

## *Editor's Note*

τοῦ λόγου δ' ἐόντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες  
φρόνησιν.

—Heraclitus

It would be more than generous today, after the manner of Jacques Maritain in 1943, to characterize education as at a crossroads. In the fifty-five years since Maritain published his Yale University Terry Lectures as *Education at the Crossroads*, the better part of educational institutions at all levels, both in the United States and abroad, has clearly made its choice of roads to take. That road, to put it quite bluntly, leads away from truth and toward the privacies of custom, technique and contingent desire. It leads away from the common things available to human beings simply insofar as they are human.

The essays in this volume were inspired by reflection upon the positive nature of Maritain's contributions to the philosophy of education, and so at least in that regard, if not always in a more explicit commitment, they represent a further Thomistic contribution to the modern debate on education at all levels, public and private, but with an emphasis on post-secondary education and Catholic higher education in particular. In a rich variety of ways these essays not only point the way back to the crossroads; they go on to indicate something of the landscape along the road not taken by contemporary education.

The essays are arranged in three sections. The essays in the first section, "The Private Life of the Modern Academy," constitute a trenchant critique of the contemporary malaise in education, while those in the second section, "Manifesting the Common," provide various perspectives on what the alternative to the current situation might look like. The volume closes with a section entitled, "Political Aspects," a group of essays which expand the discussion to include broader political, even global concerns. There is no better way to introduce the reader more fully to the themes of the volume

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than to direct him to Fr. Benedict Ashley's inspired introduction, which not only makes for an excellent introduction to the specific essays in the volume, but also serves as a masterful introduction to educational theory from a Thomistic point of view. I would like to thank Fr. Ashley for so graciously responding to the invitation to write this introduction.

I would also like to thank the Executive Committee of the American Maritain Association for inviting me to edit this volume, and a trio of past editors, Anthony O. Simon, Curtis L. Hancock, and Roman Ciapolo, who lent me their good counsel. In addition, I would like to thank the Jacques Maritain Center at the University of Notre Dame, and the St. Gerard Foundation, for their material assistance in the production of this volume. The Department of Philosophy at the University of St. Thomas, Houston, and the Center for Thomistic Studies, also provided me with many forms of assistance and encouragement during the preparation of the volume. Also deserving of special thanks is Miss Dolores Daly who created the artwork for the cover, Miss Sarah Houser who provided indispensable editorial help of various kinds, and Miss Maribel Lopez who aided me in the early stages of the project as part of the University of St. Thomas Faculty-Student Research Program. Many heartfelt thanks, too, go out to my wife Amy, who helped me all along the way but most of all during the final sprint of proof-reading and revisions.

Not least, of course, I would like to thank the contributors for their important and stimulating work in helping bring Aquinas to the fore of the contemporary debate on education.

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