

2013

Jacques Maritain and a Spirituality of Democratic Participation

Chantelle Ogilvie-Ellis

Master of Theological Studies, Australian Catholic University, chantelle.ogilvie-ellis@sydneycatholic.org

Follow this and additional works at: <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/solidarity>
ISSN: 1839-0366

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Copyright Regulations 1969
WARNING

This material has been copied and communicated to you by or on behalf of the University of Notre Dame Australia pursuant to part VB of the Copyright Act 1969 (the Act).

The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further copying or communication of this material by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.

Do not remove this notice.

Recommended Citation

Ogilvie-Ellis, Chantelle (2013) "Jacques Maritain and a Spirituality of Democratic Participation," *Solidarity: The Journal of Catholic Social Thought and Secular Ethics*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 6.

Available at: <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/solidarity/vol3/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Solidarity: The Journal of Catholic Social Thought and Secular Ethics* by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@ND. For more information, please contact researchonline@nd.edu.au.



Jacques Maritain and a Spirituality of Democratic Participation

Abstract

The contribution of Jacques Maritain to twentieth century political philosophy has been widely noted. This paper explores the implications of Maritain's work and life for contemporary spirituality, in particular, for a spirituality that might nourish and shape democratic participation. It finds the roots of such a spirituality in Maritain's integral vision of the person, and his view of saints as those persons who alone have fully resolved the human condition. Maritain argues that while sanctity so defined is universal, it must be adapted to the changing conditions of history. Contemporary democracy, in particular, has expanded the possibilities of the human being's temporal task, and so calls for new styles of sanctity to embrace the new range of human activity. This paper explores the characteristics of sanctity in a democracy, according to Maritain. It finds that the defining features of such sanctity are solidarity, embodied in suffering and fraternal love, and contemplation diversely expressed through both prayer and action. Finally it explores the implications of Maritain's spirituality for contemporary Catholic citizens.

Jacques Maritain and a Spirituality of Democratic Participation

Chantelle Ogilvie-Ellis

What is required of those who believe is a witness of God; and what the world demands and expects of the Christian is first and foremost to see the truth and brotherly love made genuinely present in and through man's personal life – to see a gleam of the Gospel shining in one place where the crucial test and crucial proof are to be found, namely in the obscure context of relationship from person to person.¹

This paper explores the resources that Jacques Maritain offers for spirituality lived in the context of democratic participation. The basis of this spirituality is an anthropology, informed by Scholasticism and twentieth century historical experience, that understands the human being as intellect and spirit united to matter and confronted with sin, suffering and contingency. Recognising the human's individual and personal dimensions, Maritain asserts that only God can rehabilitate humanity. For Maritain the problem of the person's relation to their human condition is fully resolved in the lives of saints, who transcend that condition through grace and with freedom.

There is need, Maritain believed, to translate such sanctity into "new styles" to meet the needs of modern democracy. Sanctity in a democracy would be qualitatively different from bourgeois Christianity. Underpinning it would be an understanding of spiritual and temporal things as distinct but not separate, and a positive yet critical stance towards democracy.

For Maritain Christians have spiritual and temporal missions; it is necessary that contemporary saints claim a temporal role in the transformation of social structures through a variety of political activity. In this way Christians can imbue the world with Gospel vitality.

Solidarity, this paper argues, is for Maritain the key spiritual disposition of sanctity in a democracy. "To exist and suffer with the people" is a spiritual and ethical commitment that precedes social and political action. Such solidarity gives rise to two intertwined paths: suffering and brotherly love. Through each of these Christians approach not only their fellow humanity, but also God. The saints accept their own suffering as a means of participating in the redemptive work of Christ, while working to alleviate the suffering of others. This paradox makes possible an ethic of self-sacrifice. Fraternal love meanwhile extends natural virtues of benevolence and friendship through divine charity. For Maritain witnessing to God through fraternal love in person to person relationships is primary; such love must also be translated onto the political level.

Crucially, Maritain related temporal life to contemplation – the spiritual movement toward union with God, which is the ultimate destiny of humankind. Through his schema of "open" and "masked" contemplation, Maritain asserted the possibility of authentic contemplation amidst active life.

The final section of this paper will assess the legacy of Maritain for the spirituality of active Christian citizens.

¹ Maritain, *The Range of Reason*, Under "Part I. Human Knowledge and Metaphysics. The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism. The Saint and Temporal History", 1952.

What is a Human Being?

Maritain based his spirituality on an anthropology that views the human being as a unity of intellect, spirit and matter, confronted with the unhappy realities of sin, suffering and contingency in life. Scholastic philosophy heavily influenced this view and provided an alternative to Cartesian dualism, which Maritain called the “original sin of modern philosophy.”² For Maritain the condition of “... a spirit united in substance with flesh and engaged in the universe of matter” is an “unhappy” one.³ This is not due to a Manichean view of matter for nature is good in its essence.⁴ However nature is marred by the humanity’s fallen state:

...the Spirit is immortal, and matter imposes the law of death on the body animated by it. Man has more grandeur than the Milky Way, but how easy evil is for him, how inevitable (if one considers the species collectively) it is... As for suffering, it is already a frightful thing to see an animal suffer, but the suffering of beasts is of small account in comparison with the suffering that pierces a flesh united to spirit, or spirit itself.⁵

The historical reality of suffering in the early twentieth century no doubt impacted upon Maritain’s anthropology. Capitalism, communism and fascism had produced an array of crimes against the human person, descriptions of which frequently find their way into Maritain’s writing.⁶ All rested on erroneous views of humanity, including Western individualism which reduced the poor man to a “hand” and the rich man to “a consumer”, neither of them a “person”.⁷

Key to Maritain’s anthropology was his recognition of the individual and personal dimensions of a human being. As a material individual, one is separate from all other people; he or she is a narrow ego grasping for itself in order to maintain its “precarious unity”.⁸ As a person, the human is a whole that takes its place within the universe and addresses itself to God, the transcendent Whole.⁹ Personality tends towards communion, to social life and to God.¹⁰ As the condition of our existence, individuality is good; however evil results when we emphasise the individual dimension of our being over the dimension of personality.¹¹

For Maritain the human creature can be rehabilitated only in God. Maritain rejected an anthropocentric humanism in which salvation would rely on human reason or goodness alone.¹² God is the ultimate end of the human person: “The human creature claims the right to be loved; it can be really and efficaciously loved only in God.”¹³ Maritain’s ‘integral

² Jacques Maritain cited in Matthew J. Mancini, “Maritain’s Democratic Vision: ‘You Have No Bourgeois’”, in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Marcon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 134.

³ Jacques Maritain, *Moral Philosophy. An historical and critical survey of the great systems*, trans. Marshall Suther et al (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1964), 452.

⁴ Maritain, *Moral Philosophy*, 453; Jacques Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne. An Old Layman Questions Himself about the Present Time*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 29.

⁵ Maritain, *Moral Philosophy*, 453.

⁶ For example, Jacques Maritain, “The Immortality of Man”, excerpt from *Man’s Destiny in Eternity* (1949), in *A Maritain Reader*, ed. Donald and Idella Gallagher, (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1966), 197 – 198.

⁷ Jacques Maritain, *True Humanism*, trans. M. R. Adamson (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press: 1970), 108. Interestingly, Maritain argued that totalitarianism was not only the inverse of liberal individualism, but in some sense its “fruit.” C.f. Jacques Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, trans. Mortimer J. Adler, (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 93 – 96.

⁸ Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. John J. Fitzgerald (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1948), 27.

⁹ Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 30.

¹⁰ Mancini, “Maritain’s Democratic Vision: ‘You Have No Bourgeois’”, 141.

¹¹ Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 31.

¹² Jacques Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, originally published in *Fortune XXV* (1942), in *A Maritain Reader*, ed. Donald and Idella Gallagher, (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1966), 216.

¹³ Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 12.

humanism' would consider the human being in its relationship with God, taking into account its full nature.¹⁴

Sanctity: model response to the human condition

In the context of this anthropology, the saint emerges as the one who fully resolves the problem of the human beings' relation to the human condition, by transcending that condition through grace and with freedom.

For Maritain humanism aims to render the human being more and more human; an integral humanism is an "heroic humanism" of which the saints themselves are models.¹⁵ At the time of Maritain's conversion to Catholicism, the saints had taken hold of his imagination; during formative visits to Léon Bloy, the Catholic writer would read to Jacques and his wife Raïssa from saintly lives and writings.¹⁶ For Bloy, "the only sadness is not being a saint," a conviction that would shape the Maritains' Catholic sensibility.¹⁷

According to Maritain, the saint's genius is that he or she fully resolves the problem of the human being's relation to its condition by transcending that condition through grace. Such transcendence manifests itself in acceptance of the human condition as regards the contingency of human life, its suffering and its joy, coupled with a simultaneous refusal of the human condition as regards sin.¹⁸ This "total, stable, supremely active refusal to accept things as they are" leads Maritain to describe the saint as an authentic 'revolutionary'.¹⁹

A constitutive element of that sanctity which the saints display is freedom. This freedom is unlike the liberty of individual choice of the modern libertarian; rather it is "a state of liberation which is indeed godlike, for then it is the very life of God that lives in man's heart."²⁰ The saints enact this freedom in their willingness to renounce all but God.²¹

Sanctity in a democracy

Maritain was convinced that modern democratic life called for Christians to embrace new ways of being saints. These "new styles of sanctity" would be modeled on the universal type embodied in Christ but adapted to the "changing conditions of history."²² Their antithesis was the bourgeois religion which had so failed during the rise of capitalism. Maritain embraced Bloy's strident criticism of bourgeois Christianity.²³ This "decorative" religion consisted of external forms emptied of their meaning: "They have crucifixes, medals, pictures, rosaries to

¹⁴ Maritain, "Christian Humanism", 226.

¹⁵ Maritain, *True Humanism*, xiii – xiv.

¹⁶ James Arraj, *On the Road to the Spiritual Unconscious. Mysticism, Metaphysics and Maritain* (Choquin, OR: Inner Growth Books, 1993), 13.

¹⁷ Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, "Léon Bloy and Jacques Maritain: *Fratres in Eremo*", in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini, (Marcon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 85.

¹⁸ Maritain, *Moral Philosophy*, 459.

¹⁹ Jacques Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under "Part I. Human Knowledge and Metaphysics. The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism. The Atheist and the Saint." <http://www2.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/range.htm> (accessed 5 May 2012).

²⁰ *True Humanism*, 128.

²¹ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under "Part I. Human Knowledge and Metaphysics. The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism. The Atheist and the Saint."

²² Maritain, *True Humanism*, 116.

²³ Leiva-Merikakis, "Léon Bloy and Jacques Maritain", 88.

keep business going,” writes Bloy, “but the reality of all that is as absent among them as is faith in the heart of a pumpkin.”²⁴ It was also “practical atheism”, for its adherents behaved as if there is no God,²⁵ and subordinated the requirements of faith in action to “the real energies of [the] same temporal world existentially detached from Christ.”²⁶ Hence the “double failure” of Christian capitalists: their acceptance of a social materialism contrary to the Gospel, resulting in exploitation of poor and working people;²⁷ and their failure to foster emancipation of workers, which left socialism to step into the breach.²⁸

Underpinning the new styles of sanctity was Maritain’s understanding of the interrelationship of the sacred and profane as distinct but not separate. Bourgeois Christianity partly resulted from the modern dualist dissociation between temporal and spiritual things.²⁹ In the early modern period, a “normal” process took place in which the temporal gained autonomy from the spiritual;³⁰ this was a development of scripture’s distinction between the things of God and Caesar.³¹ Dualism warped the distinction into a rupture.³² The solution cannot be restoration of Medieval Christianity’s sacral civilization, which made temporal things such as political power subservient instruments of spiritual things and the Church. Franco’s Spain may be viewed as one attempt at recapture the sacral regime; Maritain’s criticism of Franco’s actions, particularly in the Spanish Civil War, were the application of the theoretical principles he had posited in *True Humanism*.³³ By contrast, what is required is “an age of reconciliation... in which temporal things... will enjoy their autonomy and at the same time recognize the quickening and inspiring role that spiritual things, religious faith, and the Church play from their higher plane.”³⁴

This view of the spiritual and temporal enabled Maritain to develop a positive stance towards democracy that detected Christian values in the democratic promise. This stance emerged gradually. In his 1925 book *Three Reformers* Maritain attacked the false anthropology of Rousseau, which in France was tied inextricably with the development of democracy.³⁵ Until its 1926 condemnation by Pius XI, Maritain sympathised with the anti-democratic Action Française;³⁶ his involvement may be seen as temporary experimentation with the path of resacralising the *polis*. Maritain later stated that while democracy was the product of historical conditions, these conditions have a spiritual dimension that is rooted in the Gospel message.³⁷ It is a Christian conviction that each person has dignity and is responsible before God and the law of the community; once this was widely understood “how could the people be expected to obey those who govern unless it is because the latter have received from the

²⁴ Léon Bloy cited in Frank O’Malley, “The Passion of Léon Bloy”, *The Review of Politics* 10, no. 1 (January 1948), 107. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1404370> (accessed 6 May 2012).

²⁵ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part I. Human Knowledge and Metaphysics. The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism. Various Kinds of Atheists.”

²⁶ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part II. Faith and the Human Community. Christian Humanism: The Idea of a New Christian Civilisation.”

²⁷ Maritain, *True Humanism*, 106 – 107.

²⁸ Maritain, *True Humanism*, 110 – 111. Maritain stresses that is not a critique of the Church itself, which responded with the development of modern social teaching. He also acknowledges exceptions such as Frédéric Ozanam.

²⁹ Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 226.

³⁰ Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 225.

³¹ Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 108.

³² Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 225.

³³ Bernard Doering, *Jacques Maritain and the French Catholic Intellectuals*. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 87 – 88.

³⁴ Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 225.

³⁵ Mancini, “Maritain’s Democratic Vision”, 135.

³⁶ Paul E. Sigmund, “Maritain on Politics”, in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Marcon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 154.

³⁷ Mancini, “Maritain’s Democratic Vision”, 141.

people themselves the custody of the people's common good?"³⁸ Thus Maritain came to acknowledge that a defensive position by the Church in the wake of the French Revolution risked creating "apparent solidarity between Christianity and the forms of a world which meanwhile was becoming more and more inhuman" – that is the *ancien regime*.³⁹

Far from embracing democracy in its existing form, however, Maritain critiqued the way in which it was practiced. Modern democracy envisaged society as a collection of atomized individuals; its members lacked commitment to the common good.⁴⁰ They also lacked a common thought, by which Maritain meant a fundamental agreement about the basis of life together.⁴¹ Without an adequate self-understanding, early twentieth century democracies had been an easy victim for fascist, racist and communist propaganda.⁴² A new conception of democracy was required – one marked by strong personalist, communal and pluralist dimensions.⁴³

To explore in detail Maritain's political philosophy is beyond the scope of this essay, which takes instead the spirituality of his ideas as its focus. For Maritain Christian spirituality has a role in democratic life. What is this role?

For Maritain, Christians have two vocations, which, like the planes on which they take place, he distinguished in order to unite. Human life has two directions: a spiritual one, which proceeds on a vertical plane towards union with God and God's reign, and a temporal one which proceeds on the horizontal plane towards the authentic development of the world.⁴⁴ Each is distinct: the Christian's temporal mission cannot turn the world into the reign of God in a definitive sense.⁴⁵ As long as human freedom remains there can be no definitive advent of justice and peace.⁴⁶ There is therefore always need for the spiritual movement's eschatological promise.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the two movements should assist one another, human development supporting spiritual development, and spiritual development instilling radiance in the temporal task.⁴⁸ In the field of everyday life the spiritual and temporal vocation have the same work, temporal vocation being concerned with the object of the work itself, the spiritual vocation with the spirit in which it is done.⁴⁹

Saints for the temporal mission

Christians pursue the temporal mission in various ways not limited to social and political action. The temporal mission encapsulates all that contributes to human emancipation and

³⁸ Jacques Maritain, Jacques Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1945), 34.

³⁹ Maritain, *True Humanism*, 106.

⁴⁰ Mancini, "Maritain's Democratic Vision", 147 – 148.

⁴¹ Maritain, *Man and the State*, 110 – 111. Maritain referred to such an agreement as a "democratic secular faith", would be distinct from a specific religious faith, but providing practical tenets that would underpin national communion and civic peace amidst pluralism. Without such agreements, modern democracy offered a mere free market of ideas – "a neutral, empty skull clad with mirrors." Maritain's involvement in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights partly reflects the importance he placed on such agreements as a basis for political life.

⁴² Maritain, *Man and the State*, 110.

⁴³ Jacques Maritain, "Confession of faith", in *The Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain. Selected Readings*, ed. Joseph W. Evans and Leo R. Ward (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956), 366 – 367.

⁴⁴ Maritain, "Christian Humanism", 230; Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne. An Old Layman Questions Himself about the Present Time*, 199.

⁴⁵ Maritain, *True Humanism*, 105.

⁴⁶ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 202.

⁴⁷ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under "Part II. Faith and the Human Community. A Faith to Live By."

⁴⁸ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under "Part II. Faith in the Human Community. Christian Humanism: The Vertical Movement and the Horizontal Movement in Man's Life."

⁴⁹ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 201.

self-perfection, or realises human potential, including science, philosophy and art, as well as the daily tasks of human labour.⁵⁰ However along with these “ordinary tasks of temporal life” pursued throughout history, there emerges today a “special task” – that of transforming the temporal world.⁵¹

The philosophical, social and political developments of the modern world have presented social transformation as a new field for those pursuing saintly lives. Maritain notes that prior to the Industrial Revolution, such activity was not possible, for “the means of exercising such activities were non-existent. In the seventeenth century, Saint Vincent de Paul could found hospitals but he could not found trade unions.”⁵² While the changes wrought by the French Revolution freed the Church from its authority over temporal things, they also introduced the possibility of individual Christians shaping social and political structures as citizens.⁵³ Past saints had contributed to social renewal in fields such as social service (St Vincent de Paul) or culture (St Thomas Aquinas); today the indirect impact of interior renewal is not sufficient – “a specifically social activity, an activity which directly aims at improving and recasting the structures of temporal life, is also needed.”⁵⁴ The Gospel message has social and political implications which Christians must pursue directly.⁵⁵

Maritain gave, as examples of the special temporal task, instances of social critique, reflection in the social sciences, parliamentary politics and grassroots political action. He cited Ozanam and Italian political economist Giuseppe Toniolo as uncanonised saints of social action; both have since been beatified.⁵⁶ Among his contemporaries Maritain hailed Eduardo Frei, co-founder of the Chilean Christian Democratic Party, and Saul Alinsky, the father of community organizing, as the only two authentic revolutionaries in the West.⁵⁷ Through his work with people’s organizations Alinsky, an agnostic Jew known for his irreverence and far from a saint in any classical sense, was, in Maritain’s view “offering [his] life for the temporal salvation and emancipation of mankind...”⁵⁸

Although temporal things have autonomy, it was important to Maritain that saints who take up the temporal mission would play a distinct role: that of imbuing the temporal world with Gospel vitality. In this way, the sacred would animate and sanctify the secular and profane.⁵⁹ Maritain used a range of metaphors to express such sanctification: Christianity should offer democracy the “quickenning inner ferment of evangelical inspiration;”⁶⁰ “Gospel leaven and

⁵⁰ Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 230; Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 41.

⁵¹ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 41 201.

⁵² Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part I. Human Knowledge and Metaphysics. The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism. The Saint and Temporal History.”

⁵³ Maritain, *True Humanism*, 112.

⁵⁴ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part I. Human Knowledge and Metaphysics. The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism. The Saint and Temporal History.”

⁵⁵ Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, 28.

⁵⁶ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part I. Human Knowledge and Metaphysics. The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism. The Saint and Temporal History.”

⁵⁷ Aside, Maritain asserted mischievously, from himself. Bernard Doering, “Maritain and America – Friendships”, in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini, (Marcon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 39.

⁵⁸ Doering, “Maritain and America – Friendships”, 52. Maritain referred to Alinsky as “a Christian at heart, a better Christian perhaps than I am.” For Maritain it was entirely possible for non-Christians to be ‘members of Christ *in act*’, if they have received Christ’s grace and charity. C.f. Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 71. Maritain was not without reservations for some aspects of Alinsky’s writing – C.f. footnote 104 below. However he maintained a close relationship with Alinsky throughout his life, taking carriage of the French publication of his work and recommending to Cardinal Montini (later Pope Paul VI) that he bring Alinsky to Milan to advise him on a practical response to Communist labor unions. Doering, “Maritain and America – Friendships”, 46 – 47.

⁵⁹ Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 226.

⁶⁰ Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 231.

inspiration,”⁶¹ and “Christian sap”.⁶² These images present Christianity as the critical ingredient infusing the whole with flavour or vitality.⁶³ They are metaphors of *inner* renewal. The sacral regime is gone and Christianity can no longer rely on social structures for protection; Christians instead must nourish these structures by infusing in them an evangelical spirit.⁶⁴ Such a task is the outworking not primarily of social power but of moral authority.⁶⁵ To perform such a role, it was important to Maritain that Christian sanctity “descend from the heaven of cloistered life... descend to the world of secular culture and labour in social and political affairs with a view to the reform of the temporal order of mankind... [but]... not lose its character on the way.”⁶⁶

What then is the character of the sanctity that one lives out via democratic participation?

Solidarity and the saint

Throughout Maritain’s writing, solidarity is the key characteristic of spirituality associated with political life. Maritain proposed the vocation to “exist and suffer with the people”, as a fundamental decision preceding but leading to social and political action. *Le peuple* are the moral community of manual labour and those “socially and morally bound up with them.”⁶⁷ “To exist and to suffer with the people” is a spiritual condition that “takes place within the soul.” “*To act for* belongs to the realm of mere benevolence,” while “*To exist with and to suffer with*, to the realm of love in unity.”⁶⁸ When one loves the people, in an act of radical empathy, one “becomes one with” them.⁶⁹ According to Maritain the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus embody existence with the people through their commitment to sharing the people’s poverty, pain and work.⁷⁰ Existence with the people is the “previously required condition” for genuine political and social action.

For Maritain existing with the people was a requirement of Christian spirituality. He identified the people as the “multitudes” whom Christ addressed in the Gospel.⁷¹ Maritain was drawn to the communitarian dimension of the Catholic faith, with its concept of mystical communion amongst members who were both rich, poor, living and dead.⁷² He had witnessed in Bloy’s family the Catholicism of the poor, and this was formative.⁷³ Existing with the

⁶¹ Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 226.

⁶² Maritain, *True Humanism*, 107.

⁶³ Mancini, “Maritain’s Democratic Vision”, 147

⁶⁴ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 42.

⁶⁵ Maritain, *Man and the State*, 162.

⁶⁶ Maritain, *True Humanism*, 114 – 115.

⁶⁷ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part II. Faith and the Human Community. To Exist with the People. Class, Race, People.” The concept of ‘the people’, Maritain argues, emerged from a spiritual basis (the people of the poor to whom the Beatitudes are addressed), and was transferred to the temporal domain, where it was informed by the developing consciousness of the dignity of the worker. This itself was a “primarily spiritual gain,” which consisted of class consciousness but more importantly of “the consciousness of the collective personality of the people.”

⁶⁸ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part II. Faith and the Human Community. To Exist with the People.”

⁶⁹ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part II. Faith and the Human Community. To Exist with the People.” This does not mean simple acceptance of majority opinions; leaders who exist with the people have profound trust in and respect for them while being obliged at times to engage them in “an education in which [the people] are the principle agents”. Maritain, *Man and the State*, 137.

⁷⁰ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part II. Faith and the Human Community. To Exist with the People. To Exist and Suffer with the People.”

⁷¹ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part II. Faith and the Human Community. To Exist with the People. A Fundamental Choice.”

⁷² John Hellman, “The Humanism of Jacques Maritain”, in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Marcon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 121.

⁷³ John Hellman, “The Humanism of Jacques Maritain”, in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Marcon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 123.

people is not an obligation for every individual Christian, but it is a collective requirement of the Christian people, if they are not to lose their moral authority. This was

“the great scandal of the nineteenth century”... The working class turned away from the Church because the Christian world had turned away from the working class. For the people to exist with Christ it is necessary that Christians exist with the people.⁷⁴

The solidarity Maritain describes gives rise to two intertwined paths— suffering and brotherly love – by which Christians approach not only their fellow humanity, but also God. While humans are wounded by sin and death, they are “caused by Christ to become of the race and lineage of God, living by divine life, and called upon to enter by suffering and love into Christ’s very work of redemption.”⁷⁵ Each of these has political implications.

Solidarity and suffering

Ambivalence towards suffering is a strong theme in Maritain’s spirituality. The saints accept their own suffering as a means of participating in the redemptive work of Christ, while working to alleviate the suffering of others.⁷⁶

For Maritain, sanctity entailed, in part, accepting one’s own suffering as co-redemption. Maritain had witnessed abject suffering closely amongst the Bloys;⁷⁷ yet the family viewed their trials as an invitation to share in Christ’s passion.⁷⁸ Maritain too viewed human suffering as potentially meaningful. He drew on St Paul, whose suffering “complet[ed] what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” (Col 1:24). Raïssa explained that Christ’s passion lacked development in time.⁷⁹ “Jesus will be in agony till the end of the world,” Raïssa wrote, quoting Pascal. “There must be souls in which he continues to agonise.”⁸⁰ Thus the saints desire suffering as “co-operation in the work of their Beloved”.⁸¹ They lived the mystery of co-redemption before theology articulated it.⁸²

Yet Maritain’s conviction about suffering’s spiritual value confirms rather than undermines the mission to reduce the unwilling suffering of others. Even when translated in the saint’s life into a “superior good,” suffering simultaneously remains what it is – an evil.⁸³ Bloy’s view of suffering as “the sole adventure of his existence,”⁸⁴ did not lessen his invective those responsible for the affliction of the poor.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Maritain acknowledged a chasm between the suffering that saints welcome and choose, and the “suffering of the mass of men,

⁷⁴ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part II. Faith and the Human Community. To Exist with the People. To Exist and Suffer with the People.”

⁷⁵ Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 228.

⁷⁶ Maritain, *Moral Philosophy*, 461.

⁷⁷ For example, he accompanied Bloy to pawn an item so that the latter could pay to prevent his own dead son’s body from being moved to a common grave. Leiva-Merikakis, “Léon Bloy and Jacques Maritain”, 84.

⁷⁸ Leiva-Merikakis, “Léon Bloy and Jacques Maritain”, 80 – 82. Maritain and other friends commented on the peace that prevailed in that household despite its poverty. The Bloys’ example was likely rendered all the more powerful to the Maritains in the light of the youthful angst they exhibited some years earlier when they made a pact to kill themselves should they be unable to discover life’s meaning. In contrast, the Bloys faced suffering with courage and grace. Arraj, *On the Road to the Spiritual Unconscious*. 10.

⁷⁹ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 252.

⁸⁰ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 247.

⁸¹ Maritain, *Moral Philosophy*, 460.

⁸² Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 251.

⁸³ Maritain, *Moral Philosophy*, 460.

⁸⁴ Leiva-Merikakis, “Léon Bloy and Jacques Maritain”, 80.

⁸⁵ Frank O’Malley, “The Passion of Léon Bloy”, 106.

the suffering they have not willed, the suffering that falls on them like a beast”; the Christian must struggle against such suffering.⁸⁶

The impetus for this struggle is also found in Christ’s solidarity. Reflecting on the meaning of willed and unwilled suffering, Maritain writes: “It all seems to take place as though the passion and death of Jesus were something divinely vast, that it must be shared by men in it is various and contrasting aspects.”⁸⁷ The willed suffering of the saints reflects the aspect of freedom in Christ’s passion - “Into thy hands I commend my spirit”. The other aspect is that of abandonment, expressed in the cry “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” This is reflected in the suffering of those others who are “hurled into Christ’s death agony without knowing it and against their wills.” Christ’s solidarity with those who suffer leads Maritain to conclude that thirsting for the justice of God’s kingdom requires one to thirst for justice in the world, for “...God suffers in the persons of all who are suffering, all those who are spurned, all those who are persecuted throughout the world.”⁸⁸ This view shaped Maritain’s response to the Holocaust with particular clarity: “The great mysterious fact is that the sufferings of Israel have more and more distinctly taken the shape of the cross.”⁸⁹

Importantly, the paradox of suffering provides the basis for an ethic of self-sacrifice. Maritain lamented the loss of penance and fasting in post-Vatican II Catholic practice,⁹⁰ and he regarded the willingness to sacrifice even what is good as essential to sanctity.⁹¹ On the level of public life, Maritain argued that a society could legitimately ask a person to sacrifice his or her life for truly supra-human values.⁹² Christian belief in eternal life enables one to embrace self-sacrifice with humility.⁹³ This evokes martyrs of justice such as Bonhoeffer and Romero; however Maritain remarks that the small sacrifices of daily life are also meaningful. The common good requires that persons accept various restraints,⁹⁴ for example, that of making political and economic choices contrary to one’s narrowly defined self-interest: “...Love, by assuming voluntarily that which would otherwise be servitude, transfigures it into liberty and a free gift.”⁹⁵ This is integral humanism’s “heroic” character.⁹⁶

SOLIDARITY AND BROTHERLY LOVE

Fraternal love is solidarity’s other aspect in saintly life. It consists of the natural virtues of benevolence and civic friendship, leavened by the grace of God in charity. As such, brotherly love, like suffering, has a spiritual quality which makes it an entrance into divine life. It is first and foremost displayed in person to person relationships, but ought also to be translated onto the political level.

⁸⁶ Maritain, *Moral Philosophy*, 461.

⁸⁷ Jacques Maritain, “That Suffer Persecution”, originally published in *The Commonwealth Reader* (1949), in *A Maritain Reader*, ed. Donald and Idella Gallagher, (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1966), 323.

⁸⁸ Maritain, “That Suffer Persecution”, 319.

⁸⁹ Maritain, “That Suffer Persecution”, 321.

⁹⁰ Jacques Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 248–249.

⁹¹ Jacques Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 240. This goes partway to explaining the Maritain’s controversially celibate marriage. Despite their deep and obvious affection for one another, the Maritain’s choose to forgo an all-consuming romance with each other in order to focus their energies on their “mad, boundless love” for God. Leiva-Merikakis, “Léon Bloy and Jacques Maritain”, 78.

⁹² Maritain, “Confession of Faith”, 365.

⁹³ Maritain, “Christian Humanism”, 229. For Maritain, even the willingness to risk one’s life through simple acts points towards humanity’s ontological knowledge of its immortality. Jacques Maritain, “The Immortality of Man”, 199.

⁹⁴ Maritain and Fitzgerald, *The Person and the Common Good*, 46–47.

⁹⁵ Maritain and Fitzgerald, *The Person and the Common Good*, 55.

⁹⁶ Maritain, “Confession of Faith”, 365.

Brotherly love consists of natural human friendship and kindness, transformed by divine charity. Benevolence stems from the intuitive knowledge of human equality.⁹⁷ Charity extends this intuition, exemplifying the way in which the spiritual vivifies temporal things:

Thus brotherly love brings to the earth, through the heart of man, the fire of eternal life, which is the true peacemaker, and it must vitalize from within that natural virtue of friendship, disregarded by so many fools, which is the very soul of social communities.⁹⁸

Without brotherly love, even what is good might be used to produce evil, as Maritain observed of the Spanish Civil War.⁹⁹

Divine charity enables brotherly love to unite one with God as well as with other people. When a person reaches out in divine charity, his or her love is directed firstly to God, and then through God to others.¹⁰⁰ Since charity is a participation in God's own love, it extends beyond conflicts of nation, class, race or religion.¹⁰¹ Brotherly love can become "love-prayer... pursued in those very relations with men in which those who live in the world are constantly involved."¹⁰² As through an icon, we see Christ through others, drawing us into a more intimate union with himself.

In order to renew temporal life, it is essential that Christians witness to God through brotherly love on a relational level. Political and social action themselves are insufficient, Maritain writes. One must manifest "glean of the Gospel... in the obscure context of relationship from person to person."¹⁰³ Maritain's biography is replete with such relationships. Oliver Lacombe wrote to him: "Everyone left your home moved to the bottom of his soul for having been accepted and recognized personally, with a solicitous friendship which went straight to the centre of one's being."¹⁰⁴ For Alinsky Maritain was

that rare person who not only professes Christianity but whose heart is filled with it and who lives a Christian way of life.... when he is made a saint it will not be just for wisdom but for compassion and real love for his fellow men. To know Jacques Maritain is to know a richness and spiritual experience that makes life even more glorious.¹⁰⁵

For Maritain such relationships served both "brotherly love and the love of the One who is the Truth," and so he raised differences of conviction and thought when necessary.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁷ Jacques Maritain, *Ransoming the Time*, trans. Harry Lorin Binsse (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), 18.

⁹⁸ Maritain, "Christian Humanism", 228.

⁹⁹ Maritain, "Confession of Faith", 371.

¹⁰⁰ Maritain, *Ransoming the Time*, 124 – 125.

¹⁰¹ Maritain, Maritain, *Ransoming the Time*, 124, 133.

¹⁰² Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 236.

¹⁰³ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under "Part I. Human Knowledge and Metaphysics. The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism. The Saint and Temporal History."

¹⁰⁴ Leiva-Merikakis, "Léon Bloy and Jacques Maritain", 84.

¹⁰⁵ Doering, "Maritain and America – Friendships", 46. Alinsky also writes that a letter from Maritain almost evoked the feeling of his Bar Mitzvah. C.f. Saul Alinsky to Jacques Maritain, undated, in *The Philosopher and the Provocateur. The Correspondence of Jacques Maritain and Saul Alinsky*, ed. Bernard Doering, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 5.

¹⁰⁶ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 80. An example may be found in his critique of Alinsky's underestimation of moral power and the power of love, and the worrying consequences of his statements on ends and means. Doehring 53, 54. C.f. Jacques Maritain to Saul Alinsky, Kolbsheim (Bas Rhin), 14 September 1964, in *The Philosopher and the Provocateur. The Correspondence of Jacques Maritain and Saul Alinsky*, ed. Bernard Doering, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 105, and Jacques Maritain to Saul Alinsky, Kolbsheim, 19 September 1971, in *The Philosopher and the Provocateur. The Correspondence of Jacques Maritain and Saul Alinsky*, ed. Bernard Doering, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 111.

While brotherly love precedes political action, in a democratic context it must assume a place in political life. In circumstances of oppression, which lack the means of political action, only via brotherly love may one be able to express solidarity with the people.¹⁰⁷ When the means of political action remain intact, brotherly love shapes political goals:

... the political task *par excellence* is to render common life better and more and more brotherly, and to work to make the structure of laws, institutions and customs of this common life a house for brothers to live in.¹⁰⁸

In 1941, Maritain wrote that, had true justice and friendship existed on an international scale, Western powers would have intervened early against Nazi and Soviet atrocities through political and economic means.¹⁰⁹

Contemplation in the new styles of sanctity

Despite the importance of the temporal task, for Maritain the world's spiritual movement toward union with God remains crucial. Contemplation denotes this union; it is entrance into "the very states of God."¹¹⁰ Maritain's affirms the significance of lives dedicated completely to such union through typical forms of contemplation. His high regard for contemplative life was consummated in his decision to take up residence with the Little Brothers of Jesus after Raïssa's death.¹¹¹ Maritain believed that a contemplative life drew all of humanity towards eternal salvation and spiritual transformation.¹¹² It contributes to rather than detracts from the common good.¹¹³

At the same time, Maritain asserts the universality of the call to union with God in contemplation. All are called, at least "distantly", including lay people who live in the world and are involved in its temporal work.¹¹⁴ Union with God is humanity's destiny and so contemplation must be possible amidst secular life.¹¹⁵ The Maritains' life-long quest to integrate contemplation into their lives no doubt informs Maritain's thinking.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁷ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under "Part II. Faith and the Human Community. To Exist with the People. Political and Evangelic Action."

¹⁰⁸ Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, 37.

¹⁰⁹ Maritain, *Ransoming the Time*, 128.

¹¹⁰ Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, 175.

¹¹¹ Upon this occasion, Maritain explained to Alinsky the temporal and spiritual tasks. "Both kinds of actual gift of oneself are *necessary*," he wrote. "Yet the human condition obliges each one of us to give priority to the one or the other." Maritain gave the Little Brothers as the example of the spiritual task and Alinsky's work as the example of the temporal – while noting that each included aspects of the other. Jacques Maritain to Saul Alinsky, Princeton, 5 November 1962, in *The Philosopher and the Provocateur. The Correspondence of Jacques Maritain and Saul Alinsky*, ed. Bernard Doering, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 94.

¹¹² Jacques Maritain to Saul Alinsky, Princeton, 5 November 1962, in *The Philosopher and the Provocateur. The Correspondence of Jacques Maritain and Saul Alinsky*, ed. Bernard Doering, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 95. Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 195.

¹¹³ Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 45 – 46.

¹¹⁴ Astrid O'Brien, "Contemplation along the Roads of the World: The Reflections of Raïssa and Jacques Maritain," in *Lay Sanctity, Medieval and Modern. A Search for Models*, ed. Ann W. Astell, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 154.

¹¹⁵ O'Brien, "Contemplation along the Roads of the World", 152. Maritain laments that contemplation would be more common among the laity were it not for the dissuasive influence of some spiritual directors. Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 197.

¹¹⁶ O'Brien writes that their "immediate challenge was to fashion for themselves a way of living which would be faithful to both the Gospel and to their duties as married laypersons in the world." O'Brien, "Contemplation along the Roads of the World", 148. Early in their life together the Maritains, with Vera, Raïssa's sister followed a strict rule of life adapted from the practice of religious orders. They lived almost as "secularised monks rather than... laymen given to God."

Drawing on Thomistic teaching on the spiritual gifts, Maritain outlined the “open” and “masked” ways in which contemplation might manifest itself in people living in the world. For Maritain mystical life and life according to the spirit are one;¹¹⁷ the distant call to contemplation becomes immediate when the gifts of the Spirit become habitual in the soul.¹¹⁸ All gifts are then present but the contemplative life takes on a different form depending on which predominate. Where Wisdom, Understanding and Love are pre-eminent one is graced with “contemplation in its typical forms.” In the world, this might be “without visions, without miracles, but with such a flame of love for God and neighbor that good happens all around them without noise and without agitation.”¹¹⁹ It is a humble form of “open” contemplation, in the way of St Therese of Lisieux. Other people will receive gifts that more closely relate to active life: Counsel, Fortitude, Fear of the Lord, Piety.¹²⁰ For them contemplation is “masked”; its grace will not be detected in their prayer but in their behavior: “in their sweet-minded hands, perhaps, or in their way of walking, perhaps, or in their way of looking at a poor man or at suffering.”¹²¹ Such persons are not released from the need to pause and to pray.¹²² Ultimately however, it is the degree of love rather than the type of prayer that witnesses to whether one has entered into union with God.¹²³

Contemplation is therefore possible in the active life; it is also necessary to ensure that a Christian spirit can truly vivify the temporal task. The world needs Christian sanctity that remembers that its source is “from elsewhere and of another order.”¹²⁴ Activity that does not spring from contemplation, whether open or masked, is liable to fall into disillusionment or lose its truly Christian integrity.¹²⁵ Contemplation is too important to be left only to specialists:

One might ask if in the West, by a sort of division of labour, spirituality and [supernatural] contemplation... have not been too much the exclusive preoccupation of souls consecrated to God and to the things of His kingdom; while the rest of mankind was abandoned to the law of the immediate, practical success and the will to power. If a new age of Christian civilization should dawn, it is probable that the law of contemplation superabounding in action would overflow in some way into the secular and temporal order....¹²⁶

Implications for contemporary Catholics

A century after Maritain began to write philosophy, his spirituality can help Catholics to clarify their role as citizens and to live a spirituality that might nourish and shape that role.

Many Australians today are disillusioned with politics. At the same time, the role of faith in political debate is highly contested by voices across the political spectrum.¹²⁷ In such a

¹¹⁷ Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, 185 – 186.

¹¹⁸ O’Brien, “Contemplation along the Roads of the World”, 155.

¹¹⁹ Raïssa Maritain cited in Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 234.

¹²⁰ Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, 186.

¹²¹ Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, 187.

¹²² O’Brien, “Contemplation along the Roads of the World”, 157.

¹²³ O’Brien, “Contemplation along the Roads of the World”, 156.

¹²⁴ Maritain, *True Humanism*, 115.

¹²⁵ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under “Part II. Faith and the Human Community. The Ways of Faith.”

¹²⁶ Jacques Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, 191 – 192.

¹²⁷ For example, from the political left, in 2006, Senator Kerry Nettle controversially wore a t-shirt with the slogan ‘Mr Abbott, Get your rosaries off my ovaries’ during parliamentary debate about the drug RU-486. From the right, in a 2003 speech, then Foreign Minister Alexander Downer accused Church leaders critical of Australia’s involvement in the Iraq War of a “tendency.... to ignore their primary pastoral obligations in favour of hogging the limelight on complex political issues.” C.f. John Warhurst, “Religion in 21st Century National Politics.” http://wopared.parl.net/senate/pubs/pops/pop46/religion_in_21st_century.pdf (accessed 11 June 2012).

context, Maritain reminds Catholics of the great privilege and responsibility they have in a democracy to be a vivifying influence, grounded in solidarity and expressed through self-sacrifice and brotherly love.

Maritain's explanation of the inner renewal that Christianity must foster by its moral authority raises important questions. In the eyes of secular society are Christians losing their moral authority, due to both wider cultural change and to the counter-witness of scandal within the Church?

If so perhaps at least a partial response may be found in Maritain's call to exist and to suffer with the people. Unless Christians exist with the people, Maritain writes, any vision or standard they offer for political life, including Catholic social doctrine, will lack power.¹²⁸ Spirituality for democracy must therefore be marked by solidarity rather than separation, expressed in simplicity of life, among other things.¹²⁹ Paradoxically, such existence with the people can be inherently other-worldly, in the sense that it points towards the transcendent by answering Maritain's call to "live in such a manner that life could not possibly be lived if God did not exist."¹³⁰

Of course, Christian spirituality can provide an efficacious witness only to the extent to which Christians are in relationship with those others with whom they share life in the *polis*. By emphasizing brotherly love, Maritain reminds Catholics engaged in political action that their work must be *relational*, that is, that it should draw them into bonds of love with each other but also with people of all faiths and none. Provided common grounds for cooperation can be found, democratic life provides a rich occasion for true charity which unites the brothers and sisters of the human family in God.¹³¹

For those engaged in democratic action, Maritain's delineation of contemplation in active life is particularly helpful. Such action involves one in the turmoil of human society. The Maritains caution activists with the need for prayer: "the widespread infatuation that today prevails for action...will some day give rise to a great deal of strong disappointments," Raïssa writes.¹³² At the same time, they console those given over to the active life with their assessment that what is required is not so much the life of "secularised monks" but that of "laymen given to God."¹³³ Writing of the many obstacles to prayer in active life Jacques quotes Dom Florent Miège, who argued that these are part of prayer in the world and constitute its suffering: "You must love your chains..."¹³⁴

¹²⁸ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under "Part II. Faith and the Human Community. To Exist with the People. To Exist and Suffer with the People."

¹²⁹ A contemporary example of existing with the people is found in a 2012 Sydney Morning Herald article about the Christian community Urban Neighbours of Hope. The perceived moral authority of a Christian family choosing to live with radical simplicity and hospitality in a marginalised Western Sydney neighbourhood is evidenced by the popularity of the article which was posted more than 800 times to social networking sites, far more than other articles in the newspaper's "Life and Style" section. C.f. Tim Elliot, "House of Hope", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January 2012. <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life/house-of-hope-20120118-1q62h.html> (accessed 11 June 2012).

¹³⁰ Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (1952). Under "Part I. Human Knowledge and Metaphysics. The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism. The Saint and Temporal History."

¹³¹ Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation continues today to teach the practical tools of such cooperation. In contemporary people's organisations, such as the Sydney Alliance, diverse people come together as citizens to act on shared concerns, starting first with the intentional work of building relationships of mutual understanding and trust. This relational dimension of community organising was developed by subsequent leaders after Alinsky's death, and arguably answer's Maritain's challenge to Alinsky, that he acknowledge the power of love in citizen action.

¹³² Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 233.

¹³³ Jacques Maritain cited in O'Brien, "Contemplation along the Roads of the World", 148.

¹³⁴ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 238.

Perhaps most of all, Maritain calls contemporary Catholics involved in political participation to reclaim sanctity as their *raison d'être*, and to remember that such sanctity involves both divine love for the world and a radical break with it. Towards the end of his life, Maritain expressed misgivings about “a dangerous feeling of veneration for the world which is raging today amongst a certain number of naïve but often quite generous people.”¹³⁵ The world is always ambivalent, good in its natural structures, and full of heroism but also capable of great evil, which progresses along with the good.¹³⁶ The wars of the twenty-first century may not match those of Maritain’s time in scale but they surpass them in technological prowess and continue to take the lives of civilians in scandalous numbers. By pointing towards the example of the saints, Maritain reminds Catholics that they are called to refuse the world as it is, through political action but also and ultimately by embracing the divine freedom that declares as nothing all that is not God.¹³⁷ It is because of this freedom that the saint in a democracy is able to make the sacrifices that the common good requires.

Conclusion: To live in the storm of life

This paper has excavated the life and work of Jacques Maritain for spiritual resources that might vivify the work of democratic action. It has explored Maritain’s integral anthropology and the status, in his imagination, of saints as authentic revolutionaries, transcending the unhappy human condition by means of grace and freedom. This view of sanctity underpins Maritain’s Christian humanist vision for democratic participation. In the modern democracy, saints are needed who “exist with the people”, and who live their solidarity by the twin paths of suffering and fraternal love. This task is nourished by and situated within that experience of union with God that we call contemplation, diversely expressed in lives of prayer and action.

In his final work, Maritain quoted his wife’s words: “I have a feeling that what is asked of us is to live in the storm of life...”¹³⁸ In the last instance, Maritain’s contribution is that he challenges and consoles contemporary Catholics with the possibility of sainthood amidst such a life – a truly integral sainthood at once profoundly political and personal.

¹³⁵ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 65.

¹³⁶ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 203.

¹³⁷ Maritain describes this stance of the saint as “a lovers contempt for all that is not love itself”. Importantly it is not a statement of speculative philosophy; confusing the two led to “practical Manichaeism” amongst Christians. C.f. Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 44, 47.

¹³⁸ Maritain, *The Peasant of Garonne*, 139.