his own dignity. "She says 'you' to the child, she treats it as a small person and only because she will treat the child already as a person will it become what it was from the beginning and what she regards it as from the beginning." Next, Spaemann's 1954 "A Keyhole for Unbelievers? The Public Character of *Cultus* and the Broadcasting of the Mass on TV" examines particular media in light of his understanding of art's sacramental structure of self-transcendence and what *cultus publicus* truly means for the Church.

In *Notes & Comments*, we offer two essays that each contribute to an understanding of how the longed-for "peace which surpasses all understanding" (Phil 4:7) is enjoyed in the midst of trials in the world. **Agata Rottkamp**, in "The Many Homes of *Anna Karenina*," addresses the common life and work that makes the family home a fully human dwelling place. Reading Tolstoy's great work in light of her own experiences both of childhood and parenthood, Rottkamp ponders how the nuptial vow alone secures the home as a school of love in which children receive

their cultural heritage and grow into their own personhood. “The parents’ relationship is the bedrock of every child’s existence, the ground on which their little world is built.” Lastly, in “The Closing of Stores of Sunday: The Church’s Social Doctrine Says Yes,” **Giampolo Crepaldi** argues that the protection of Sunday rest is a duty that belongs to the state. Drawing from the Church’s social teaching, Crepaldi notes that keeping Sunday set apart promotes the common good of society precisely through serving the bonds of the family and inviting citizens to worship. “Closing up shop and being able to enjoy the things in life that are free is already a kind of openness to transcendence.” □

—The Editors