

From the Editor

Some momentous changes have occurred since the last issue of *Horizons*. I want to talk about two of them.

Federico Borromeo, nephew of the great Tridentine reformer Charles Borromeo who eventually succeeded his uncle as archbishop of Milan in 1595, was a great patron of the arts. He founded a Milanese academy of painting and eventually donated his large art collection to the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana as a civic resource. The art historian Pamela Jones, who has written extensively on Federico, notes that his great appreciation of landscape and still-life paintings was based on his spirituality and that, “as a Christian optimist, he regarded nature as a manifestation of God’s goodness.”¹ His optimism was due in large part to his love of spiritual simplicity as well as to the influence of his friend Filippo Neri and his Oratorian movement, an influence that encouraged Federico “to devise his own path to spiritual peace and equilibrium,” a path that encompassed a love of nature and beauty, and an intense awareness of God’s presence in the world of creation.

Why mention a moment in the history of Counter-Reformation Catholicism that can only be obscure to many readers of this journal? Precisely because of Jones’s description of the effect created by a “second wave of Counter-Reformational thought” that included Neri and Borromeo: “That generation of reformers . . . began to revitalize humanism and to incorporate it into contemporary religious thought. The result was a less rigid strain of Roman Catholicism, based on love and appeal to the emotions.”² After a century full of controversy, suspicion, violence, and rancorous polemics, a different attitude arose among some influential Church figures, one that emphasized viewing the world sacramentally and discerning its cultural tendencies not merely as threats to Catholicism’s essence but also as possible opportunities for evangelization.

A similar “optimistic” change in attitude has been apparent to Catholics and non-Catholics alike (even Jon Stewart) after the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI and the election of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio as Pope Francis. The new pope’s immediate emphasis on mercy and simplicity, both in

1 Pamela M. Jones, “Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes and Still Lifes: Christian Optimism in Italy ca. 1600,” *Art Bulletin* 70/2 (June 1988): 261–72, at 261.

iv 2 *Ibid.*, 270.

words and in surprising and inspiring gestures, sparked not only media buzz but even (slightly) raised the hopes of those who, like me, had low (or no) expectations before the papal conclave. I am writing this two weeks after Francis' election, and at this stage there is no way to predict the direction (s) this change will take.

While the future is veiled, the meaning of the immediate past is not. The media has already reduced Benedict XVI's papacy to a single descriptive adjective: "troubled". One reason for Benedict's resignation, I am convinced, is the failure of his "ordered" and ethereal Neo-Platonic/Augustinian worldview: it eventually collided with the plurality of truths outside the Vatican and the almost willful disorder and corrupt behavior within the Vatican, and could not "solve" (*solvere*, unravel) any of it or put it into any order.³ A similar view has been voiced by Leonardo Boff (the "collapse" of Ratzinger's theology)⁴ and by Martin Drobinski, writing in Munich's *Süddeutsche Zeitung* of the current repudiation of Ratzinger's "hermetic" view of the Church as a little ship tossed about on a stormy "relativist" sea, forced to batten down the hatches and pull in the sails.⁵ Perhaps a comparable defeat awaits the *juridical* view of Roman Catholicism that has become the default position over the past few decades, a view accompanied by what can be called "the paranoid-critical method" applied to everything contemporary. Juridicism effectively reduces Catholicism to a brand and ignores its New Testament roots as a "way" of discipleship. A more incarnational and sacramental view looks for possibilities of grace in everything, everywhere, all the time. At the moment, this looks like Pope Francis' path, visible in his various exhortations to Christians to risk going out and showing loving concern for one another, especially those in need, and for the world—all of which are "God's gifts."⁶ It appears as well as in his encounters with Orthodox Christians and

3 Some support for this can be found in Benedict's announcement of his impending resignation (*Declaratio*, 10 February 2013, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2013/february/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20130211_declaratio_en.html).

4 Leonardo Boff, "Was the Collapse of this Theology the Main Reason for the Resignation of Benedict XVI?" (18 March 2013), <http://leonardoboff.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/was-the-collapse-of-this-theology-the-main-reason-for-the-resignation-of-benedict-xvi/>.

5 Martin Drobinski, "Papst Franziskus: Das Gegenteil von Benedikts Programm," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 28 March 2013, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/panorama/bergoglios-brandrede-das-gegenteil-von-benedikts-programm-1.1635295>; partial English translation at <http://www.praytellig.com/index.php/2013/04/04/reporting-on-benedict-and-francis-from-bavaria/>.

6 See his homily at the inaugural Mass of his papacy (19 March 2013), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130319_omelia-inizio-pontificato_en.html.

Muslims. This is indeed a “less rigid strain of Roman Catholicism,” and Christians and non-Christians are very interested in how it all plays out.

The other momentous change since the last issue concerns *Horizons* itself. This issue you are holding in your hands or viewing on your screen is the first to be published in our new relationship with Cambridge University Press. The differences are striking: new cover, new interior design, and a new website (<http://journals.cambridge.org/hor>). Enough has been said previously announcing the change to our readers. What must now be said is how grateful the College Theology Society and the journal’s staff are for the Press’ interest and expertise in bringing this large project to fruition. *Horizons* owes a huge debt of gratitude to Martine Walsh, the senior commissioning editor of humanities and social science journals for the Press. She was the original catalyst for the entire project and has worked tirelessly to smooth the way to the current issue. Without her expertise, (gentle) prodding, always excellent humor, and knack for unraveling unexpected knots, I don’t know where we would be. We also owe a huge debt to members of the Press’ New York team, especially Kelly Loftus, Susan Soule, Ed Carey, Catherine Paduani, and Claire Gilmore. They have worked on the many technical aspects of the journal, including the redesign of the hard copy issue and our internet presence, and they have never hesitated to answer a question, to iron out a glitch, or to share their hospitality.

There are yet two more changes to be noted at *Horizons*. Elena Procario-Foley, who until now has been the Assistant Editor of the journal, has been named Associate Editor, in view of her major responsibilities as a member of the editorial staff. Then there is the retirement of Irene Noble, the journal’s long-time editorial assistant, in December 2012. Over the years many of our authors and readers have heard Irene’s lilting yet insistent voice over the phone as she dealt with all the day-to-day issues in what is for most of the week a one-person office. Her distinctive voice even had a way of inhabiting e-mails. No caller to the journal’s office remained a stranger. Irene now focuses her attention on her grandchildren, and her contributions and her kindness will long be remembered at *Horizons*.

Irene’s successor as editorial assistant is the omni-competent Sarah Glaser. Already her expertise has proven invaluable in the preparation of this issue, in working with Cambridge University Press, and in the smooth running of the editorial office, especially while the editor has been away on research leave. She and Ben Winter, the graduate assistant in charge of coordinating book reviews, have the editor’s undying gratitude for meeting deadlines and keeping the trains running on time over the past few months.