

Render Unto Caesar

Serving the Nation by Living Our Catholic Beliefs in Political Life

by Charles J. Chaput



**A COMPANION AND STUDY GUIDE
BY DAVID SCOTT**

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SERVING THE NATION BY LIVING OUR CATHOLIC BELIEFS IN POLITICAL LIFE

by Charles J. Chaput
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Summary

Does religious faith have a rightful place in political discourse? Do religious believers have the right to turn their convictions into political action? What does a proper “separation of Church and state” really mean? *Render Unto Caesar* addresses the very heart of these important questions.

While American society has ample room for believers and nonbelievers alike, Chaput argues, our public life must be considered within the context of its Christian roots. American democracy does not ask its citizens to put aside their deeply held moral and religious beliefs for the sake of public policy. In fact, it requires exactly the opposite.

As the nation’s Founders knew very well, American democracy depends on an engaged citizenry—people of character, including religious believers, fighting for their beliefs in the public square, respectfully but vigorously and without apology. Anything less is bad citizenship and a form of theft from the nation’s health. Or as Chaput suggests: Good manners are not an excuse for political cowardice.

American Catholics and other persons of good will are part of a struggle for our nation’s future, says Chaput. Our choices, including our political choices, matter. Catholics need to take an active, vocal, and morally consistent role in public debate. We can’t claim to personally believe in the sanctity of the human person and then act in our public policies as if we don’t. We can’t separate our private convictions from our public actions without diminishing both. In the words of the author, “How we act works backward on our convictions, making them stronger or smothering them under a snowfall of alibis.”

Render unto Caesar is a call to American Catholics to serve the highest ideals of their nation by first living their Catholic faith deeply and authentically.

Biography

CHARLES J. CHAPUT

Brief Biography

Charles J. Chaput has served as the archbishop of Denver since 1997, appointed by Pope John Paul II. He frequently addresses the intersection of religious faith and political life and is widely known for his teachings on abortion, the death penalty, immigration and other issues. He is a former two-term member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, a tenure which included missions to China and Turkey.

Archbishop Chaput is a Capuchin Franciscan and a registered member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi tribe. He is the second Native American to be ordained bishop in the U.S., and the first Native American archbishop.

Other Writings and Addresses

- Charles J. Chaput
(www.archden.org/archbishop)

chapter 1

STARTING AT THE SOURCE

Summary and Key Points

In his short and reflective opening chapter, Archbishop Chaput sets the tone and the themes for *Render Unto Caesar*.

This is a book about being American, and it is a book about being Catholic; and it is a book about the crossroads where those two identities intersect. *Render Unto Caesar* is about the possibility of *faithful citizenship*—of being at the same time a loyal *American* who loves his country and a faithful *Catholic*, a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Not only is this possible, it is absolutely vital to the future of democracy in America, the Archbishop contends. Thus, while this is a book addressed to Catholics, it should be read by anybody concerned about our common life together in early 21st-century America.

Archbishop Chaput writes in the present tense, addressing urgent questions facing America today. But he writes with a strong sense of history. History is our teacher, he says. And we cannot move forward unless we understand where we have come from and who we were meant to be.

This is how the Archbishop sees things: America, under the influence of aggressively secular leadership classes, is deliberately and progressively moving further away from its roots in the Christian and natural law traditions of its founders. This has resulted not only in moral confusion, but in profound and persistent injustices.

At the same time, American Catholics, historically the victims of sectarian prejudice, have emerged on top of the heap, a large, prosperous and comfortably assimilated religion. The problem is that many Catholics seem content to play by the rules of the secular elites—accepting a political arrangement that requires them to keep their faith and values to themselves in the name of “pluralism” and respect for the diversity of viewpoints and religions in America today.

What we have, in a word, is a crisis of American Catholic identity and a crisis of national purpose; and the two cannot be separated, as the Archbishop sees it.

America has lost its way. The increasingly contentious debates over the role of religion in public life are only a presenting symptom.

A key underlying issue is *abortion*, a word the Archbishop will almost studiously avoid in his initial chapters. But as will become very clear, the peculiar institution of legalized abortion in

America is for him the great test of American mettle, of our collective commitment to the noble ideas of our founding. Can a nation established to defend the God-given “rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” long endure such a profound contradiction to its founding ideals?

If America is to endure, it will require the faithful witness of Catholics, Archbishop Chaput believes. *Render Unto Caesar* is a call for American Catholics to recover their identity as believers and citizens. He wants Catholics to remember why we are here and step up to our responsibilities, our duty as believers at this time in our nation’s history. At stake, the Archbishop believes, are the lives of millions of innocents, and the souls of hundreds of millions more.



Prayer

God our Father,
you guide everything in your wisdom and love.

In your Word, you teach us
that where there is no vision, the people perish.

Accept the prayers we offer for our nation;
Banish the injustice and violence from our midst,
Lead our people to recognize
the sanctity and dignity of human life
in all conditions and at all stages of development.

Grant us the courage to help our nation
to recover the noble vision of our founding documents.
Grant us the wisdom and integrity to be faithful citizens.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son,
the King of Kings and the Lord of history,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

(Compare Proverbs 29:18; Prayers - Mass for the Nation; Mass in Time of War or Civil Disturbance;
1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. Archbishop Chaput points to the example of Archbishop John Ireland’s optimism about the possibilities for faithful citizenship in America. In an address to the nation’s bishops in 1884, Archbishop Ireland, said:

I love too deeply the Catholic Church and the American republic not to be ever ready to labor that the relations of the one with the other be not misunderstood. It is true, the choicest field which Providence offers in the world today to the occupancy of the Church is this republic, and she [the Church] welcomes with delight the signs of the times that indicate a glorious future for her beneath the starry banner. But it is true, also, the surest safeguards for her own life and prosperity the republic will find in the teachings of the Catholic Church, and the more America acknowledges those teachings, the more durable will her civil institutions be made.

Discuss this statement. How does Archbishop Ireland understand love for the Church and love for his country? Is it possible for one to love one's country and the Church, or do you think these two "loves" are mutually exclusive? What do you think Archbishop Chaput would say about these two "loves" and their relationship?

Do you share Archbishop Ireland's conviction that conditions in America, primarily freedom of religion, make it "the choicest field" for the Catholic faith to grow and flourish? Do you think it is true that America's life and prosperity, and the endurance of her civil institutions, are in large measure dependent upon the country acknowledging the truth of Catholic teachings? How would you defend that statement in today's political environment?

2. Examine the most recent platforms of the Republican and the Democratic political parties: <http://www.gop.com/2008Platform/> and <http://www.democrats.org/a/party/platform.html>

Explain and discuss the Archbishop's statement: "Neither party fully represents a Catholic way of thinking about social issues." Be specific about aspects of each party's platform. Discuss what the basic outlines of an authentic Catholic party platform might look like.

3. Explain and discuss Archbishop Chaput's assertion: "Christian faith is always personal but never private."
4. Discuss the following statement from the U.S. bishops' statement, *Living the Gospel of Life*, which in many ways anticipates and summarizes Archbishop Chaput's concerns in *Render Unto Caesar*:

As Americans, as Catholics and as pastors of our people, we write ... to call our fellow citizens back to our country's founding principles, and most especially to renew our national respect for the rights of those who are unborn, weak, disabled and terminally ill. Real freedom rests on the inviolability of every person as a child of God.

The inherent value of human life, at every stage and in every circumstance, is not a sectarian issue any more than the Declaration of Independence is a sectarian creed. In a special way, we call on U.S. Catholics, especially those in positions of leadership ... to recover their identity as followers of Jesus Christ and to be leaders in the renewal of American respect for the sanctity of life.

"Citizenship" in the work of the Gospel is also a sure guarantee of responsible citizenship in American civic affairs. Every Catholic, without exception, should remember that he or she is called by our

Lord to proclaim His message. ... Every Catholic is a missionary of the Good News of human dignity redeemed through the cross. ... No one, least of all someone who exercises leadership in society, can rightfully claim to share fully and practically the Catholic faith and yet act publicly in a way contrary to that faith.

In what sense does respect for the rights of the unborn and the weak represent a return to America's "founding principles"? What do the bishops mean when they say that true freedom "rests on the inviolability of every person as a child of God"? How would you defend their understanding that the value of human life, from the womb to the tomb, is not a sectarian religious issue? What are some examples of ways that a Catholic leader might act contrary to the faith? As Catholics, how are you carrying out your responsibility for the Gospel? Explain and defend the bishops' statement: "Citizenship' in the work of the Gospel is also a sure guarantee of responsible citizenship in American civic affairs."

Scripture

Catholics are called to fight the good fight of the faith in the presence of God who gives life to all things, and in the presence of Jesus Christ who testified to the truth.

– 1 Timothy 6:12–13

Jesus Christ is the "Author of Life" and Jesus came that all men and women might have life and life abundantly.

– Acts 3:15

– John 10:10

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of Life.
 - Pope John Paul II,
Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life), nos. 1–2
- Political community exists for the common good, and politicians and other participants in the political process have a responsibility to be dedicated solely to the common good. The Church, while occupying an independent and autonomous sphere, shares the political community's concern for the "personal vocation of man." The Church must be always be granted the freedom to devote herself to promoting the rights of the human person and the salvation offered to men and women in Christ.
 - Second Vatican Council,
Gaudium et Spes (Joy and Hope), nos. 74–76

- The right to life is the most basic and fundamental right and the condition of all other personal rights.

– Pope John Paul II,
Christifideles Laici (The Christian Lay Faithful), no. 38

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (b. 1927): The future Pope Benedict XVI is an important influence on the thinking of Archbishop Chaput. Ratzinger’s theology is characterized by a keen awareness of modern history’s ideological and political impulses toward de-Christianization. In a letter written to the world’s bishops in March 2009, he said:

“The real problem at this moment of our history is that God is disappearing from the human horizon, and, with the dimming of the light which comes from God, humanity is losing its bearings, with increasingly evident destructive effects. Leading men and women to God, to the God who speaks in the Bible: this is the supreme and fundamental priority of the Church and of the Successor of Peter at the present time.”

Pope John Paul II (1920–2005): Along with Ratzinger, another key influence on Archbishop Chaput’s perspective, John Paul’s courageous confrontation of the evil of atheistic communism is also an obvious inspiration for the Archbishop’s candor as a bishop in confronting injustices and evils in American life. John Paul’s philosophy recognized a profound anti-humanism at the core of modern thought, a theme of his great encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life). His speeches and addresses to American audiences fill a large volume, and he recognizes the importance of the American experiment. “At the center of the moral vision of [the American] founding documents is the recognition of the rights of the human person,” he said, noting that America’s greatness lies in its “respect for the dignity and sanctity of human life in all conditions and at all stages of development.”

Archbishop John Ireland (1838–1918): The first Archbishop of St. Paul, Minnesota and an intellectual and moral leader of the American Church in the last decade of the 19th century, an important period in the development of the American Catholicism. Ireland was known for his eloquent and forceful optimism about American institutions and ideals. He was also a champion of the rights of workers and the dignity of African Americans.

Other important figures and works:

- Christopher Lasch
- George Orwell

Resources for Further Study

Catholic Bishops of the United States

– *Living the Gospel of Life*

(<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/gospel.shtml>)

Pope John Paul II

– *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life)

(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae_en.html)

U.S. Supreme Court

– *Roe vs. Wade*

(<http://laws.findlaw.com/us/410/113.html>)

chapter 2

MEN WITHOUT CHESTS

Summary and Key Points

The title of this chapter is a signal. “Men Without Chests” was the introductory lecture in a series that the scholar and Christian apologist, C. S. Lewis, published in 1943 under the title, *The Abolition of Man*.

It was a serious work for serious times and, as Archbishop Chaput will make clear, the issues that Lewis raised are even more pressing today. In fact, it might be helpful to read *Render Unto Caesar* as almost a sequel to *The Abolition of Man*.

Lewis’ little book was a meditation on human nature, religion, and values; the purpose of government and education; and the role of science and technology in shaping human relationships with the natural world and with God. *Render Unto Caesar* is urgently concerned with all of these issues and more, as the Archbishop reflects on a secularized America where human dignity and liberty, the identity and practice of the Christian faith, and even the ideals of our democracy now stand in jeopardy.

Back then, Lewis was warning of the rise of a scientific-materialist worldview that would stop at nothing short of changing human nature itself. In the name of reason and logic, this worldview rejected everything that could not be discovered or proven scientifically. Thus it rejected one of the core beliefs of Western civilization, found not only in the Christian tradition but also in Greek and Roman philosophy and other ancient philosophical traditions—the idea that there is a “natural law,” that every man and woman is born with certain innate understandings about right and wrong, good and evil, truth and falsehood, justice and duty.

Lewis noted that already in English schools of the 1940s children were being taught that there were no such things as moral absolutes (behaviors that one “ought” or “ought not” to do) or transcendent values such as *freedom, beauty, truth, and the good*. Children were being told that statements about supposedly universal values (“This is beautiful.” “That is wrong.”) actually express only personal feelings—our irrational emotional response to the “world of facts.”

That is what Lewis meant by “men without chests,” the chest being the metaphorical seat of the heart, the source of values. As Lewis saw it, the new worldview was producing men and women who were all head and no heart. They were able to reason but unable to know the truth or to make judgments about what is right and what is just, or about what one ought to do. They were hence incapable of the very virtues necessary to sustain civilization.

He projected a future in which this worldview would be pressed into the service of “an omniscient state and an irresistible scientific technique,” resulting in the slavery of the many by the few. As he put it: “The power of man to make himself what he pleases means ... the power of some men to make other men what they please.”

That future is even closer today, as Archbishop Chaput will show us in *Render Unto Caesar*. The profoundly anti-human worldview that Lewis identified has come to insinuate itself in American life, pushed by an unbelieving elite and abetted by a mass media system with powers for manipulation and disinformation that Lewis could scarcely have imagined. All of this, as the Archbishop knows, threatens the future of the historic American experiment in democracy.

It is always a dicey proposition to try to define the “American spirit,” or what makes this country unique. Archbishop Chaput, however, does not hesitate. America, he argues, is founded on an ideal—a belief in the singular importance of the human person, in every man and woman’s “innate dignity and potential for greatness.”

Rooted in the Christian and natural law heritage of the nation’s founders, this belief has led to the creation of a society and government committed to promoting individual freedom and opportunity. This belief, in turn, has been the source of America’s proudest achievements—extending civil and religious liberties and social mobility to a great percentage of our people; our extraordinary advances in science, technology, industry, and the rule of law; our humanitarian spirit and our willingness to sacrifice and to use our wealth and power to defend freedom and human rights throughout the world.

Yet in the bright light of all that America has accomplished, the Archbishop sees growing shadows. Staggering increases in depression and other mental health problems; soaring individual debt levels; increasing ignorance of history and current events; the growing vulgarity and callousness of public discourse; widespread cynicism about civic responsibilities and public service; a peculiar contempt for life and a growing disregard for the dignity of the person.

All of these are signs that we are devolving “from the land of opportunity to the land of private appetites,” he writes. Reading this chapter in light of the economic meltdown that became manifest in late 2008, the Archbishop’s analysis sounds prophetic—in identifying not only the seeds of the crisis but also the reasons for our inability to deal with it.

The prospects for American renewal, unfortunately, are made uncertain by the same forces that Lewis identified—a hollowing-out of our nation’s Christian “soul,” under the influence of a new “knowledge oligarchy” and leadership classes committed to an agenda of de-Christianization.

Lewis warned that “the practical result” of educating people to be men without chests “must be the destruction of the society which accepts it.” Archbishop Chaput knows too that the stakes are high.



Prayer

Father in heaven,
 You have created us in your image and likeness,
 and made us to seek you.
 In your only Son Jesus Christ,
 you destined us to become your sons and daughters.

Lord, you look down from heaven,
 and you see that we have wandered.
 Thinking ourselves wise, we have become fools.
 For only the fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

Turn our hearts from our idols, the works of our hands,
 that we might find you, our Creator,
 in the works of your creation,
 especially in the human person,
 whom you have made a little less than God.
 so wonderfully wrought and fearsomely made.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
 the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, for ever and ever.

(Compare Romans 1:18-25; 1 Corinthians 1:20-25; Psalms 8:4-6; 14:1-3; Colossians 1:15)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. Archbishop Chaput opens this chapter by discussing the current religious and political situation in France, and especially the then-recent election of President Nicolas Sarkozy. Why do you think he does that in a book that he is writing about America? What similarities or dissimilarities do you see between America and France, as the Archbishop describes them?

The Archbishop sees France, and Western Europe in general, as "hollowing out its spirit through pride, greed, self-absorption, the rejection of children, the exclusion of God, and contempt for its own past, including its Christian soul." Discuss how this description might apply to America today.

2. The Archbishop says that modern atheism comes in two basic styles, "hard" and "soft." Discuss what he means by each of these characterizations.

Now consider again the “hard” style of modern atheism that Archbishop Chaput describes. These atheists seem motivated by an antireligious agenda and have undertaken a deliberate strategy to eradicate religion from the areas of education, science, the media, and law. What can you and your fellow believers do to “push back” against this aggressive form of modern atheism, as the Archbishop suggests we must?

3. Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical letter, *Pacem in terris* (Peace on Earth, no. 36), offers this beautiful statement of the Catholic vision for human society:

Human society must primarily be considered something pertaining to the spiritual. Through it, in the bright light of truth, men should share their knowledge, be able to exercise their rights and fulfill their obligations, be inspired to seek spiritual values; mutually derive genuine pleasure from the beautiful, of whatever order it be; always be readily disposed to pass on to others the best of their own cultural heritage; and eagerly strive to make their own the spiritual achievements of others. These benefits not only influence, but at the same time give aim and scope to all that has bearing on cultural expressions, economic, and social institutions, political movements and forms, laws, and all other structures by which society is outwardly established and constantly developed.

Discuss this statement, which is also quoted in the *Catechism* (no. 1886). To what extent does American society today encourage and promote its citizens’ search for spiritual values and beauty? In what ways might America do a better job in promoting authentic values in our arts and other cultural expressions, as well as in our laws and our economic and social institutions?

4. Read again the quotation from religious pollster George Barna that comes near the end of this chapter. Do you agree with his assessment? Is it true about you or the people you know? What can you do to make a more “tangible commitment to knowing and loving God, and to allowing him to change [your] character and lifestyle”? Why is this kind of “conversion” important to the renewal of America?
5. Archbishop Chaput quotes the historian Paul Johnson’s distinction—that America is “a moral and ethical society without a state religion.” Discuss what this means in light of what the Archbishop calls “Christianity’s formative role in American life.”

Discuss the Archbishop’s argument that American democracy cannot be sustained without reference to the religious convictions, thoughts, and vocabulary that shaped its institutions. Many people of good will argue quite to the contrary—that we *can* solve America’s problems as a nation without reference to religious faith or to the values derived from America’s Christian heritage. Why does the Archbishop disagree? Why does he believe that “unless we solve our problems in a way consistent with our founding beliefs and principles, we will become a very different nation”?

6. C. S. Lewis concludes his lecture, “Men Without Chests,” with these words: “We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked

to find traitors in our midst. We castrate, and bid the geldings be fruitful.”

It is a provocative quote. How does it pertain to the argument that Archbishop Chaput has made in this chapter? To what extent is America in danger of becoming a nation without a soul, a people no longer capable of the virtues necessary to defend and realize the purposes for which this nation was founded?

7. In his book, *The Republic, Religions and Hope* (2005), French President Nicolas Sarkozy writes: “I am of Catholic culture, Catholic tradition, Catholic faith. Even if my religious practice is episodic, I acknowledge myself as a member of the Catholic Church.”

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this statement of faith in light of the Archbishop’s argument in this chapter. What does it mean to be a Catholic whose “religious practice is episodic”? To what extent is the kind of “cultural Catholicism” professed by President Sarkozy symptomatic of what the Archbishop describes as the hole in the chest of Europe? Is cultural Catholicism of this type also an issue in the American Church?

Based on the Archbishop’s argument in this chapter, explain why President Sarkozy’s brand of Catholicism is insufficient for meeting the challenges that believers face in America today.

Scripture

Every human person is created by God, in his image and likeness, and is his “offspring.”

- Genesis 1:26
- Psalm 139:13–18
- Psalm 8:4–8
- Isaiah 49:15–16
- Acts 17:28

In Jesus Christ, the firstborn of many brethren, we know God as our Father, and we know all men and women as brothers and sisters, for whom Christ in his love has died, and with whom he has united himself in a personal way.

- Romans 8:29
- Galatians 2:20
- Galatians 4:4–6
- Romans 8:15–17
- 1 Corinthians 8:11
- Romans 14:15
- Matthew 25:31–46

In his love, God has destined each person, from before the foundation of the world, to be his sons and daughters through Jesus Christ and to play a part in his divine plan.

- Ephesians 1:3–10
- Isaiah 49:1
- Jeremiah 1:5
- Galatians 1:15
- Matthew 25:31–46

Men and women were made to live, not alone or in solitude, but in society; the model of that society is the Church.

- Genesis 2:20, 23
- Ephesians 2:19:20–22
- Philippians 3:20
- Acts 2:44–47; 4:32–35

God has made every nation on the face of the earth, for the purpose that every man and woman should seek God and find that he is not far from them.

- Acts 17:26–27
- Genesis 22:18
- Acts 3:25
- Luke 24:47
- Matthew 28:18–20
- Acts 2:5–11

Human authority is from God and should serve the purposes of God.

- John 19:11
- Romans 13:1, 3–4
- 1 Peter 2:13–14
- Luke 20:21–26
- Acts 5:28–29

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- Human societies and governments exist to serve the authentic good of the human person—both the person’s material and spiritual well-being.
 - *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 384, 386
 - *Catechism*, nos. 1881, 1886
- God, as the author of human society, entrusts the government of society to political authorities who must see themselves as servants of the moral order and as ministers of divine providence.
 - *Compendium*, nos. 396–398
 - *Catechism*, nos. 1884, 1902, 1951, 2235–2237
- Authentic democracy is possible only when it is based on a true conception of the human person, including the persons fundamental right to religious liberty.
 - Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 46
 - *Compendium*, no. 407
 - *Catechism*, nos. 2108–2109

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

Christopher Dawson (1889–1970): One of the most important historians of the 20th century, Dawson advanced a Christ-centered vision of history as the working out of God’s divine plan of salvation. He saw religion as the root of every culture and wrote extensively on the Judeo-Christian foundations of Europe and Western culture, warning of what he saw as the progressive “de-Christianization” of the West. In an unpublished manuscript from 1928, he wrote “Every culture is like a plant. It must have its roots in the earth, and for sunlight it needs to be open to the spiritual. At the present moment we are busy cutting its roots and shutting out all light from above.” Among his books, the most important for the purposes of Archbishop Chaput’s discussion are: *Progress and Religion: An Historical Enquiry* (1929); *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* (1950); *The Dynamics of World History* (1956).

Other important figures and works:

- **B. F. Skinner**, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971)
- **Rev. Reinhold Niebuhr**
- **Francis Collins**
- **John Polkinghorne**

Resources for Further Study

C. S. Lewis

- “Men Without Chests”
(<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/augustine/arch/lewis/abolition1.htm>)

chapter 3

WHY WE'RE HERE

Summary and Key Points

This chapter is the most deeply theological in *Render Unto Caesar* and, at the same time, it may be the book's most "practical" chapter. Archbishop Chaput here unpacks big concepts—the Trinity; the salvific work of Christ's cross; the nature and "vocation" of Baptism; Scripture and Tradition; the identity and mission of the Church; the meaning of human suffering.

His point is not to rehearse in the abstract the claims of Catholic dogma and doctrine. Quite the opposite. As the Archbishop explains, the doctrine of the Trinity, the central mystery of the faith, is not just an elegant theory. It is the key that unlocks the meaning of our lives. In revealing who God is, the Trinity reveals who we are—and why we are here. Because God is revealed to be Love, and because we are created in his image and likeness, we ourselves are made to *be love*.

That is the basic answer to the question, "Why are we here?" We are here because God loved us, and out of love created us to share in his love for the world, a love that he showed most fully in sending us his only Son, Jesus Christ.

But the answer does not stop there. Love is an action word. The relationship of love that God has established in creating us is a *calling*, a *vocation*, a mission that is given to us. Archbishop Chaput expresses this in a graceful little epigram: "We were made by Love, to receive love ourselves, and to *show love to others*. That's why we're here."

Thus, from the seemingly abstract theological truth about the Trinity we get very practical guidance—marching orders you might say—for how we are to live and what we are supposed to be about in the world. "The Christian mission in the world comes from the nature of God himself," he writes. And that mission is to testify and bear witness to the love that God has shown to the world in Jesus Christ.

We are here, every one of us, to bring Jesus Christ to the world and the world to Jesus Christ—through our ordinary day to day life among our friends, families, co-workers, and fellow citizens.

This mission joins us in a vital way to the Church which, as the Archbishop explains, is a family of believers, a social "institution," and the mystical Body of Christ. The Archbishop's pages on the Church are important. Christian discipleship is never a solo affair. We must understand ourselves, not as individuals, but as members of a society of faith that extends back to the apostles, a community that from the beginning has guarded and protected the truth of Christ's teaching even as it has proclaimed it to the ends of the earth.

“We can’t reject the Church and her teachings and then simultaneously claim to be following Jesus Christ or the Scriptures,” Archbishop Chaput writes. Only our identification with the Church and her teachings can keep our witness honest and purify our motives of self-seeking.

The cost of discipleship is high. It will entail suffering. We are forewarned by the Archbishop that the call to follow Christ is an invitation to participate in God’s own life and in his plan for the world. Of necessity, this will involve us in spiritual warfare—the ongoing battle of good and evil in which we must contend with the darkest forces of human nature. It is a battle in which there is no neutral ground.



Prayer

Father, we cannot help but speak of what we have seen and heard,
in your Son, Jesus Christ.

In him, you reveal the new creation,
make manifest the mystery of your life,
and draw us to share in your love.

Woe to us if we do not preach this good news to all the world,
the word of life, that all may have fellowship with us in your love.

Give us the strength to proclaim your love,
the love that has called and made us children of God.

We ask you this, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
one God, true and living, for ever and ever.

(Compare Acts 4:20; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 9:16; 1 John 1:1-3; 3:1; Opening Prayer - Mass for
Trinity Sunday)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. In the inaugural homily of his pontificate (April 24, 2005), Pope Benedict XVI said:

It is really so: the purpose of our lives is to reveal God to men. And only where God is seen does life truly begin. Only when we meet the living God in Christ do we know what life is. We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary. There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know him and to speak to others of our friendship with him.

Reflect upon and discuss this profound statement of the meaning of the Christian life in light

of the chapter you have just read. Do you understand that your life is the result of the loving forethought of God and that you are in some unique and irreplaceable way “necessary” to God’s plan that everyone come to meet him in Christ? What can you do to better to fulfill what Archbishop Chaput and Pope Benedict say is your purpose in life—to speak of your friendship with Christ and to reveal God to all your brothers and sisters?

2. What does the word “martyr” mean as Archbishop Chaput describes it? What does “disciple” mean in his description? Describe how, on a daily basis, you are looking for chances to share your faith with co-workers, family members, and friends.
3. Archbishop Chaput makes a strong and important case that bearing witness to our faith—in word and in deed, and in every aspect of our lives—is central to our identity to Catholics. He goes so far as to suggest that if we are not doing this, we are not really Catholics at all.

In light of this, discuss and develop arguments to defend the following statement: “The efforts by America’s secularized leadership classes to prevent Catholics from testifying to their faith in matters of public affairs violate Catholics’ fundamental human rights to freedom of conscience and religion.” You may want to refer to the teaching of the *Catechism* (nos. 2104, 2467), which says that the human person, by nature, is compelled to seek the truth and to bear witness to it.

4. Reflect upon the “catholicism” of Archbishop Chaput’s method of argument in this chapter. He uses the testimony of a Jew who survived Auschwitz to deliver his point that “salvation” and the meaning of life is found in love. In addition to numerous citations from the New Testament, he quotes three popes, a saint, a Catholic novelist, a Catholic poet, and a Catholic historian. He draws on the arguments of an anti-Christian philosopher. His example of “the cost of discipleship” comes from a Lutheran pastor and martyr of the Nazis; he quotes an American Protestant on the failure of Christian witness in our day; and he ends the chapter with a stark quote from C. S. Lewis, an Anglican.

Discuss how the Archbishop’s argument in this chapter is strengthened by his appeal to authorities outside the Catholic Church. Recall what we said in the previous chapter about the universal nature of the truths of the natural law, how these truths transcend religious and cultural lines. How do you think the Church can do a better job of preparing Catholics to defend the truth of the Gospel in such ecumenical and “catholic” terms?

5. The Church, as a community of believers, and an “institution,” is vital to Catholic life, the Archbishop argues. Explain his argument about the essential relationship between the individual believer and the Church. Pope Pius XII said that lay people need “an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church” (*Catechism*, no. 899). Discuss this statement in light of the Archbishop’s treatment of the Church in this chapter. How can you deepen your own consciousness of belonging to the Church?

6. The Archbishop quotes Rev. Reinhold Niebuhr on the hypocrisy of Christians as one source of unbelief in the modern world. The Second Vatican Council, in its document on the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope, no. 19), said something similar: “Believers can have more than a little to do with the rise of atheism. To the extent that they are careless about their instruction in the faith, or present its teaching falsely, or even fail in their religious, moral, or social life, they must be said to conceal rather than to reveal the true nature of God and of religion.”

Discuss this statement, which is also quoted in the *Catechism* (no. 2125). To what extent do you feel a personal responsibility for the growing numbers of those who feel indifferent or hostile toward God and organized religion? What can you and other believers in the Church do to stop and reverse this development?

7. Discuss the Archbishop’s use of Pope Pius XI’s letter on the Hitler regime. Victor Frankl, with whom the Archbishop begins the chapter, said in his book, *The Doctor and the Soul*, that Hitler’s holocaust was “ultimately prepared not in some ministry or other in Berlin, but rather at the desks and in the lecture halls of nihilistic scientists and philosophers.”

Discuss this comment in light of Pope Pius’ remark about the “[false] gospel which has not been revealed by the Father of heaven” and in light of the discussion in Chapter 2 about “men without chests.” What are the “false gospels” in our culture and society today? Are not Americans today also being told, as the Germans were, that what is “morally indefensible” can somehow contribute to the good of our people? In what ways are the attacks on the unborn and other assaults on the sanctity of life being prepared in lecture halls by scientists and philosophers?

Scripture

God is love, and God so loved the world that he sent his only Son among us for our salvation. In laying down his life for us, Christ revealed the Father’s love and showed us how we are to live—in imitation of Christ, with a love that expresses itself in deed and in truth.

- John 3:16
- John 13:34–35
- 1 John 3:16–18
- Romans 13:8–10
- Ephesians 5:1–2

The Church is the people of God, called to preach the Gospel to the whole creation, to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that Christ commanded. The mission of the Church is entrusted to every member of the Church.

- 1 Peter 2:4–10

- Mark 16:15
- Matthew 28:18–20

As members of the Church, each of us is a citizen of the commonwealth of heaven, called to be a light to this world, a salt that brings savor to the affairs of the earth, and a leaven of the kingdom of God, the new heavens and new earth that God promises.

- Philippians 3:20
- Matthew 5:13–16
- Luke 13:20–21
- 1 Corinthians 5:7–8

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- The whole Church is apostolic and each member is called to *apostolate*—sent out to continue the mission of Christ by spreading the good news of the Kingdom of God to all the nations.
 - Second Vatican Council, *Apostolicam actuositatem* (On the Apostolate of the Laity), no. 2
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 863
- Every Christian has a duty to bear witness to the Gospel and the obligations that flow from it. This duty includes transmitting the faith in words and deeds, by the example of their lives, making known the truth that was revealed by Christ.
 - *Catechism*, nos. 2472, 905
- Every Christian has a duty to awaken in his or her neighbors the love of the true and the good. This includes making known the worship of the one true religion which subsists in the Catholic Church
 - *Catechism*, nos. 899, 2105
- Lay people, by virtue of Baptism and Confirmation, are entrusted especially with the duty of seeking that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven, bringing the teachings and values of the Gospel to bear on issues of social, political, and economic life.
 - *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 541, 543
 - *Catechism*, nos. 898, 900, 2442
- Religious freedom and freedom of conscience, which is “willed by God and inscribed in human nature” and includes the obligation to bear witness to the truth, is a fundamental human right that must be guaranteed by every society and government.
 - *Compendium*, nos. 421–423
 - *Catechism*, nos. 2104, 2108, 2467

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1972): The English Catholic novelist is best known for his trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings* (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, *The Return of the King*), which tells the story of a cosmic war between good and evil and is filled with Christian symbolism.

Léon Bloy (1846–1917): A romantic and mystical poet and novelist, his writings became widely known only after his death; but they were influential to the generation of Catholic intellectuals that came of age in Europe between the world wars, including those who would become leading lights of the Second Vatican Council. His novel, *The Woman Who Was Poor*, and the anthology, *Pilgrim of the Absolute*, offer important statements of his belief that discipleship must always be a quest for heroic sanctity.

Other important figures and works:

- **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, *The Cost of Discipleship* (1948)
- **Friedrich Nietzsche**, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (1883–1885)

Resources for Further Study

- Matthew Scully
 “Victor Frankl at 90: An Interview” (1995)
 (<http://www.leaderu.com/ftissues/ft9504/articles/scully.html>)

chapter 4

CONSTANTINE'S CHILDREN

Summary and Key Points

Being Catholic is not a matter of convenience. The faith that we profess compels us to be actively engaged in the social, economic, and political life of our nation. That is one of the key lessons that Archbishop Chaput wants to convey in this, the first of four “historical” chapters that make up the core of his argument in *Render Unto Caesar*.

The Archbishop believes passionately that “knowing history matters.” We need to understand what has come before us in the past in order to understand the present and set noble goals for the future.

That is why he devotes the heart of *Render Unto Caesar* to an extended meditation on the history of Catholic engagement with the world—from the Church’s origins as an embattled and persecuted minority in the Roman Empire to its status today in America as a large, assimilated and comfortable community.

Catholics today, the Archbishop suggests, are “Constantine’s children.” What he means is that in one way or another we are heirs to the legacy of the marriage of Church and state that occurred when the Roman Emperor made Christianity the de facto (and later, official) state religion.

For some, Constantine’s union of “altar and throne” or “crown and cross” remains the ideal that Catholic engagement in the world should be striving for. For others, this arrangement—whereby the state and all its power is deployed to advance the aims of the Gospel—represents the Church’s original sin and the seeds of its corruption.

Archbishop Chaput steers clear of the scholarly debates over Constantine to focus on the historical realities since then—that the Church has existed in many different political situations, from empires and monarchies to democracies and atheistic totalitarian regimes.

What interests the Archbishop always are the dynamics of the Gospel and the imperatives that flow from faith in Jesus Christ.

The call of the Gospel is an appeal to the human heart. This call is deeply interior—it is a call to conversion, to change one’s way of thinking, to live a new life by a new set of rules. Thus, this very personal message has unavoidably public implications. One cannot change one’s life without changing one’s basic stance toward society and its laws, customs, and institutions.

As the Archbishop notes, the rulers of Roman society knew right away that the confession of faith, “Jesus is Lord,” was filled with political content.

And living the Gospel always and everywhere will have public and political consequences, the Archbishop says. The task for the Christian under any form of government is to be *in* the world, but not *of* the world—to seek that God’s will be done on earth, but to do that in such a way that we are not “absorbed” or compromised by the ways of the world.

As children of Constantine, the Church will always face two basic temptations in its struggle to live the Gospel and make it known in the world. On the one hand, we will be tempted to pursue a Constantinian-style agenda of power politics, seeking to co-opt the organs of the government as a means for achieving our religious ends.

On the other hand, we may experience a kind of anti-Constantinian impulse—to withdraw from the world and its corrupting influences, to focus on prayer, liturgy, and private devotion, leaving the world to its own devices.

Neither of these is a viable, authentically Catholic response, Archbishop Chaput teaches. Anticipating his discussion of the American experiment in the chapter that follows, here he holds up the model of “limited secularity” or “limited government under God,” derived from the philosophies of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.

This form of government, he suggests, is the one perhaps most conducive for the flourishing of the Church’s mission. This, as he will explain in the chapter that follows, is essentially the American model—in which Church and state are autonomous and respect each other’s spheres of operation while working together for the common good of building a free and virtuous society.

The Archbishop writes history always with an eye to the present, to the lessons we need to learn from the past. One clear lesson here is that confessing that “Jesus is Lord” remains the most powerful political act that a Catholic citizen can make.



Prayer

Father of heaven and earth,
we know that by you rulers govern.

We pray for the rulers of our nation,
that they may always seek your will
and defend the rights of the human person.

We know that your kingdom is not of this world.
Set our minds on the things that are above,
as we await new heavens and a new earth
in which righteousness dwells.

We ask this according to the promise of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

(Compare Proverbs 8:15; John 18:36; Colossians 3:2; 2 Peter 3:13)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. What does Archbishop Chaput mean by the expression “limited government under God”? In what respects should we consider government to be “limited”? In what respects should we consider government to be “under God”? What does the Archbishop mean when he says that secular government “depends on virtues that it cannot generate from within itself”? Discuss to what extent the United States reflects this ideal of “limited government under God.” Does this describe the government of the United States today?
2. Explain the basic outlines of the Catholic understanding of “the two powers,” as articulated by St. Augustine and Pope Gelasius I. Discuss the difference between this understanding of the “practical autonomy” of civil authority and religious authority and what Archbishop Chaput describes as the “ideology” of secularism.
3. Archbishop Chaput notes that St. Thomas Aquinas, in addition to advancing his own understanding of the “two powers,” also believed that civil law has a pedagogical or teaching function. Simply put, St. Thomas believed that laws not only regulate citizens’ behavior but they also have the effect of teaching the values and virtues necessary to the formation of good citizens.

Consider this explanation by St. Thomas: “Every law aims at being obeyed by those who are

subject to it. It is obvious, then, that the proper effect of law is to lead its subjects to their proper virtue. And, since virtue is that which makes its subject good, it follows that the proper effect of law is to make those to whom it is given, good. For if the intention of the lawmaker is fixed on true good, which is the common good regulated according to divine justice, it follows that the effect of the law is to make men good simply” (*Summa theologiae*, Part 1a-2a, question 92, article 1).

Discuss this concept of the law as a teacher of virtues. Essentially, Thomas is saying that good laws must reflect “divine justice,” that is, God-given natural virtues and values. Good laws will express the society’s respect and commitment to those virtues and values. And, by encouraging citizens to align their thinking and actions in accordance with these virtues, the law instructs and helps to form men and women in these virtues. If this is the effect of *good* laws, discuss what you think the effect might be of *bad* laws, that is, laws that are contrary to the moral order, the teachings of the Gospel, or the dignity of persons.

4. What are the four lessons that Archbishop Chaput believes American Catholics can learn from the history of the Church’s engagement with political authorities? Discuss the Archbishop’s statement that elite skepticism and distrust of religious faith has left American culture in a “deeply wounded state.”
5. Reread the passages from social scientist Rodney Stark’s *The Rise of Christianity*, quoted in this chapter. His conclusion is quite striking—that Christianity conquered the empire by the force of its beliefs and teachings. People lived out their faith. And that living out of their faith had revolutionary consequences. Discuss the implications of what America might look like if even a slight majority of Catholics began believing in the Church and living her teachings in all of their choices, decisions, and actions, both public and private.

Scripture

The Kingdom of God that Christ proclaimed is not of this world. As his disciples, Christians are called to seek his Kingdom, to pray for its coming on earth, and to live *in* the world but be not *of* the world.

- John 18:36
- Matthew 6:33
- Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2
- Isaiah 65:17; 66:22
- 2 Peter 3:13
- John 17:14–18

Christians have the duty to respect duly constituted political authority as instituted by God for our own good. This means, among other things, that we ought to obey just laws, pay our taxes, and pray for our leaders.

- Romans 13:1–12
- 1 Timothy 2:1–2
- 1 Peter 2:13–17
- Titus 3:1

Political authority can become corrupt and evil. In the face of political immorality or evil, Christians must always obey God and not human authority.

- Revelation 17:1–18
- Acts 5:29

As a general principle, Christians have an obligation to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

- Matthew 22:21
- Mark 12:17
- Luke 20:25

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- As citizens, Christians have the duty, out of gratitude and charity, to contribute to the good of their country, including the duty to pay taxes, to vote, and to defend their country.
 - *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 380–383
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2238–2240
- Christian citizens sometimes have the duty, in the spirit of loyal collaboration, to criticize government policies or other actions that harm the dignity of persons or the good of the community. Under no circumstances must a Christian citizen obey government directives that are contrary to the moral teachings of Christ and his Church.
 - *Catechism*, nos. 2238, 2242, 2256
 - *Compendium*, nos. 399–401

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

Tertullian (155–222): One of the Church's first great lay theologians, and one of its most distinct personalities. In his writings, Tertullian defended the true faith against the propaganda of its enemies and sought to protect it from being diluted through the influence of Greek and Roman philosophies. He left us with an important witness to the countercultural spirituality and practice of the early Church, and the heroism of the martyrs. Although considered one of the "Fathers of the Church," he died outside of the faith. As Pope Benedict XVI has said, Tertullian remains a cautionary tale of taking an overly individualistic approach to the faith: "In the end he lacked the simplicity, the humility, to integrate himself with the Church, to accept his weaknesses, to be forbearing with others and himself."

Other important figures and works:

- Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity*
- Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*

Resources for Further Study

Evelyn Waugh

- “St. Helena Empress” (1952)
(<http://www.cin.org/saints/helena.html>)

chapter 5

THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

Summary and Key Points

Charles Carroll, the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, is held up by Archbishop Chaput as the archetype of the Catholic experience in America. Despite the persistence of often harsh prejudice against Catholics in the colonies, Carroll believed in the American experiment—that peoples of many different cultures and faiths could govern themselves according to common principles—and he was committed to loyal service to the new nation’s founding ideals.

Archbishop Chaput believes that history has vindicated Carroll’s faith in the American system. Granted unprecedented freedom to worship and bear witness to their faith in an environment with no state-run or state-established religion, Catholics flourished and so did the Church.

That is a key point of the compact historical survey that the Archbishop offers in this chapter. Focusing on the history of religious freedom in America and the fortunes of Catholics as a barely tolerated minority, Archbishop Chaput provides an important corrective to what has become a contentious area in the interpretation of our history.

Today there is great debate over what role religion was intended to play in American public life. Archbishop Chaput gives us the backstory.

He reminds us that in the beginning religion was not regarded by American leaders as it so often is today—as an obstacle to human freedom to be “tolerated” or “walled off” from the rest of American life.

The first colonists came here not to escape religion or to “separate” themselves from its effects. They came looking for a place where they could truly live their faith—purely and fully. In forming a new national government, they believed the state’s proper role was two-fold—to ensure that no individual religion was privileged over another and to ensure that no obstacles were imposed on citizens’ free exercise of their faith.

Moreover, as the Archbishop details, America’s founders believed that religion had a vital role to play in the promotion of the moral virtues and habits necessary for true democracy. Without religion and the values it instills, the American experiment could not survive, the founders maintained.

The religious concepts expressed in the Declaration of Independence are very important to

Archbishop Chaput’s interpretation of our history. This is a part of our history that many in the secular elite today would downplay or have us forget. But the Archbishop knows that America can never be understood accurately without appreciating the founders’ belief in the “laws of nature and of nature’s God.”

The Declaration is based on an essentially Christian understanding—that God *creates* every man and woman, and that in that act of creation he *endows* and *entitles* them to certain rights—*life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*. Government has only one purpose—to *secure these rights* for its people. Finally, these rights are *unalienable*; as they come from God and are not granted by any human government, these rights cannot justly be taken away by any human power either.

Archbishop Chaput wants to stress this point—that our nation’s ideals and institutions are based on a belief in the natural law and a belief that nations are subject to a higher authority than their own “man-made laws.” Thus, we cannot abandon this natural law tradition without becoming a people alienated from our nation’s founding purposes.



Prayer

Father, who made heaven and earth,
the seas and all that is in them,
who executes justice for the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry,

We know from your Word,
that we should not put our trust
in princes or kings, presidents or legislatures.

We know that your law is written in our hearts,
and that nature and our consciences
bear witness to your truth.

Teach us to love your truth more and more.
Teach our nation to walk in your paths and according to your law.
and teach our leaders to be your servants.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

(Compare Psalm 146; Romans 1:19–22; 2:14–15; Micah 4:2)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. Explain and discuss the statement by Lord Acton that the Archbishop quotes: “[Freedom] is not the power of doing what we like, but the right of being able to do what we ought.”
2. Explain the difference between what the Archbishop calls the Americanist and traditionalist approaches.
3. Pope Leo XIII, as the Archbishop notes, was apprehensive about the status of the Church because while the American Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, it does not extend to the Church “the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority.” But Leo also warned about the social pressures of assimilation. He was concerned about social pressures on the American Church to change its teachings to better reflect “the spirit of the age.” Discuss this statement, from Leo’s encyclical, *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae*:

The underlying principle of these new opinions is that, in order to more easily attract those who differ from her, the Church should shape her teachings more in accord with the spirit of the age and relax some of her ancient severity and make some concessions to new opinions. Many think that these concessions should be made not only in regard to ways of living, but even in regard to doctrines which belong to the deposit of the faith. They contend that it would be opportune, in order to gain those who differ from us, to omit certain points of her teaching which are of lesser importance, and to tone down the meaning which the Church has always attached to them.

Consider in what respects do the Pope’s words seem prophetic? Do we not often hear from secular opinion leaders how the Church is out of step with the times, and how the Church should alter its teachings on contraception, abortion, homosexuality, and other areas to better align itself with American culture? Discuss the problems and the errors of this approach to the evangelization of American culture.

4. Explain and discuss the findings of Alexis de Tocqueville on the status of Catholicism and religion in the new American democracy. Why did he believe that Catholics were “both the most obedient of the faithful and the most independent of citizens”? Why did he believe the “complete separation of Church and state” was responsible for the flourishing of religion in America?
5. Pope Leo stressed the importance of morality for the endurance and prospering of American democracy. He praised President George Washington’s farewell address (also quoted by the Archbishop) for stressing this same point and for recognizing that religion is essential for promoting the virtues and morals necessary for civic life. Compare and discuss the following

statements from Leo and Washington, respectively. What points do the Pope and America's founding president make to argue that religion and morality are vital to democracy? Do these points remain relevant in 21st century America?

Pope Leo XIII: "For without morality the State cannot endure ... But the best and strongest support of morality is religion. She, by her very nature, guards and defends all the principles on which duties are founded, and setting before us the motives most powerful to influence us, commands us to live virtuously and forbids us to transgress. ... As regards civil affairs, experience has shown how important it is that the citizens should be upright and virtuous. In a free State, unless justice be generally cultivated, unless the people be repeatedly and diligently urged to observe the precepts and laws of the Gospel, liberty itself may be pernicious. Let those of the clergy, therefore, who are occupied with the instruction of the multitude, treat plainly this topic of the duties of citizens, so that all may understand and feel the necessity, in political life, of conscientiousness, self-restraint, and integrity; for that cannot be lawful in public which is unlawful in private affairs." (*Longinqua Oceani*, 4, 15)

George Washington: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. ... Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. ... [R]eason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle. It is substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government." (Farewell Address [September 17, 1796], 27, 28)

6. Explain and discuss the Catholic teaching on natural moral law. Compare the words of St. Thomas Aquinas and the pagan statesman, Cicero, quoted in the *Catechism* (nos. 1955–1956). Thomas says the natural law is "placed in us by God" and tells us "what we must do and what we must avoid." Cicero calls it "immutable and eternal" and says that "to replace it with a contrary law is sacrilege; failure to apply even one of its provisions is forbidden; no one can abrogate it entirely."

Recall our discussion of Chapter 2 ("Men Without Chests"). What C. S. Lewis was writing about, and what Archbishop Chaput sees happening in present-day America, is the slow but deliberate abrogation of the natural law, especially as it regards the fundamental dignity of the human person. Defend the proposition that America, founded on belief in the natural law, cannot abandon it or replace it with a contrary law without becoming a fundamentally different kind of nation.

Scripture

Christ alone is our king; the kingdom he came to establish is not of this world, but begins in the mission of his Church to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

- John 19:14
- Matthew 2:2
- Acts 1:3, 6–8

The kings of nations can become corrupt when they do not recognize that God alone is sovereign and the source of their earthly authority; monarchy can descend into tyranny.

- 1 Samuel 8:4–7, 10–18

Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. In him, men and women know the truth that sets them free.

- John 8:32
- John 14:6

The Church is to be a holy nation in which all are free and equal in Christ, and a sign of the kingdom of God and the new creation

- 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:5–6
- Galatians 3:26–28; Romans 10:12–13; Philemon 1:16
- Ephesians 2:19–22
- Acts 2:42–46; 4:32
- Revelation 5:9–10

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- The founding of America was the fruit of Christian mission, in particular, the voyages of Columbus which sought to “open a pathway for the Christian faith” in the New World. The legacy of the nation’s Catholic origins can be detected in the names of many American towns, cities, rivers, mountains, and lakes.
 - Pope Leo XIII, *Longinqua Oceani* (The Wide Expanse of the Ocean), nos. 2–3
- Religion, and the moral virtues instilled by religious faith, are vital to the America’s foundation and to its endurance and prospering.
 - Pope Leo XIII, *Longinqua Oceani*, 15

- The natural moral law is the origin and foundation of human law and the organization of human society. The natural law has been placed by God in every human heart; it orders our lives to the seeking of God as the source of everything that is good; it enables us to discern the dignity of the human person and our fundamental duties toward one another. The Ten Commandments, the Decalogue, presents the natural law and indicates the universal and essential norms for regulating moral life. This natural law is universal and unchangeable. It unites peoples of different cultures according to its common principles.
 - Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of the Truth), 50
 - *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 140–141
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1954–1960

- Catholic social teaching supports different forms of political organization so long as these regimes serve the legitimate common good of the people.
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1901, 1922

- Catholic social teaching supports an organization of government similar to that found in America, with a balance of three powers—legislative, executive, and judicial. This ordering reflects realistically the social nature of the human person and the need for the rule of law to protect human freedom.
 - Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (One Hundred Years), 44

- The Church values the democratic system, in principle, because it ensures the participation of citizens in their own government through elections and other forms by which those who govern are held accountable to the people. Authentic democracy, however, is marked not only by the rule of law, but by a correct understanding of the human person, respect for the rights of the person, and commitment to the common good.
 - Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 46
 - *Compendium*, nos. 406–410

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859): Historian and sociologist of modern democracy, Tocqueville also served as France’s minister of foreign affairs until the *coup d’état* and resulting dictatorship of Napoleon III in 1851. After this he wrote a penetrating book on the French Revolution, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, which stands, along with *Democracy in America*, as a major contribution on political and intellectual forces that shaped the modern world.

Lord Acton (1834–1902): Historian of freedom, Whig member of the English Parliament, and editor of a journal of liberal Catholic thought, *The Rambler*. In an essay on the history of freedom in Christianity, he wrote: “The story of the future is written in the past, and that which hath been is the same thing that shall be.”

Other important figures and works:

- **The Maryland Toleration Act** (1649)

Resources for Further Study

Papal encyclicals on America:

- Pope Leo XIII, *Longinqua Oceani* (Wide Expanse of the Ocean, 1895)
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_1-xiii_enc_06011895_longinqua_en.html)
- Pope Leo XIII, *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae* (Witness to Our Good Will, 1899)
(<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/113teste.htm>)

Pope John Paul II, Addresses to the American People

- 1995 Pastoral Visit
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/travels/sub_index1995/trav_usa_en.htm)
- 1987 Pastoral Visit
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/travels/sub_index1987/trav_stati-uniti-canada_en.htm)
- 1979 Pastoral Visit
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/travels/sub_index1979/trav_united-states-america.htm)

George Washington, Farewell “Address to the American People” (1796)

(<http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/farewell/text.html>)

Alexis de Tocqueville, on the Condition of Religion in America

(http://www.churchstatelaw.com/historicalmaterials/8_2_5.asp)

chapter 6

A NEW DISPENSATION

Summary and Key Points

Having sketched in Chapter 4 the intellectual foundations for Catholic thinking about their role in the world; and having established in Chapter 5 the importance of freedom of religion and natural law thinking in America's founding; Archbishop Chaput turns in these next two chapters to the Second Vatican Council and its reception in the American Church, and especially its implications for Catholic engagement in the public square.

An ecumenical council is the most authoritative forum for articulating the Church's faith. And the teachings of Vatican II (1962–1965) rightly exercise a decisive influence over contemporary Catholic attitudes and approaches to participation in public life. But as the Archbishop acknowledges, the question of what the Council actually taught and did not teach remains a matter of confusion, misunderstanding, and disinformation, even forty-five years on.

The Archbishop is well aware that he is entering into vexed terrain, an intellectual battleground upon which competing groups, both inside and outside the Church, are still struggling to lay claim to the Council's legacy and rightful interpretation. But in these two chapters he gives us about as honest, accurate, and insightful an assessment of the Council as we are likely to find.

Hewing closely to the actual words of the Council documents and the authoritative readings of participants such as Joseph Ratzinger, Henri de Lubac, and Yves Congar, he steers clear of partisan divides and interpretive "spin." The Council, he argues, cannot be understood through a political or sociological lens; rather it must be judged by its results—in the light of faith and in the light of the Church's mission to preach the Gospel to the nations.

Drawing on the analysis of Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, the Archbishop locates the need for the Council in modern European political and intellectual history. In a sense, the Council was needed because, as the Archbishop noted in an earlier chapter, we are "Constantine's children."

The Church by the middle of the 20th century was stuck in a defensive and reactionary stance toward the world. Much of this, of course, was understandable. For more than one hundred years, the Church had been subject to political and intellectual attack—beginning with the bloody anti-clerical revolts of 1848 and reaching a kind of dark nadir in the Soviet revolution that violently imposed atheistic totalitarian regimes over much of the European continent. Church leaders were justifiably wary of a modernity so fiercely hateful of God and the institutions of the Church. But Church leaders were also clinging to pre-modern models of Church engagement with the

world, insisting on an almost Constantinian ideal of “altar and throne.” As Ratzinger explains, the pre-Vatican II Church stubbornly equated faith in the absolute truth revealed by Christ with an “absolute secular status for the institutional Church.”

In other words, the Church mistakenly believed that, because Christ had revealed the fullness of truth to the world, his Church was entitled to a privileged position in secular society. This led the Church to consider itself aloof from other religions and groups in society, as if Catholicism, in possessing the fullness of truth, had no need to hear the viewpoints of others.

This essentially defensive attitude toward the world was what the Council set out to adjust. Archbishop Chaput explains the two philosophies guiding the Council’s approach to renewal—*aggiornamento*, a reinvigoration through fresh ways of thinking; and *ressourcement*, a return to the sources of Catholic faith in the Gospel and the witness of the first Christians.

He offers a close reading of four Council documents that mark a new beginning on the question of Catholics and the public square and a return to the missionary optimism and fervor of the early Church.

The Council’s *Lumen Gentium* affirmed that the Church is the necessary agent of salvation in the world, although it allowed that there are sources of holiness and truth that lie outside the visible structure of the Church. *Nostra Aetate* recognized the value and dignity of the sincere search for truth in non-Catholic faith traditions and even in non-believers. *Dignitatis Humanae* acknowledged the Church’s supreme respect for the individual conscience and affirmed that the truths of Christ can never be imposed upon an unwilling soul. Finally, *Gaudium et Spes* called for a new missionary approach, one open to the goodness of human achievement, and one that is fully aware that the old order has been swept away and the Church can never again claim primacy in the temporal order of human affairs.

Archbishop Chaput gives us revisionist history at its finest—a patient and clear-eyed corrective to the bewildering array of false and misleading readings of the Council. As he says, “No interpretation of the Council has merit unless it proceeds organically from *what the Council actually said*, and then remains true to it,” he writes.

The Council, he shows, neither intended nor did anything to suggest that the Church abandon her unique claim to possess the truth about salvation. Nor did the Council suggest any retreat from the Church’s mandate to preach the Gospel to all creation.

Its task was just the opposite—to make the faith more compelling for the modern heart and to make the Church more effective in bringing the world to Jesus Christ. As always, the Archbishop stresses the need for the Church’s teachings to become the lived experience of the Church’s member. He stresses the interior, spiritual dimensions of conciliar renewal. He quotes from the Council’s own decree on ecumenism—a message for every Catholic: “Every renewal of the Church essentially consists in an increase of fidelity to her own calling.”



Prayer

Almighty God!
In you we place all our confidence,
not trusting in our own strength.

Look down benignly upon your Church.
May the light of your grace aid us.
Graciously hear the prayers which we pour forth to you.

May the light of the true faith
free humanity from ignorance and slavery to sin,
and lead it to the only freedom worthy of the name—that of life in Jesus Christ
under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
here below and in the kingdom of heaven,
in the fullness of the blessed vision of
God face to face!

To Jesus Christ,
our most amiable Redeemer,
immortal King of peoples and of times,
be love, power, and glory
for ever and ever.

(compare Pope John XXIII, Address for the Opening of the Second Vatican Council; Pope John Paul II, *Fidei Depositum*; John 8:32; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. What were Pope John XXIII's goals in calling the Second Vatican Council? Discuss the key concepts of the Council—*aggiornamento* and *ressourcement*. What do these terms mean and how are they related to each other? Consider the teachings of each of the Council documents that the Archbishop focuses on—*Nostra Aetate*, *Dignitatis Humanae*, *Lumen Gentium*, and *Gaudium et Spes*. Discuss how these concepts of *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement* are reflected in these documents, as the Archbishop describes their importance.
2. In its document, *Gaudium et Spes* (no. 43), the Second Vatican Council states: “One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives. . . . Let there be no such pernicious opposition between profes-

sional and social activity on the one hand and religious life on the other. The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation.”

3. Explain and discuss the quotation the Archbishop attributes to Blessed Charles de Foucauld—that “obedience is the yardstick of love.” Do you understand your own love for God in these terms?
4. In his speech closing the Council, Pope Paul VI had this to say about the meaning of the Council:

Would not this Council, then, which has concentrated principally on man, be destined to propose again to the world of today the ladder leading to freedom and consolation? Would it not be, in short, a simple, new and solemn teaching to love man in order to love God? To love man, we say, not as a means but as the first step toward the final and transcendent goal which is the basis and cause of every love. And so this Council can be summed up in its ultimate religious meaning, which is none other than a pressing and friendly invitation to mankind of today to rediscover in fraternal love the God “to turn away from whom is to fall, to turn to whom is to rise again, to remain in whom is to be secure ... to return to whom is to be born again, in whom to dwell is to live” (St. Augustine).

Explain and discuss the purpose of the Council as Paul explains it. Notice that fraternal love, love for our brothers and sisters in the world, is not considered an “end” in itself, but rather as a means, “a ladder” for discovering God. How does this help us to understand our mission as Catholics in the public square? In our work for social justice and change, how can we better ensure that our efforts not only contribute to the material well being of our brothers and sisters but also invite them to return to God?

5. Consider and discuss the quotation from Cardinal Henri de Lubac, S. J. Discuss what he means when he says that the teachings of the faith can never be changed or adapted to the fashions of the day, but there is a “continual need” for each one of us to find new ways to witness to those teachings in our lives—to live our faith with more strength and even with heroism.

Scripture

The Church belongs to Jesus Christ. He has entrusted it to the apostles and their successors and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

– Matthew 16:17–19

Christ has given his Spirit to the Church to bear witness to him and to guide the Church into all truth; Christ himself will be with his Church until the end of the age.

- John 15:26; 16:12–14
- John 20:21–23
- Acts 1:8; 2:1–11
- Matthew 28:20

Until the end of the age and the return of Christ, the Church's mandate remains to preach the Gospel to all creation and to make disciples of all nations, for there is salvation in no other name under heaven.

- Matthew 28:18–19
- Mark 16:15
- Luke 24:47
- Acts 4:10, 12

The ecumenical councils of the Church are called to protect and interpret the deposit of faith; in these councils, the Holy Spirit guides the decisions of the Church.

- Acts 15:6–31

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- The purpose of the Second Vatican Council was to renew the Church's apostolic and pastoral mission. The Council was called to develop a new attitude and approach to making the Church's teachings more accessible to Catholics and to showing the world the unity, beauty, and truth of the Catholic faith. The goal of the Council was to make the Church more effective in proclaiming Christ to the world.
 - Pope John Paul II,
Fidei Depositum (The Deposit of Faith)
- The Church is missionary by her very nature; the preaching of the Good News of Christ, which every person has the right to hear, is the primary service that the Church renders to humanity, and is the center of her life, and the center of the life of every believer.
 - Pope John Paul II,
Redemptoris Missio (The Mission of Redemption),
nos. 1, 5, 32, 46, 62
- In the mystery of his plan of salvation, God loves all people and grants them the possibility of being saved; he has established Christ as the one mediator and the Church as the necessary instrument and sacrament of that salvation.
 - Second Vatican Council,
Lumen Gentium (Light to the Nations), nos. 9, 14–17, 48

- Second Vatican Council,
Gaudium et Spes (Joy and Hope), no. 22
- The Church, which possesses the fullness of truth necessary for salvation, esteems what is good in each religion and respects the sanctuary of the human conscience.
 - Second Vatican Council,
Dignitatis Humanae (The Dignity of the Human Person), nos. 3–4
 - Second Vatican Council,
Nostra Aetate (Our Age), no. 2
- The human person has a right to religious freedom and can never be forced to act against his or her conscience in religious matters.
 - *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 2
- We must work for the Kingdom of God, which is already mysteriously present on earth in the Church. While the Kingdom of God cannot be equated with earthly progress, progress in human dignity, justice, and freedom is vitally important. Every Catholic is called to work to bring human society more and more in accord with the law of God.
 - *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 42–43

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

Henri de Lubac, S. J. (1896–1991): One of the great theologians of the 20th century and influential in the movement of *ressourcement* leading to the Second Vatican Council. Among his most enduring works are *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, and *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*. In an essay on the temporal authority of the Church, he wrote: “The Church’s greatness is not a worldly greatness. . . . The Church’s authority is entirely spiritual. Her divine authority is limited to the individual conscience. This is not a restriction, however. There can be no question of closing off any area of thought or human activity from the Church, because there is no activity or thought—however profane in appearance—in which, in one way or another, faith and morality cannot be involved.”

Lamentabili Sane (With Truly Lamentable Results) and *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (Guarding the Lord’s Flock): Two important works issued in 1907 by Pope Pius X aimed at condemning pernicious errors of modern thought. Indeed, Pius saw in these errors a “whole system” of thought that, in his opinion represented “the synthesis of all heresies.”

Other important figures and works:

-Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (1993)

Resources for Further Study

Pope John XXIII

- Address for the Opening of the Second Vatican Council (1962)
(<http://www.ourladywarriors.org/teach/v2open.htm>)

Pope Paul VI

- Address during the Last General Meeting of the Second Vatican Council (1965)
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651207_epilogo-concilio_en.html)

chapter 7

WHAT WENT WRONG

Summary and Key Points

The Second Vatican Council triggered reactions and unleashed forces that Church leaders scarcely could have anticipated.

Still today, most American Catholics have never read the Council's documents in their entirety. This has transferred extraordinary power to the many "interpreters" of the Council in the press and within the Church. Sadly, many of the most influential of these chose to "spin" the Council's meaning to advance their own agendas.

Confusion and disinformation ensued. The "letter" of the Council, the actual words of the conciliar documents, was pitted against some alleged "spirit of Vatican II," which was said to be a spirit of freewheeling abandonment of traditional Catholic priorities and morality in the name of "openness" to the modern world. Pope John XXIII was said to be a revolutionary figure and the Council he called was portrayed as a rupture from all that had gone before it in the Church. That such a reading did violence to the truth goes without saying. But the damage was done, confusion was sown.

Continuing his account of Vatican II and its reception in America, this chapter again finds Archbishop Chaput writing in a calm, revisionist vein, as he attempts to reclaim the Council's true meaning from what he aptly describes as the "dictatorship of interpreters."

As he explains, the post-conciliar disorder and bewilderment fit together with widespread social changes—anti-colonialism and the irruption of the poor in the Third World, and in America, the civil rights struggle, the war on poverty, the rise of artificial contraception, and a seismic upheaval in sexual mores.

The supposedly "revolutionary" spirit of Vatican II was held to be a perfect expression of the tenor of the times, in which a deep concern for social reform was wed to an eager optimism about the possibilities of personal freedom and transformation. To the spirit of the Council was attributed the rise of a new age in which concerns about personal holiness and the struggle against sin were passé, and personal conscience was said to trump any claim of morality or tradition, even the teachings of Christ and his Church.

The Archbishop focuses his narrative on two pivotal moments in the 1960s that he believes, along with the Council, have shaped Catholic attitudes in the post-conciliar period. The first is the introduction of the birth-control pill. The pill and the sexual disarray it gave rise to continue to exercise a corrosive influence on American society and morals.

Within the Church, artificial contraception became a sort of moral line in the sand. Many Catholics came to reject the Church's teaching authority on this issue, in part basing themselves on misleading ideas of personal conscience promoted in the name of the "spirit of Vatican II." This has had an incalculable effect on Catholic witness, including introducing a "pick and choose" approach to the faith, with Catholics feeling free to ignore authoritative teachings in the name of their "conscience."

The second decisive moment identified by the Archbishop is the 1960 presidential elections. In America, the reception of Vatican II coincided with Catholicism's ambivalent coming of age, symbolized by the candidacy of John F. Kennedy. The Archbishop offers a close reading of Kennedy's famous speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in which he essentially vowed that his Catholic faith would not influence his decisions as president.

Thus, in this chapter, the Archbishop traces the roots of some of the greatest challenges in contemporary American Catholic life—the privatization of religious faith and its evacuation from the public square, and the exultation of lifestyles in which the search for sensual pleasure and material gratification are seen as the primary goals of personal striving.



Prayer

Lord our God, Father of all,
you guard us under the shadow of your wings
and search the depths of our hearts.

There are many among us who are
empty talkers and deceivers.
They go from bad to worse, confusing whole families,
seeking to draw people away from the truth.

We know that your Son is with his Church
until the end of the age,
and that your Spirit will guide us into all truth.

Increase our faith in your promises.
Give us the strength to testify in your name,
and to live by your Word of truth.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

(Compare Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday and Weekday Prayers, no. 29; Acts 20:29-30; 2 Timothy 3:13-14; Titus 1:10-11)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. At the end of the Council of Nicea, St. Basil, one of the Church's great theologians, compared the reception of that Council to a battle at sea conducted during a raging storm. He said:

“The raucous shouting of those who through disagreement rise up against one another, the incomprehensible chatter, the confused din of uninterrupted clamoring, has now filled almost the whole of the Church, falsifying through excess or failure the right doctrine of the faith.”

In what respects might this description be applied to the reception of Vatican II, as Archbishop Chaput describes it? In what respects were the doctrines of the Church “falsified through excess or failure” to interpret correctly the teachings of the Council?

2. In his encyclical, *Humanae Vitae* (On Human Life, no. 17), Pope Paul VI, predicted several consequences of the widespread adoption of artificial birth control:

[F]irst consider how easily this course of action could open wide the way for marital infidelity and a general lowering of moral standards. ... [H]uman beings—and especially the young, who are so exposed to temptation—need incentives to keep the moral law, and it is an evil thing to make it easy for them to break that law.

Another effect that gives cause for alarm is that a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection. Finally, careful consideration should be given to the danger of this power passing into the hands of those public authorities who care little for the precepts of the moral law.

Who will blame a government which in its attempt to resolve the problems affecting an entire country resorts to the same measures as are regarded as lawful by married people in the solution of a particular family difficulty? Who will prevent public authorities from favoring those contraceptive methods which they consider more effective? Should they regard this as necessary, they may even impose their use on everyone. It could well happen, therefore, that when people, either individually or in family or social life, experience the inherent difficulties of the divine law and are determined to avoid them, they may give into the hands of public authorities the power to intervene in the most personal and intimate responsibility of husband and wife.

Explain and discuss your understanding of the Pope's statement, which many consider prophetic. In what respects has widespread availability of contraceptive methods and devices contributed to higher divorce rates and a lowering of standards of sexual morality, especially among the young? Explain and discuss the connection the Pope makes between artificial contraception and disregard for women. In what ways do foreign aid for “population control” and policies such as China's “one-child per family” law represent what the Pope called government interventions “in the most personal and intimate responsibility of husband and wife”?

3. In his writings, Pope John Paul II often stressed that artificial birth control is a social justice issue and not a matter only of private and conjugal morality. Indeed, he saw the rise of systematic anti-childbearing campaigns in the Third World as “a conspiracy against life,” by the rich against the poor, involving “scientifically and systematically programmed threats,” “chemical warfare,” and “racist forms of eugenics.”

Read and then discuss the passages on contraception in the Pope’s *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (no. 25) *Evangelium Vitae* (nos. 13, 17, 91), and *Centesimus Anus* (no. 39). Discuss these passages in light of the predictions of Pope Paul VI quoted above. In what ways does the “contraceptive mentality” lead to the abuses and coercive practices that the Popes condemn?

4. Read or watch President Kennedy’s address to the Houston ministers’ association; then reread Archbishop Chaput’s critique. Why is this address so pivotal in the history of American Catholic engagement in the public square? What are the deficiencies in President Kennedy’s understanding of the relationship between his faith and his public service? Explain the connection between President Kennedy’s “logic” and the alibi frequently heard in public life today—“I am personally opposed to abortion, but I will not impose my personal beliefs upon my fellow citizens.”

Scripture

The bishops of the Church are successors of the apostles, and stewards of the mysteries of God and his kingdom; the one who hears the apostles and their successors, hears Christ.

- Acts 20:28
- 1 Corinthians 4:1
- Luke 10:16

Those who, in continuity with the apostles, are preparing the kingdom of heaven, must be like a householder who can bring out of his treasure what is new and what is old.

- Matthew 13:52

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- Catholicism rejects cultural relativism and ethical pluralism, which claim that in a pluralistic society different outlooks on life are to be tolerated and treated as of equal value; Catholicism also rejects the notion that laws should reflect the autonomous moral choices of citizens even if those moral choices are contrary to the natural law. A Catholic cannot vote for a political program or a law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals.
 - Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,
Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the

Participation of Catholics in Public Life, 3–4

- Pope John Paul II,
Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life), no. 73

- The Second Vatican Council affirms the Church’s constant teaching that artificial contraception is not consistent with God’s intentions for married love.
 - *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope), no. 51.
- The family is the sanctuary of life, the place in which life, the gift of God is to be welcomed and protected. Artificial contraception and sterilization, along with abortion, are intrinsically evil and, when encouraged or required by government policy constitute a kind of “anti-civilization.”
 - *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 231–234
- While it is often argued that increased access to birth control is a way to prevent abortions, “the contraceptive mentality” in fact leads to abortion and other grave abuses; indeed, contraception and abortion are “fruits of the same tree.”
 - Pope John Paul II,
Evangelium Vitae, no. 13

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

Francis X. Murphy (1915–2002): A Redemptorist priest who, under the pseudonym Xavier Rynne, wrote a series of 13 articles for *The New Yorker* magazine on the Second Vatican Council. These articles promoted the view that the Council could not be understood only by reading the words of its documents. “More important than the documents, the Council has consecrated a new spirit, destined in the course of time to remake the face of Catholicism,” he wrote.

Rev. Charles Curran (b. 1934): One of the theological experts at Vatican II, Father Curran became the figurehead for dissent from the Church’s teachings on sexual morality, beginning with a 1968 “response” to *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI’s encyclical affirming the Church’s rejection of artificial contraception. Eventually his consistent public dissent from Catholic teaching led to his dismissal from the faculty of Catholic University of America.

Other important figures and works:

U. S. Supreme Court, *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965)

Resources for Further Study

Cardinal Avery Dulles, S. J.

- “Vatican II: The Myth and the Reality”
(http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2810)

Pope Benedict XVI

- Address to the Roman Curia Offering them his Christmas Greetings
(On the 40th anniversary of the close of Vatican II)
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia_en.html)

John F. Kennedy

- Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association (1960)
(<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfkhoustonministers.html>)

Pope Paul VI

- *Humanae Vitae* (On Human Life)
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html)

chapter 8

CONSCIENCE AND COWARDICE

Summary and Key Points

Words matter, Archbishop Chaput argues in this chapter. He is concerned here with two developments—the one technological and the other philosophical—and their implications for political discourse in American life.

The American democratic system was founded when the printed word on the page was the only form of mass communication. And our political system reflects the assumptions of a culture based on the printed word.

The culture of print and reading tends to encourage certain ways of thinking and making decisions, the Archbishop explains. For instance, reading tends to promote a person's ability to form and follow complex arguments, as well as the person's capacity to make critical judgments based on reason. That is why America's founders stressed the importance of having a literate and educated electorate.

Today's new digital and electronic media are shaping whole new ways of thinking. These new media have become pervasive in our society. This development has broad consequences for the way we think about, talk about, and resolve issues in our democratic process.

There is a world of difference between reading *The Federalist Papers*, as the early Americans did, and watching a televised presidential debate, or tuning in a topical discussion on talk radio. The new media are fast-paced and stress brevity, the emotions, visual imagery, and entertainment values.

The Archbishop notes that these new media are creating an electorate that no longer has the patience or ability to engage in complex and difficult debates.

Related to this technological shift, Archbishop Chaput senses a philosophical change in our culture's understanding of language and its relation to our experience of reality.

Many people no longer believe in universal truths, that is, truths that are "always true," that are a part of the world as it has been created. In addition, many people do not believe that there is an objective reality, a reality outside of our individual perceptions of the world, a reality that our words can meaningfully refer to and describe.

In short, this philosophical change means that there are no "facts" or "truths"—only our individual opinions and feelings about things. Words mean whatever their speaker says they mean.

In our political life, this philosophical change has encouraged some politicians and powerful interest groups to cynically manipulate language in order to advance themselves along with dangerous and immoral agendas.

As a result of these developments, Archbishop Chaput says Catholics find themselves in an increasingly difficult position as they try to advance the Church's moral teachings in the public square.

First, under the influence of the new media, they find themselves talking to an audience that has little appetite or aptitude for complicated moral arguments. Second, they face great obstacles in making the Church's teachings known because the reach and influence of the new media has made it much easier for politicians and powerful interests to spread lies and moral confusion.

In the face of these developments, the Archbishop proposes two basic stances for mature Catholic political participation.

First, we must reclaim the true meaning of key words in our national discourse. Catholics cannot accept a public debate in which concepts such as tolerance, rights, the common good, and conscience are used in ways that empty them of moral content.

Secondly, Catholics must insist on the historical fact that America was founded upon certain basic truths—truths ultimately based on a Christian understanding of the human person and human society.

Among the principal falsehoods in American life today is the notion that our democratic system was meant to be a totally secular proposition, that citizens must check their religious beliefs at the door before entering the public square.

The Archbishop points out that this is flatly wrong from a historical standpoint. But also, he believes that the growing hostility toward religion and moral arguments based on religious beliefs threatens our society with “a new kind of barbarism.”

What is needed now more urgently than ever, Archbishop Chaput concludes, is a courageous Christian witness and a willingness to struggle against injustice in the service of the common good. “God,” he says, “did not put us here to sit out the struggle for the soul of the public square.”



Prayer

O Lord,
 Who shall dwell on thy holy mountain?
 Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,
 who speak truth from their hearts;
 who do not slander with their tongue,
 and do no evil.

Make us to know thy ways, O Lord;
 teach us thy paths.
 Lead us in thy truth, and teach us,
 for thou art the God of our salvation;

Make our hearts courageous in your ways,
 strengthen us in faith
 that we might testify and bear witness to your Gospel,
 in the face of great opposition.

(compare Pss. 15:2-3; 25:4-5; Acts 16:5; 23:11; 1 Thess. 2:2)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. Explain some of the differences between the culture of print and reading and the culture of the digital and electronic media.

Discuss what the *Catechism* (no. 2496) means when it states that the mass media “can give rise to a certain passivity among users, making them less than vigilant consumers of what is said or shown. Users should practice moderation and discipline in their approach to the mass media. They will want to form enlightened and correct consciences the more easily to resist unwholesome influences.”

2. Consider the quotation from Humpty Dumpty: “When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.” Discuss how this characterizes aspects of our public discourse.
3. St. Thomas Aquinas once wrote: “Men could not live with one another if there were not mutual confidence that they were being truthful to one another” (see *Catechism*, no. 2469). Reflect on this in light of this chapter.

How is truthfulness vital in the context of both our personal relationships and our lives together in society? What are some of the consequences of the breakdown of people's confidence in truthfulness, or what George Orwell called "the decay of language"?

4. What are the true meanings of the words *pluralism* and *tolerance* as Archbishop Chaput explains them? Discuss how the true meanings of these words differ from the way these words are used today in our political discourse.
5. The following is a thought-exercise: Polls find that a clear majority, 65 percent of Americans, support Congressional legislation known as "The Right to Choose Act." This legislation would establish once and for all that (a) all women have the right to an abortion for any reason and under any circumstances; and (b) that all citizens the right to a physician's assistance in ending their lives for whatever reason.

Respond to the argument being made by the legislation's supporters and the media: We live in a democracy and in a democracy the laws should reflect the will and opinions of the majority.

6. Read the short subsection, "The Nation Under God," in the "E Pluribus Unum" section of Father Murray's *We Hold These Truths*.

He quotes former Presidents John Adams and Abraham Lincoln who both acknowledge widespread belief in the "duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God." Do you feel that Americans still believe this? Do you think our government officials and civic leaders still believe this?

Father Murray states: "The United States has had, and still has, its share of agnostics and unbelievers. But it has never known organized militant atheism on the Jacobin, doctrinaire Socialist, or Communist model." In your opinion, is this statement still true?

Respond to the following argument: We live in a pluralistic society where many people either do not believe in God or they do not believe in a god that "rules" over nations. Hence, we should not appeal to God in framing laws and public policies.

7. Read both Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail," and the letter from the Alabama clergymen that prompted it. Notice that among the clergymen who signed that letter was the then-auxiliary bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Mobile-Birmingham.

Compare and contrast the approaches of these two letters to the acknowledged injustice of racial segregation and discrimination. Why did Martin Luther King find the clergymen's approach inadequate? Do you agree with King's assessment?

8. Page through this chapter again and notice the diversity of sources that the Archbishop uses to make his argument. Catholic sources are actually a small minority of the figures and texts he makes use of. Among others, he draws from secular authorities in philosophy, cultural criticism, and media theory; a novelist; a TV entertainer; and the atheist political commentator, George Orwell; his primary example of Christian courage is not a Catholic, but a Baptist minister.

Are you surprised that a Catholic Archbishop, a leader of the Church, would use these kinds of authorities in analyzing problems and proposing strategies for the spread of the Gospel?

What does the Archbishop's method tell us about a truly authentic Catholic approach to political and cultural engagement? Discuss this statement in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (no. 78):

“A significant contribution to the Church's social doctrine comes also from human sciences and social sciences. ... The Church recognizes and receives everything that contributes to the understanding of man. ... Thanks to the sciences, the Church can gain a more precise understanding of man in society, speak to the men and women of her own day in a more convincing manner, and more effectively fulfill her task of incarnating in the conscience and social responsibility of our time, the word of God and the faith from which social doctrine flows.”

9. Consider two statements by Cardinal Newman that are quoted by Archbishop Chaput: Conscience “has rights because it has duties” and, “We are answerable for what we choose to believe.” What do these statements mean to you? How can you personally respond to Archbishop Chaput's challenge: “God did not put us here to sit out the struggle for the soul of the public square”?

Scripture

A society that is not ordered to truth descends into injustice, proceeding from evil to evil.

- Psalm 12:1–8
- Isaiah 59:3–4, 8–9, 13–15
- Jeremiah 9:3–6
- Romans 1:25–31

Christians are called to bear witness to the truth; truthful witness saves lives.

- Proverbs 14:25
- Matthew 10:32–33
- John 18:37
- Ephesians 4:23–25, 29

God gives courage and strength to those who bear witness to his truth.

- Acts 23:11
- 1 Corinthians 16:13
- 1 Thessalonians 2:1–5
- Philippians 4:13

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- As social beings, words and language are crucial to our relationships with others and with God.
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1146
- The human person, by nature, seeks the truth about himself or herself and seeks to live according to that truth.
 - *Catechism*, nos. 2467–2469
 - *Compendium of the Social Teaching of the Church*, no. 198
- The denial of absolute or objective truth, also known as “ethical relativism,” can cause a democracy to devolve into a thinly disguised totalitarianism.
 - *Compendium*, no. 407
 - Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (One Hundred Years), no. 46
 - Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), 70
- Secular intolerance is the harbinger of moral anarchy threatening the very spiritual and cultural foundations of civilization.
 - *Compendium*, no. 572
 - Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life*, no. 6
- Information is crucial to democratic participation. The media is at the service of the common good and must provide information that is truthful and respectful of the dignity of the human person.
 - *Compendium*, nos. 414–415
 - *Catechism*, no. 2493–2494
- Christians are obliged to educate their consciences through study of the Word of God and the authoritative teachings of the Church; their consciences thus formed, they are to make decisions in their private and public lives according to their conscience.
 - *Catechism*, nos. 1783–1789

- Christian has a positive duty to confidently bear witness to the truth and to promote the common good.
 - *Compendium*, no. 543
 - *Catechism*, nos. 1816, 1913–197; 2471–2474
 - Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* (The Christian Lay Faithful), 59

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

John Henry Newman (1801–1890): An influential theologian, preacher, and leader in the Church of England when he converted to Catholicism, Cardinal Newman is noted especially for his teaching on the relationship between Church teaching and the formation of conscience.

John Courtney Murray (1904–1967): A Jesuit priest and theologian who made important contributions in the areas of religious freedom and pluralism and the relationship between the Church and the American political order.

Other important figures and works:

- Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

Resources for Further Study

George Orwell

- “Politics and the English Language”
(http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit)

John Henry Newman

- Letter to the Duke of Norfolk
(<http://www.newmanreader.org/works/anglicans/volume2/gladstone/index.html>)
- “Disposition for Faith” (Sermon, 1856)
(<http://www.newmanreader.org/works/occasions/sermon5.html>)

Martin Luther King

- “Letter from Birmingham Jail”
(http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/popular_requests/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf)
- “Statement of Alabama Clergymen”
(<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/frequentdocs/clergy.pdf>)

chapter 9

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Summary and Key Points

The martyr-saint of the English Reformation, Thomas More, is presented in this chapter as the role model for American Catholic politicians today.

More was a virtuous and learned man—a poet, historian, and social thinker. He was a devoted father and husband who attended daily Mass and maintained a rigorous life of personal prayer and ascetic discipline. A brilliant lawyer who eventually became Speaker of the Parliament’s House of Commons, More’s political career culminated with his appointment as Lord Chancellor to King Henry VIII; he was the first lay person to hold the office, succeeding the infamous Cardinal Thomas Wolsey.

More, however, resigned his post when it became clear that Henry’s intention was make himself the supreme head of the Church of England and to deny the authority of the Pope. Though he knew it would mean certain ruin for his career and poverty for his family, he stepped down rather than go along with a policy so contrary to his Catholic faith.

Yet More’s reputation for integrity and honor made his refusal to publicly endorse Henry’s moves all the more compelling—and threatening—to the King. Henry had him arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. A sham show-trial was held and More was found guilty of treason and beheaded.

The bulk of this chapter consists of a meditation on the character and witness of this great Catholic politician. More, the Archbishop says, embodies the virtues that we are all called to as Catholics and citizens—virtues unfortunately all too uncommon in our public leaders and in our own daily witness to the faith.

His approach to the life of this saint is unique and instructive. Too often, he explains, we focus on the end product—the final, heroic manifestations of the saints’ sanctity. What interests the Archbishop instead is the hard work of holiness—More’s ordinary, everyday struggles to do God’s will, to master his appetites, and to learn the patience of self-denial. This is the true stuff of saintliness.

Archbishop Chaput wants us to understand that saints are not born but made—through determination, discipline, and a commitment to love God and to conform one’s life to the gift of his grace.

What does all this have to do with the Archbishop’s project in *Render Unto Caesar*? The answer is: everything. Archbishop Chaput would have each of us striving to be saints in the public square, men and women with well-formed consciences who know the seriousness of their duty as citizens.

Like More, he would have us be prepared to lose our fortunes and careers—and even our lives—rather than to lose our souls by compromising the principles and truths of our religion.

There are, of course, no easy analogies to be drawn between 16th-century England and 21st-century America. As the Archbishop sees it, all Catholic politicians today are, in some way, heirs to the legacy of John F. Kennedy’s promise not to let his religious faith influence his public service. To illustrate the point, he looks at the conflicting witness of two Catholic lawyers who went on to become governors of two of the largest states in the country, Mario Cuomo of New York and Robert Casey of Pennsylvania.

Cuomo followed Kennedy’s path, advancing the argument that while he was personally opposed to abortion, he could not, in a pluralistic democracy, seek to impose his beliefs on others who might not share those beliefs. Casey took a different path. And it is Casey’s path that the Archbishop would have us follow.

The words of Casey that he quotes could stand as a kind of credo for the brand of faithful citizenship that the Archbishop wants to seed in *Render Unto Caesar*: “Give your country not what it wants or will reward, but what it needs.”



Prayer

All-powerful ever-living God,
you confirm the true faith with the crown of martyrdom.

Give us the courage to proclaim our faith by the witness of our lives.
That we may obey God instead of unjust human laws.

Take from us, Lord, this lukewarm fashion,
this cold manner of meditation and dullness in praying to you.
Give us warmth, delight, and quickness in thinking of you.

Turn our weakness into strength,
that we might heed your call
for the endurance and faith of the saints.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

(Compare Mass for the Feast of Ss. John Fisher and Thomas More - Opening Prayer; St. Thomas More - “A Devout Prayer” [1535]; Acts 5:29; Revelation 13:10; Liturgy of the Hours, Common of Several Martyrs)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. For his portrait of St. Thomas More, Archbishop Chaput draws inspiration from both the historical record and the famous play by Robert Bolt, “A Man for All Seasons.” In the play, during his final interrogation More is confronted by Thomas Cromwell, who accuses him of a lack of patriotic loyalty in defying the Kings’ orders. More replies: “Is it my place to say ‘good’ to the State’s sickness? Can I help my King by giving him lies when he asks for truth? Will you help England by populating her with liars?”

Discuss More’s response in light of the contemporary issues raised in this chapter and Chapter 8. What are some of the lies that are contributing to the sickness of 21st-century America? Explain and discuss why More’s refusal to say “good” to the sickness of the England in his day was the highest form of patriotism. What can Catholic citizens and politicians do today to stop populating America with liars?

2. Explain the difference between St. Thomas More’s understanding of conscience and the false notions discussed in earlier chapters, especially the notion of conscience as a matter of autonomous personal choice or opinion.
3. In his 1984 address at the University of Notre Dame, Governor Mario Cuomo articulated this philosophy of Catholic leadership in the public square:

The Catholic who holds political office in a pluralistic democracy ... undertakes to help create conditions under which all can live with a maximum of dignity and with a reasonable degree of freedom; where everyone who chooses may hold beliefs different from specifically Catholic ones—sometimes contradictory to them; where the laws protect people’s right to divorce, to use birth control, and even to choose abortion.

In fact, Catholic public officials take an oath to preserve the Constitution that guarantees this freedom. ... Not because they love what others do with their freedom, but because they realize that in guaranteeing freedom for all, they guarantee our right to be Catholics: our right to pray, to use the sacraments, to refuse birth control devices, to reject abortion, not to divorce and remarry if we believe it to be wrong.

This freedom is the fundamental strength of our unique experiment in government. In the complex interplay of forces and considerations that go into the making of our laws and policies, its preservation must be a pervasive and dominant concern. ...

Almost all Americans accept some religious values as a part of our public life. ... But we are also a people of many religions, with no established church, who hold different beliefs on many matters. Our public morality, then—the moral standards we maintain for everyone, not just the ones we insist on in our private lives—depends on a consensus view of right and wrong. The values derived from religious belief will not—and should not—be accepted as part of the public morality unless they are shared by the pluralistic community at large, by consensus. ...

We create our public morality through consensus and in this country that consensus reflects to some extent religious values of a great majority of Americans. But ... all religiously based values don't have an a priori place in our public morality. The community must decide if what is being proposed would be better left to private discretion than public policy; whether it restricts freedom, and if so to what end, to whose benefit; whether it will produce a good or bad result; whether overall it will help the community or merely divide it."

In this passage, Cuomo describes opposition to abortion variously as a "religiously based value," a "specifically Catholic" belief, and a personal decision that a pluralistic democracy must allow people the freedom to choose. Compare his understanding with the teachings of the Church articulated above, especially in the *Catechism* and in *Evangelium Vitae*. Explain and discuss the differences between Cuomo's view and the Church's teaching. Discuss also Cuomo's concept of "a consensus view of right and wrong." Based on your understanding of America's founding, is it accurate to say that our national laws and morals were intended to be established on the basis of such a "consensus view"? Discuss this notion in terms of the Church's teaching presented above. Can what is right and wrong legitimately be determined by a majority vote or a consensus decision?

4. In his 1995 address to the graduating class of the University of Notre Dame, Governor Robert Casey offered this interpretation of American history:

A nation is no different from a person in his need for fidelity to his calling. Fidelity to who he is, or she is. When a person turns from his vocation in spite of himself, it brings grief. No matter what comforts and distractions life offers, deep down he will always be uneasy. He will know that he is not being true to himself. And you know ... America was born with a calling. It was the noblest destiny to which any society can be called. ... Of extending rights and opportunities. Of raising up the powerless. ...

This was our common faith—our civil religion ... And wars were fought in its name. We've always had political quarrels and disagreements. But these debates were mostly centered on how to achieve these noble ends, not on whether or not the ends were worthy in themselves. Throughout our history ... people of all faiths, and people of no faith, have joined in great moral causes. All this too is part of the American story. ... It shows a diversity of belief, but a unity of moral purpose. ...

We must ask ourselves, "Where today does conscience call us?" What is the deepest source of the unease that's documented in survey after survey across this country? ... I believe that a great majority of people in America know the answer to that question.

The silent figure at the center of our great cultural debate is the unborn child. ... The abortion debate is not about how we shall live, but who shall live. And more than that, it's about who we are.

The fundamental question posed is this: once a child has been conceived, what is the proper response of a good society—of America at her best? ... Where is our true character as a nation to be seen ..., in an adoptive home, or in an abortion clinic? ...

Who are we America? ... Since when does America, the strongest, the most powerful country in the

world, abandon in despair an entire class of people—the most defenseless, innocent, and vulnerable members of the human family? How can we justify with our experience in this country—our tradition, our heritage, our history—how can we justify writing off the unborn child. . . . I believe the American people know the answer to these questions. They know that abortion is not worthy of a great nation.

Explain and discuss Casey’s argument that abortion is a defining issue for America. Notice that unlike Cuomo, Casey does not define abortion as a sectarian religious issue, but as a question of human rights—the most basic of rights, “who shall live.” Why does he consider the abortion debate is a debate about “who we are”? In what sense is the struggle for the rights of the unborn related to earlier struggles in our nation’s history? In what sense is this struggle a continuation of America’s historic “calling”?

Scripture

Every baptized person is called to be a saint, one who is holy and blameless before God.

- Romans 1:7
- 1 Corinthians 1:2
- Ephesians 1:4
- Colossians 1:2

We are called to preach the gospel in season and out of season, even in times when people have turned away from the truth; we must be ready to endure suffering.

- 2 Timothy 2:2–5

The new commandment of Jesus Christ calls us to love our brothers and sisters as Christ has loved us. “He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

- John 13:34
- 1 John 3:16

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- Catholics are called to live according to a unity or integrity of life. That means they can never separate their religious faith from their secular affairs or their life in the world. All our daily activities, professional and social, must be seen as an occasion for serving God and our neighbor.

- Pope John Paul II,
Christifideles Laici (The Christian Lay Faithful), no. 17

- Abortion is a grave moral disorder, since it is the deliberate killing of an innocent human being. This is not a sectarian doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, but is based upon the natural law and upon the written Word of God, in addition to being the constant teaching of the Church since the very beginning.
 - Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), nos. 62
- A Catholic may not in good conscience vote for laws or political programs that contradict the values and teachings of the Church. Abortion and euthanasia are crimes that no human law can legitimize and a Catholic must oppose such intrinsically unjust laws and must never cooperate in any way with the evil that such laws sanction; this may require them to sacrifice their professional professions or relinquish hopes for career advancement; in extreme cases one may be called sacrifice one's life, to martyrdom in the name of love and human dignity.
 - *Evangelium Vitae*, nos. 73–74
 - *Compendium of the Social Teaching of the Church*, no. 570

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (1471–1530): One of the most powerful men in England and in the Church during the time of English Reformation. Wolsey had a large hand in crafting the foreign and domestic policy of King Henry VIII and was on the short list of possible successors to the papacy. His reluctance to support Henry's bid to divorce Queen Katharine in order that he might marry Anne Boleyn led to his downfall.

Other important figures and works:

- **English Parliament**, “Act of Succession” (1534)
- **U.S. Supreme Court**, *Planned Parenthood vs. Casey* (1992)

Resources for Further Study

Robert Bolt

- “A Man For All Seasons” (1960)
(http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/classes/coreclasses/hss2/library/man_for_all_seasons.html)

Pope John Paul II

- Motu Proprio Declaring St. Thomas More Patron of Statesmen and Politicians (2000)
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_20001031_thomas-more_en.html)

Mario Cuomo

- “Religious Belief and Public Morality: A Catholic Governor's Perspective” (1984)
(<http://pewforum.org/PublicationPage.aspx?id=611>)

Robert Casey, Sr.

- Address Delivered at the University of Notre Dame (1995)
(http://www.davidscottwritings.com/Casey_1995.pdf)

chapter 10

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Summary and Key Points

With this wide-ranging chapter, Archbishop Chaput begins his conclusion to *Render Unto Caesar*—moving from analysis and diagnosis to his proposals for renewal and strategies to address the challenges facing American Catholics in the public square today.

He begins by registering a frank critique of the Church’s political and cultural assumptions since the Second Vatican Council and the Catholic coming of age symbolized by the Kennedy election in 1960. The fruits of Catholics’ ascendancy into the American mainstream have been decidedly mixed, as the Archbishop notes.

Although they now make up nearly one-quarter of the population, and claim leadership positions everywhere from corporate boardrooms and governors’ mansions to the halls of Congress and the chambers of the Supreme Court, the actual influence of Catholics on American life remains slight.

Catholics today have become far more wealthy and better educated, and they possess a greater range of professional skills and expertise than any generation before them. But this change in status has not been accompanied by any corresponding growth in their knowledge of the faith or their sense of Christian identity. It could be argued that Catholics have been changed by the culture far more than they have changed the culture.

This situation cannot be blamed on the supposed liberalism of Vatican II, the Archbishop says. As his quote from the Rev. John Hugo indicates, the roots of Catholic assimilation or “absorption” by the culture can be traced back at least twenty years before the Council.

What is to be done, then? Archbishop Chaput’s proposals are offered in the best conciliar spirit of *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement*.

First, he calls Catholics to live their faith with fresh new vitality and a vibrant evangelical spirit. Catholics will renew America only if they rededicate themselves to living the Gospel and to sharing the good news of Christ with their neighbors. Renewal spreads soul to soul; only the heart that is converted can convert others.

The Archbishop again draws courage and inspiration from the words of Christ and the witness of the early Church, especially those first heroic leaders who defended the Church against the intrusions of the Roman imperial state. Catholics today—bishops, priests, religious, and lay people—need that same courage and confidence in Christ.

Urging Catholics to apply the values of the Gospel to the issues of the day, Archbishop Chaput calls for a new appreciation of Catholic social teaching. Catholics must avoid the temptation of treating the Church's teaching on economic, political, and cultural issues as a set of humanitarian principles or a political platform. The Church's social teaching must be seen rather as an instrument of the love of God and the love of neighbor—a means for building solidarity and justice and for bringing all men and women to Christ.

The Archbishop's personalism again shines through in this chapter. The world, he says, will try to make us believe a lie. The lie that King Henry VIII tried to make St. John Fisher believe: "Well, well, it shall make no matter ... for you are but one man." But one man or woman does matter—indeed makes all the difference, the Archbishop insists. Catholics are called to be faithful. Whether they will be successful in the renewal of America is something only God knows.

Catholics can fulfill their vocation—both as Catholics and as loyal citizens—by living their faith, by being willing to stand alone if necessary to defend the truths of our religion and the unalienable rights of the human person and the duty of the government to secure those rights.



Prayer

God our Father,
 you call us to spread the Gospel of your Son
 to the ends of the earth,
 making disciples and teaching all men and women
 to observe what you have commanded.

Help us to seek first your Kingdom and your righteousness.
 Fill us with your strength
 that we may show all humankind that
 the perfection of justice is found in your
 new law of love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

(Compare Matthew 28:19-20; Mass for Peace and Justice - Opening Prayer; Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday and Weekday Prayers, no. 26)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. Explain and discuss the Archbishop's contention: "The conscious choice to *repent and believe the Gospel* is the most radical decision a human being can make." Do you understand yourself as having a mission to share the Gospel—not only among your friends and family, but with co-workers and in all your actions in the community and in the political sphere?
2. At the core of Archbishop Chaput's concern in this chapter, and throughout *Render Unto Caesar*, is an attempt to empower Catholics to exercise their faith in the face of the perceived demands of a false pluralism. This was also a key concern of the U.S. Bishops' fine meditation, *Living the Gospel of Life*. Discuss the following excerpt from that document:

Since the entry of Catholics into the U.S. political mainstream, believers have struggled to balance their faith with the perceived demands of democratic pluralism. As a result, some Catholic elected officials have adopted the argument that, while they personally oppose evils like abortion, they cannot force their religious views onto the wider society.

This is seriously mistaken on several key counts. First, regarding abortion, the point when human life begins is not a religious belief but a scientific fact—a fact on which there is clear agreement even among leading abortion advocates. Second, the sanctity of human life is not merely Catholic doctrine but part of humanity's global ethical heritage, and our nation's founding principle. Finally, democracy is not served by silence. Most Americans would recognize the contradiction in the statement, "While I am personally opposed to slavery or racism or sexism I cannot force my personal view on the rest of society."

Real pluralism depends on people of conviction struggling vigorously to advance their beliefs by every ethical and legal means at their disposal.

Today, Catholics risk cooperating in a false pluralism. Secular society will allow believers to have whatever moral convictions they please—as long as they keep them on the private preserves of their consciences, in their homes and churches, and out of the public arena.

Democracy is not a substitute for morality, nor a panacea for immorality. Its value stands—or falls—with the values which it embodies and promotes. Only tireless promotion of the truth about the human person can infuse democracy with the right values. This is what Jesus meant when He asked us to be leaven in society.

American Catholics have long sought to assimilate into U.S. cultural life. But in assimilating, we have too often been digested. We have been changed by our culture too much, and we have changed it not enough. If we are leaven, we must bring to our culture the whole Gospel, which is a Gospel of life and joy. That is our vocation as believers. And there is no better place to start than promoting the beauty and sanctity of human life. Those who would claim to promote the cause of life through violence or the threat of violence contradict this Gospel at its core.

Discuss this excerpt in light of the Archbishop's argument, especially in this and the previous

chapter. Explain why the bishops find the “personally opposed, but ...” excuse of Catholic politicians to be a dodge of the real issues involved in the sanctity of life.

What do the bishops mean by “false pluralism”? What do they mean when they say that Catholics have been “digested” by American culture? Explain their contention that the evil of abortion is not only a religious belief, but a matter of science and the natural law.

3. Again in this chapter we see the Archbishop drawing inspiration and real guidance from the witness of the early Church. As a man of history, the Archbishop knows that moral opposition to abortion and infanticide, which were widely practiced in the Roman Empire, has been a part of Catholic identity since the earliest days of the Church. Consider these statements from the first three Christian centuries:

The Didache: You shall not put to death the child by abortion nor shall you kill it after it is born.

Tertullian: It is anticipated murder to prevent someone from being born; it makes little difference whether one kills a soul already born or puts it to death at birth. He who will one day be a man is a man already.

Athenagoras: For we regard the child in the womb as a created being and already under the protection of divine Providence.

How does the “antiquity” of the Church’s teaching influence your own understanding of the importance of this issue? Do you think the depths of the Church’s moral stance against abortion are generally known? Discuss why this teaching became such a “marker” of Catholic identity in the Roman Empire, and why it remains vital to Catholic identity today.

4. Discuss the Vatican’s teaching on the obligations of Catholic politicians in the face of unjust laws that amount to an attack on human life. The following is from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Public Life* (no. 4):

At the same time, legislative proposals are put forward which, heedless of the consequences for the existence and future of human beings with regard to the formation of culture and social behavior, attack the very inviolability of human life. Catholics, in this difficult situation, have the right and the duty to recall society to a deeper understanding of human life and to the responsibility of everyone in this regard.

John Paul II, continuing the constant teaching of the Church, has reiterated many times that those who are directly involved in lawmaking bodies have a “grave and clear obligation to oppose” any law that attacks human life. For them, as for every Catholic, it is impossible to promote such laws or to vote for them. ... A well-formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals. ...

When political activity comes up against moral principles that do not admit of exception, compromise or derogation, the Catholic commitment becomes more evident and laden with responsibility. In the face of fundamental and inalienable ethical demands, Christians must recognize that what is at stake is the essence of the moral law, which concerns the integral good of the human person. This is the case with laws concerning abortion and euthanasia ... Such laws must defend the basic right to life from conception to natural death.

Explain and discuss this statement. Why is it not permissible for a Catholic to vote for a policy or programs that contradicts the Church's teachings on faith and morals? Why do we have an obligation to oppose such policies. How do you understand your personal "right and the duty to recall society to a deeper understanding of human life and to the responsibility of everyone in this regard."

Scripture

Jesus came to spread the fire of divine love on the earth. Catholics are called to kindle that fire through their offering of their lives in worship to God.

- Luke 12:49
- Hebrews 12:28–29
- 1 Peter 1:7
- Romans 12:1

Times are coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but will have itching ears and seek teachings to suit their own liking; Catholics must continue to preach the full Gospel of Christ and to declare the whole counsel of God.

- 2 Timothy 4:3
- Acts 20:27
- Romans 15:19

For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? Do not fear those who can kill the body; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

- Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25
- Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:4

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- From the earliest days of the Church, abortion has been condemned as child murder.
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2270–2275
 - Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 51
 - Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 61

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

Cardinal F. X. Nguyen Van Thuan (1928–2002): Recently named Archbishop of Saigon when he was arrested by Vietnamese communist authorities in 1975, Thuan was imprisoned for 13 years, nine of which were spent in solitary confinement. He was never tried. In 1991 he received permission to visit the Pope in Rome, but he was not allowed to return to Vietnam. He spent the rest of his days in exile, though he worked tirelessly for his people. Pope John Paul II named him president of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace in 1998 and elevated him to the College of Cardinals in 2001. His book *The Road of Hope*, which the Archbishop quotes in this chapter, was written during his years in solitary confinement and is a spiritual classic.

Other important figures and works:

- Stanley Hauerwas
- Daniel Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation Between Church and State*
- Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*

Resources for Further Study

Becket Fund for Religious Liberty

- The Blaine Amendments Debate
(<http://www.blaineamendments.org/Intro/whatis.html>)

chapter 11

FAITHFUL CITIZENS

Summary and Key Points

Early in *Render Unto Caesar*, Archbishop Chaput warned that Americans risk becoming “men without chests,” a people hollowed out of all their core values and principles. To begin his penultimate chapter, he offers us a sketch of what such a “chestless” class might look like.

The “Bobos,” the bourgeois-bohemians who make up America’s new leadership classes in business and politics, are a pleasant and comfortable lot who value stability and order in society; while they are willing to work hard for their own prosperity, and are generally generous, they prefer to duck tough choices on moral and social questions. Instinctively, they will seek ways to compromise and split the differences. Bobos practice their religion moderately but regularly; however, they get uncomfortable with people who take their faith too seriously.

As Archbishop Chaput makes clear, the Bobos include in their number many American Catholics. And he finds the Bobo brand of religion and citizenship seriously deficient.

Bobos are a breed of people without chests. They may be efficient and competent, reasonable and pragmatic, and they may know how to get things done. But in their preoccupation with staking out their own private comfort zones, they have cut themselves off from the values and ideals of America’s founding. They lack the virtues—and the sense of personal mission—needed to meet the challenges we face as a nation and as a Church.

The heart of this chapter is Archbishop Chaput’s close reading of the Gospel account of Jesus’ conflict with the Pharisees and Herodians over paying taxes to Caesar. The practical lesson for today is that believers are called to give their lives to God, and to love God by working with Caesar and our neighbors to build a better society and world. While this task falls primarily upon lay people, their service in civic life must be guided by the truths of the Gospel, as those truths are articulated in the teachings of the bishops, the successors of the apostles.

Catholic engagement in the public square, as the Archbishop presents it, is always a mix of idealism and realism. It is always based on a “hierarchy of truths.” That means not all of the issues facing society are of equal gravity; not everything that is evil can be made illegal. But some evils are so grave that they cannot be tolerated without risking the nation’s soul and the soul of each of its citizens.

In America today, abortion is such an evil, the Archbishop contends. The right to life is the foundation of every other right in society, and the moral “logic” that permits abortion makes all human rights contingent on the whims of elite opinion or the vote of the majority.

Archbishop Chaput explains forcefully why abortion is an issue that we cannot compromise on or seek some imagined middle ground. Compromise means continuing to permit the killing of millions of the littlest and most defenseless of our people. Nor can a Catholics take comfort in the fact that he or she is fighting for human dignity in other areas, such as poverty, racism, peace, or the environment. To be wrong on abortion makes being right on anything else meaningless.

Again the Archbishop stresses the difference that one individual can make. What matters is not “success” but staying faithful to the Gospel. And again, he draws lessons from Church history, especially from the early Church, when keeping the faith often meant martyrdom.

American Catholics best serve their country when they are loyal citizens and faithful ones, too. This is the first and last word of *Render Unto Caesar*. Archbishop Chaput writes:

“We serve our democratic institutions best when we *love* our country; when we nourish its greatest ideals through our own courage, honesty, and active political engagement. ... American Catholics need to be *more* Catholic, not less ... more *authentically and unselfishly* Catholic—in the way we live our personal lives, and in our public words and actions. That includes our political choices.”



Prayer

Father,
guide us, as you guide creation—
according to the law of your love.

Make your love the foundation of our lives.
Give us strength and joy
in serving you as followers of Christ.

Help us to open the eyes of our neighbors
to see your hand at work
in the splendor of creation,
in the beauty of human life.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(Compare Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday and Weekday Prayers, nos. 17, 25, 28)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. In Chapter 5, Archbishop Chaput presented Alexis de Tocqueville's portrait of American Catholics in the first generation after the Constitution. Tocqueville described Catholics this way:

These Catholics are very loyal in the practice of their worship and full of zeal and ardor for their beliefs. Nevertheless, they form the most republican and democratic of all classes in the United States. ... American Catholics are both the most obedient of the faithful and the most independent citizens.

In this chapter, Archbishop Chaput presents a description of American Catholics circa 2007, from the social commentator, David Brooks:

Over the decades, the authority of the Church weakened and young Catholics assimilated. Catholic values began to converge with Protestant values. Catholic adults were more likely to use contraceptives and fertility rates plummeted. They raised their children to value autonomy more and obedience less. ... On the one hand, modern Catholics have retained many of the traditional patterns of their ancestors—high marriage rates, high family stability rates, low divorce rates. ... On the other hand, they have also become more individualistic, more future-oriented and less bound by neighborhood and extended family.

Based on these descriptions, discuss what appear to be the chief differences between Catholics today and Catholics at the time of America's founding. Considering the discussion in *Render Unto Caesar*, discuss what might be some of the possible reasons for these differences. Think about your own Catholic identity and that of the Catholics that you know—which description better fits, that of Tocqueville or Brooks?

2. The Archbishop quotes a crucial passage from the U.S. bishops' *Living the Gospel of Life*:

Catholics should eagerly involve themselves as advocates for the weak and marginalized ... as they seek to build consistent policies which promote respect for the human person at all stages of life. But being 'right' in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life. Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the 'rightness' of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community.

Explain and discuss this passage. Why do the bishops consider the abortion issue—which involves a direct attack on innocent human life—the foundational social justice issue in America today? Why is it impossible, in the bishops' view, for a Catholic politician to claim to be promoting human rights and social justice if he or she is not working to prevent abortion? Defend Archbishop Chaput's statement: "Deliberately killing innocent human life, or standing by and allowing it, dwarfs all other social issues."

3. In his classic work, *The City of God* (bk. 2, 20), St. Augustine wrote of the Roman Empire:

They do not trouble about the moral degradation of the Empire. All that they ask is that it should be prosperous and secure. "What concerns us," they say, "is that everyone should be able to increase his wealth so that he can afford a lavish expenditure and keep the weak in subjection. Let the laws protect the rights of property and let them leave man's morals alone. ... Let there be sumptuous banquets where anybody can play and drink and ... be dissipated by day or night as much as he pleases or is able. Let the noise of dancing be everywhere and let the theaters resound with lewd merriment ... Let the man who dislikes these pleasures be regarded as a public enemy."

Discuss the contemporary ring of this quotation. In what respects does this describe American culture of the early 21st century? Discuss this in terms of the description of the Bobos and in terms of the Archbishop's broader critique of American culture—its excessive and wrongheaded conceptions of individualism and freedom, its de-Christianization, and the growth of a consumer and entertainment culture in which many Americans are quite literally "amusing themselves to death." Recall that the Roman Empire's demise is often attributed to moral corruption and the attendant disintegration of political and social institutions. Describe some practical steps that ordinary Catholic citizens might take to reverse these tendencies in American culture.

4. In describing the situation of legalized abortion in America today, Archbishop Chaput is thinking in the categories of Catholic social teaching, which acknowledges the existence and workings of "structures of sin" or "social sin." Consider and discuss the following definition of "social sin" from Pope John Paul II's apostolic exhortation on the Sacrament of Penance, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (no. 16):

To speak of social sin means in the first place to recognize that, by virtue of a human solidarity which is as mysterious and intangible as it is real and concrete, each individual's sin in some way affects others. ... A soul that lowers itself through sin drags down with itself the Church and, in some way, the whole world. ...

Whenever the Church ... condemns as social sins ... the collective behavior ... even of whole nations, ... she knows and she proclaims that such cases of social sin are the result of the accumulation and concentration of many personal sins. It is a case of the very personal sins of those who cause or support evil or who exploit it; of those who are in a position to avoid, eliminate or at least limit certain social evils but who fail to do so out of laziness, fear or the conspiracy of silence, through secret complicity or indifference; of those who take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world, and also of those who sidestep the effort and sacrifice required, producing specious reasons of a higher order. The real responsibility, then, lies with individuals.... At the heart of every situation of sin are always to be found sinful people.

Discuss the Church's understanding of social sin and structures of sin. What is the relationship between the sins of individuals and laws and social policies that amount to an attack on human life? What are some of the ways that individuals, by their sins of omission, can contribute to the social sins of their society?

5. Archbishop Chaput quotes from the “Letter to Diognetus,” an apologetic work written about the year 200. Here is the full context of the quote the Archbishop uses:

Christians are indistinguishable from other men either by nationality, language or customs. ... And yet there is something extraordinary about their lives. They live in their own countries as though they were only passing through. They play their full role as citizens ... but for them their homeland, wherever it may be, is a foreign country.

Like others, they marry and bear children, but they do not expose their offspring. They share their meals, but not their wives. They live in the flesh, but they are not governed by the desires of the flesh.

They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven. Obedient to the laws, they yet live on a level that transcends the law.

In a word: we may say that the Christian is to the world what the soul is to the body. As the soul is present in every part of the body, while remaining distinct from it, so Christians are found in all the cities of the world, but cannot be identified with the world. ... Such is the Christian’s lofty and divinely appointed function, from which he is not permitted to excuse himself.

Discuss this description of Christian engagement in the world in light of the themes of *Render Unto Caesar*. Notice that Christians are distinguished by their moral behavior—they do not “expose” their children or share their wives (that is, they refuse to go along with the practices of infanticide and sexual activity outside of marriage common in the Roman Empire). Again, we see that the dignity of life and the family were hallmarks of Christian identity from the earliest days of the faith. Discuss how this historical fact can and should be a part of Catholic engagement on the abortion question in our day. Discuss how Catholics can better fulfill their vocation as the “soul” of the American nation.

Scripture

God rejects those whose works are lukewarm, without passion for the righteousness of Christ.

- Revelation 3:16

The Church cannot fail to proclaim the truth it has received from Jesus Christ. As St. Paul said, “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel.”

- Acts 4:19–20
- 1 Corinthians 9:16

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- One can sin against the love of God through *indifference, ingratitude, lukewarmness, acedia* or spiritual sloth.
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2094
- Every society is based on some vision of the human person and his destiny. From this vision, the society derives its point of reference and its hierarchy of values. Societies that do not respect the truth of the human person’s origin and destiny in God easily slide into a totalitarianism.
 - *Catechism*, no. 2244
 - Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (One Hundred Years), nos. 45–46
- The right of the Church to proclaim the Gospel is also a duty of the Church to speak out against the corrupting influence of social injustice, which is often the “social” and cumulative public manifestation of many personal sins of commission or omission.
 - *Compendium of the Social Teaching of the Church*, nos. 71, 117
 - *Catechism*, no. 1869
 - Pope John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (Reconciliation and Penance), no. 16
- The abortion culture in contemporary societies constitutes a “structure of sin.”
 - Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), nos. 12, 59

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

Cardinal John O’Connor (1920–2000): A former military chaplain, he served as Archbishop of New York from 1984 to 2000 and was perhaps the American Church’s most visible spokesman for the unborn. In the last months of his life, he reflected on the changes in American life since the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade*: “That we put more than a million babies to death in a year in the United States alone is not only taken for granted, our laws are stretched further every day to loosen even those fractional restraints still in place. What would once have been a nightmare for anyone in public office, to support or to advance abortion, not only no longer needs defense, but any one committed to the pro-life movement can be looked upon as ‘anti-patriotic.’ So has our culture changed dramatically in these nearly 30 years. Death has become life, life death. ... So God creates and we destroy.”

Bishop James McHugh (1932–2000): Trained in sociology and medical ethics, then-Father McHugh was an official of the U.S. bishops’ conference—first in the bishops’ family life bureau and later director of the office of pro-life activities—during the pivotal years following the Second Vatican Council and the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade*. He was one of the chief architects of the U.S. bishops’ pro-life strategy during the post-*Roe* years. He was a good friend and mentor to Archbishop Chaput, who dedicated *Render Unto Caesar* to him.

Charles Péguy (1873–1914): An influential French poet, essayist and journalist, and a champion of justice and human rights. He was killed in battle during World War I. A devout Catholic, whose writing is thoroughly shot through with Catholic themes, he did not practice his faith because he had married outside the Church to an atheist. He often wrote of the witness of St. Joan of Arc. “She carried out a divine commandment through strictly human means. she responded to a divine vocation through exclusively human means. ... This is what gives her a place apart, a most eminent place in the hierarchy of sanctities She is of the race of saints and ... the race of heroes.”

Other important figures and works:

- **David Brooks**, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*
- **Rémi Brague**, *The Law of God: The Philosophical History of an Idea*

Resources for Further Study

PBS Newshour

- A Conversation with David Brooks on *Bobos in Paradise*
(http://www.pbs.org/newshour/gergen/jan-june00/brooks_5-9.html)

David Brooks

- “The Catholic Boom” (2007)
(http://select.nytimes.com/2007/05/25/opinion/25brooks.html?_r=1)
(registration required)

Richard Doerflinger

- “The Intellectual Legacy of Bishop James T. McHugh”
(<http://www.catholicsocialscientists.org/CSSR/Archival/2002/Symposium--Doerflinger.pdf>)

chapter 12

AFTERWORD: SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Summary and Key Points

Archbishop Chaput concludes *Render Unto Caesar* in the same reflective mood in which he began the book. In this short afterword, he offers his personal perspective on two of the most contentious issues facing Catholics in the public square today—whether pro-abortion Catholic politicians should be permitted to receive Communion, and whether Catholic citizens can in good conscience, vote for such candidates.

The questions, of course, move us far beyond the expected boundaries of American partisan politics. As the Archbishop explains, the issue goes to the nature of the Sacrament of the Eucharist—what it *is* and what it means in the life of the believer and in the mission of the Church.

His patient explanation stresses the relationship between the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance. From the beginning, every Catholic guilty of grave sin has been expected to confess his or her sins and seek forgiveness and reconciliation before approaching the altar; those who have not first done so must refrain from coming forward. It follows almost without saying, that those in public life who reject the Church's teaching on the fundamental issue of abortion should never present themselves to receive the Eucharist—until they repent their sin.

None of this is a new teaching, as the Archbishop makes clear with well-placed quotations from the New Testament and the writings of early Church leaders.

He emphasizes that denying communion to abortion-friendly politicians should never be an occasion for “public theater,” or public humiliation of the politician. At issue is the integrity of the Eucharist and the faith of the Catholic people, which must never be scandalized. In dealing with pro-abortion politicians, the bishop and his priests remain pastors of souls and not political powerbrokers or disciplinarians. Their pastoral aim in withholding the Eucharist will always be to call the politician to conversion for the sake of his or her own soul.

On the issue of whether one can vote for a candidate who supports abortion, the Archbishop's answer is characteristically candid: “*I couldn't.*”

He allows that Church teaching only forbids collusion in abortion—that is, voting for a candidate “because” he or she supports abortion. It might be conceivable that a Catholic could find a “proportionate” reason to vote for a candidate who holds a pro-abortion position—that is, a reason that would somehow outweigh the grave obligation to end the killing of the unborn. But again, the Archbishop is frank: personally he cannot imagine any possible justification. After

all, he says: what reason could we give that would be accepted by the unborn victims of abortion, whom we will meet on Judgment Day, when we are called to explain our actions as citizens and disciples?



Prayer

We thank you, Lord Jesus,
because the Gospel of the Father's love,
with which you came to save the world,
has been proclaimed far and wide in America
as a gift of the Holy Spirit that fills us with gladness.

We thank you for the gift of your Life,
which you have given us by loving us to the end:
your Life makes us children of God, brothers and sisters to each other.

Increase, O Lord, our faith and our love for you,
present in all the tabernacles of the continent.

Precisely by contemplating your Precious Blood,
the sign of your self-giving love,
we learn to recognize and appreciate
the almost divine dignity of every human being.

Grant us to be faithful witnesses to your Resurrection
for the younger generation of Americans,
so that, in knowing you, they may follow you
and find in you their peace and joy.

Give us strength to proclaim your Word
with courage in the work of the new evangelization,
so that the world may know new hope.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, pray for us!
Renew in us a love
for the beauty and sanctity of the human person
from conception to natural death;
and as your Son gave His life for us,
help us to live our lives serving others.
Mother of the Church, Mother of our Savior,
open our hearts to the Gospel of life,
protect our nation, and make us witnesses to the truth.

(Compare Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, no. 76; Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 25; U.S. Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 39)



For Study, Discussion, and Reflection

1. In the early Church, Eucharistic heresy often went hand-in-hand with disregard for the poor. In other words, those who did not believe in Christ's real presence in the Eucharist also tended to be those who refused to believe in Christ's promise to be present in the least of our brothers and sisters. Consider these two quotes from the early Church Fathers:

St. Ignatius of Antioch: "Those who hold strange doctrine ... have no regard for love—no care for the widow, the orphan, nor for the oppressed ... because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior."

St. John Chrysostom: "Do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked. Do not pay him homage in the temple clad in silk only then to neglect him outside where he suffers cold and nakedness. He who said: 'This is my body' is the same one who said ... 'Whatever you did to the least of my brothers you did also to me.'"

Discuss this understanding of the relationship between the Eucharist and the Church's social teaching. How might this aspect of the Church's ancient faith shed light on the debates over Catholic politicians and the Eucharist? Can one who does not recognize the presence of Christ in the unborn be able to recognize his presence in the bread and wine of the Eucharist?

2. Discuss the following reflection on the Eucharist, from Pope John Paul II's, encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life, nos. 25–26):

The blood of Christ, while it reveals the grandeur of the Father's love, shows how precious man is in God's eyes and how priceless the value of his life. ... Precisely by contemplating the precious blood of Christ, the sign of his self-giving love, the believer learns to recognize and appreciate the almost divine dignity of every human being ...

Furthermore, Christ's blood reveals to man that his greatness, and therefore his vocation, consists in the sincere gift of self. Precisely because it is poured out as the gift of life, the blood of Christ is no longer a sign of death, of definitive separation from the brethren, but the instrument of a communion which is richness of life for all. Whoever in the Sacrament of the Eucharist drinks this blood and abides in Jesus is drawn into the dynamism of his love and gift of life, in order to bring to its fullness the original vocation to love which belongs to everyone.

It is from the blood of Christ that all draw the strength to commit themselves to promoting life. It is precisely this blood that is the most powerful source of hope, indeed it is the foundation of the absolute certitude that in God's plan life will be victorious. "And death shall be no more," exclaims the powerful voice which comes from the throne of God in the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:4). And St. Paul assures us that the present victory over sin is a sign and anticipation of the definitive victory over death, when there "shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'" (1 Cor. 15:54–55).

Here again, we see that the Eucharist is the ultimate sign of the victory of the Author of Life over the powers of death. Again, consider how this aspect of the Church's ancient faith might

help civic leaders and see the profane contradiction between support for policies that condemn the helpless to death and the Eucharist which is the sign of Life's victory over death.

Discuss this in light of the words of St. Justin Martyr, which the Archbishop quotes: "No one may take part [in the Eucharist] unless he believes what we teach is true ... and lives in keeping with what Christ taught."

3. In their pastoral letter, "Present Crisis" (April 25, 1933), the American Catholic bishops spoke of the "great tradition" of our nation:

We are bearers of a great tradition, the tradition of religious, moral, and spiritual discipline which commenced with the preaching of the Gospel and which gave to Europe and the world a new and more perfect culture and civilization.

The culture did not develop as a result of legislative enactments or social and political upheavals, but because men and women took into their souls the spirit of the Gospel and because in their lives they gave a practical exemplification of the teachings of Christ.

The greatest revolution in the institutional life of humanity was that which was wrought when those who professed to follow Christ lived the life of earnest and devout Christians.

It was because those followers of Christ made faith the paramount influence in life and conduct, and Christian charity the source and goal of all effort, that autocracy was dethroned and that mankind came to enjoy the benefits of freedom of conscience and of civil and political liberty, and it was because those who believed that all men without distinction of Jew or Greek, bond or free, are all one in Christ, and the curse of chattle slavery vanished from the world.

Discuss this statement in light of Archbishop Chaput's project in *Render Unto Caesar*. Consider especially the bishops' remark that "the greatest revolution" in humanity has come from followers of Christ living the faith they profess. Write a final sentence to the passage quoted, extending the bishops' idea from "chattle slavery" to the curse of legalized abortion and other attacks on innocent human life and dignity.

Scripture

We are called to beware of false prophets who may come in sheep's clothing but are really ravenous wolves. We will know them by their fruits.

– Matthew 7:15–20

None of us is worthy to receive the Lord, yet by his Word, received in the spirit of humility and repentance, we can be healed.

– Matthew 8:8

The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, given for the life of the world and as a sign of the new covenant.

- Luke 19:20–21
- John 6:51–57
- 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23–26

To partake of the Eucharist in an unworthy manner is to profane the Body and Blood of the Lord and to eat and drink judgment upon oneself.

- 1 Corinthians 11:27–30

Every person will be judged by the love he or she shows in response to Jesus Christ, who comes to us in the least of our brothers and sisters.

- Matthew 25:31–46

To whom much is given, much will be required; to those whom society entrusts with much, even more will be demanded.

- Luke 12:48

Catechism, Magisterium, and Catholic Social Teaching

- A society that does not protect the unborn cannot legitimately claim to be a society committed to human freedom, justice and peace. Democracy stands or falls based on the values it embodies and promotes; thus the future of democracy depends on rediscovering the values that flow from the truth about the human person; and restoring the necessary connection between civil law and the moral law.
 - Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), 70–71, 101
- Civil leaders have a special responsibility to promote the Gospel of life. In this role, they will be responsible to their fellow citizens and to God for decisions that, by disregarding the dignity of the person, undermine the very fabric of society.
 - *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 90
- Abortion is a crime against human life for which Church law has long attached the canonical penalty of excommunication.
 - *Catechism*, nos. 2272, 2332
 - Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope), 27
 - *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 62
- The Eucharist, the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, commits us to those Christ shed his blood to die for—especially the poor and the weak, those whom he especially identified

himself with. As the Sacrament of communion between those who have been made brothers and sisters in Christ, the Eucharist commits us to the transformation of unjust structures that deny the dignity of the human person created in God's image and likeness.

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1397, 2449
- Pope Benedict XVI,
Sacramentum Caritatis (The Sacrament of Love), no. 89

Historical Foundations and Background

Key Catholic figures and works:

St. Justin Martyr (100–165): A philosopher and convert to the faith, Justin was beheaded during the reign of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who fancied himself to be something of a philosopher. Justin, in fact, had addressed one of his apologetic works to Marcus. Justin also gives us one of our most ancient testimonies of the order of the celebration of the Eucharist, which is quoted at length in the *Catechism* (no. 1345).

Other important figures and works:

- Rudy Giuliani
- Hillary Clinton
- Barack Obama
- John Kerry

Resources for Further Study

U.S. Catholic Bishops

- Catholics in Political Life (2004)
(<http://www.usccb.org/bishops/catholicsinpoliticallife.shtml>)

Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

- Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life
(http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20021124_politica_en.html)

