

Thomistic Renaissance - The Natural Moral Law: The Reawakening of Scholasticism in Catholic Teaching as Evidenced by Pope John Paul II in Veritatis Splendor

Jr. Reverend John Trigilio

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Thomistic Renaissance - The Natural Moral Law: The Reawakening of Scholasticism in Catholic Teaching as Evidenced by Pope John Paul II in Veritatis Splendor Jr. Reverend John Trigilio This dissertation seeks to establish that there is a renaissance of Thomistic Philosophy in the Post-Conciliar Catholic Church, specifically a reawakening of Scholasticism, as evidenced by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical Veritatis Splendor. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) ushered in a new era for the Roman Catholic religion prompted by the desire of Pope John XXIII to have the 2,000 year old institution catch up with the modern world and address current problems as well as present the ancient faith in contemporary ways. Prior to Vatican II, there was a monolithic way to explain faith and reason. Theology and Philosophy were rigidly taught via textbook manuals according to a norm established under Pope Pius X who vigorously denounced the errors of Modernism in his encyclical Pascendi (1907). His immediate predecessor, Pope Leo XIII had issued Aeterni Patris (1879) which directed a restoration of the pre-eminence of Thomistic philosophy. Unfortunately, the neo-Thomism of the Leonine papacy was not as resilient as the classical Thomism before it. This paper intends to show the development of the Natural Moral Law doctrine from its beginnings to its most famous herald followed by a systematic review of Veritatis Splendor in order to show that Thomism is indeed alive and well in Catholic thought and has once again captured the imprimatur of Papal endorsement. While there are many non-Catholic theologians and moralists who dispute some or all of the major tenets and propositions of the Natural Law as the means to discern ethical behavior, Pope John Paul II makes it clear where he wants to shepherd the Roman Catholic religion in terms of morality, faith and reason.



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