

## Editor's Note

Truth Matters. The ambiguity of the title of this book is intentional. On the one hand, those two words can mean that the truth of things makes a difference; given the relation between theoretical principles and the practical consequences that follow from them, what one holds to be true matters, particularly in the realm of lived experience. Regardless of the specific branch of knowledge, whether it be the various disciplines of philosophy, the experimental or social sciences, education or political theory, the arts, or theology, the affirmation of one theory or principle to the exclusion of its contrary has practical consequences for ordinary, common experience. This claim itself, however, is not without consequences of its own: by making the claim that it does, it implies that indeed there is such a thing as "the truth of things" and, although certain qualifications would be necessary, it at least initially also implies that post-modern skepticism, as a thoroughgoing human epistemology, is false.

The second meaning of the title may be seen more clearly when written: truth-matters, that is, when it refers to those various branches of knowledge previously mentioned as those subject-areas or subject matters about which questions of truth are indeed an issue. As one might expect, here too there are qualifications to be made, and paramount among them is Aristotle's sage comment that it is the mark of the educated person that he or she not expect any more truth from a particular subject matter than that subject matter itself will allow. The failure to understand these discipline-specific limitations is often the seedbed of skepticism: should one fail to understand these limitations, one might be tempted to draw the false conclusion that truth is always equally difficult to attain no matter what the subject matter. Thus, while truth matters generally, it may also matter in different ways or degrees (concerning the significance of its consequences) in the various disciplines or subject matters that might fall under consideration.

The Introduction to this volume seeks to clear up many of the confusions that so often occur in both epistemology and the metaphysics of truth. The collection of essays in this book, written in honor of Jacques Maritain (and as such, reflecting his position of philosophical realism), all apply these various insights and distinctions in various ways and in various disciplines, some theoretical, some ethical, and some practical – that is, they address the truth-matters about which truth matters!

Concerning the publication of this book, there are certain things that I know to be true: without the help of many people, this project would never have come to completion. First and foremost is Anthony O. Simon, the man who has been the Secretary/Treasurer of the American Maritain Association since it began more than twenty-seven years ago, and who is also the General Editor of the series of books of which this present volume is but the most recent. At the very outset of this project, Tony gave these Shakespearean words of sage advice ... they have served as a constant lodestar: you must “screw your courage to the hitching post,” he counseled; trust your instincts and do not be afraid to act forthrightly when certain editorial decisions need to be made. From Tony, I have learned a great deal and I am glad to have the opportunity to express my gratitude in print.

I also received so much invaluable assistance from both Dennis Wm. Moran, Managing Editor of *The Review of Politics*, who did the compositing, and from Cathy Whalen, secretary to the Division of the Humanities at Walsh University, who was always as cheerful and tireless as she is competent. Richard Jusseaume, President of Walsh University, also has given much appreciated institutional and personal support to both my work and to that of the American Maritain Association itself.

I am also grateful to iconographer and Maritain scholar Katharine Osenga, whose original drawing of Jacques Maritain provides the art work for the cover of this book. Since Maritain himself loved the beautiful arts and shared friendships with so many artists who were rising stars in their day, I am confident that he would have been pleased to have the work of such a fine, young artist as Ms. Osenga, gracing the cover of a book dedicated in his honor.

Aristotle said of metaphysics that it was the least necessary but most important; what he didn't say, but perhaps should have, is that a good family is both most necessary and most important: to my mother and father, Margaret and John, you have blessed me with your unconditional love and

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unfailing support, and you have shown, by the model of your virtuous lives, that goodness, as well as truth, matters; to my children, Lia, Josef, Rachel, and Lauren, you have been my source of greatest pride and inspiration, and you have helped me to understand that we are not loved because we are worthy, but that we are worthy because we are loved; and finally, to my wife, Sherry, you have shown me the true meaning of sacramental love – you are my lover, my friend, my life.