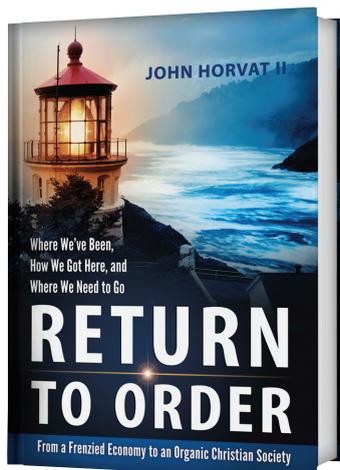


Book sees Christian faith as heart and soul of economic reform

By JOSEPH O'BRIEN
Staff Writer

“RETURN TO ORDER: FROM A FRENZIED ECONOMY TO AN ORGANIC CHRISTIAN SOCIETY” by John Horvat II. York Press (York, Penn., 2013);



One of the most famous quotations by the famously quotable G. K. Chesterton serves as both a warning for the complacent and an encouragement for the despairing. “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting,” he writes in his book “What’s Wrong with the World.” “It has been found difficult, and left untried.”

The fuller context of this famous quip shows that, as far as Chesterton was concerned, men first began to leave the principles of Christianity “untried” at the Church’s greatest moment in history.

“The ideals of the past failed not by being outlived (which must mean over-lived), but by not being lived enough,” Chesterton writes. “Mankind has not passed through the Middle Ages. Rather mankind has retreated from the Middle Ages in reaction and rout.”

It is this same sense of medieval potential unfulfilled by modernity that informs John Horvat’s “Return to Order: From a Frenzied Economy to an Organic Christian Society.”

In an ordered and organic style suitable to his thesis’s claim, Horvat identifies the cause of the seemingly cyclical boom-and-bust pattern which has plagued capitalism throughout history. In pointing out how and why the “rule of money” has led to such serial market crises, the author coins a term which should be vital currency in any discussion of economic improvement – *frenetic intemperance*. This tendency among individuals and market systems is, Horvat explains, “a restless, explosive, and relentless drive inside man that manifests itself in modern economy by 1) seeking to throw off legitimate restraints; and 2) gratifying disordered passions. It tends to form an economic undercurrent whose action can be likened to that of a faulty accelerator or regulator that takes an otherwise well-functioning machine and throws it out of balance.”

Moreover, Horvat writes, frenetic intemperance, “is not specifically an economic problem but a moral and psycho-

logical one deep within the soul of modern man that manifests itself in the economy. ... Unless frenetic intemperance be addressed, any solution, perfect though it may seem will be found lacking.”

Horvat sources this intemperance in the slow but steady deterioration of man’s concern for spiritual matters throughout history, a deterioration begun with the liberation of secular society in the twilight of the Middle Ages by the Renaissance and the Protestant Revolt, continued by the violently anti-religious French and Communist revolutions, and accelerated by the Industrial Revolution.

“Such an attitude [opposing spiritual matters] calls to mind the condition that Saint Thomas Aquinas calls *acedia*, which he defines as the weariness for holy and spiritual things and a subsequent sadness of living,” Horvat writes. “As a spiritual being, the man afflicted with *acedia* denies his spiritual appetites....The modern version of *acedia* includes both a weariness and a wariness for all things spiritual.”

This wariness, Horvat concludes, has led a deepening suspicion of any religious solution to economic woes. Therefore, Horvat says that in an attempt to address this spiritual emptiness modern economic conditions manifest this frenetic intemperance as “an attempt to hide *acedia*’s effect of listlessness, low spirits, and lack of joy.”

The solution to current – and future – economic crises will not be found in tweaking economic theories, renewing government programs or revamping financial policies. Rather, Horvat insists, for any lasting solution, we must return to our spiritual roots through the eternal truths discovered by man and the Eternal Truth revealed by God.

“This superior side of man’s

nature is what makes him unique and establishes his dignity,” Horvat writes. “This gives rise to political, social, cultural and religious activities and sciences that tower above mere material economic sustenance and deal even more directly with our spiritual needs and ultimately our eternal salvation.”

According to Horvat, the “return to order” denoted by the book’s title is a return to the “Christian wellspring,” of

“ideals, principles, and values that have always served to inspire and unify men” and gives them what Horvat calls “a vertical perspective.”

This return, he writes, “supposes a vertical vision of the universe where things are viewed through another prism [other than the horizontal which leaves man’s focus scattered]. ... we can liken the model we seek to a vertical line drawn on paper. This line draws our attention to a single

point as it progresses upward, much like the vertical lines of a church bell tower draw our gaze upward toward the cross at the top.”

In culling the virtues of unified Catholic culture (i.e. Christendom) and reapplying them in a practical and convincing way to our modern economic problems, John Horvat’s “A Return to Order” renews Chesterton’s challenge to put Christianity to the test in the open market of ideas.

First Expressions Photography

Continued from Page 10

number of subjects she can fit into her view finder – big families and small are welcomed to enlist her services. With larger families, she has a basic strategy that guarantees success.

“If it’s a large family ... I socialize with the children, goofing around with them,” she said. “But then I tell the parents beforehand to be continually looking at the camera and smiling, because you never know when the kids will be ready.”

Each photo shoot is guaranteed, Luebke said.

More than a business, Luebke said, First Expressions is an attempt to capture on film the dynamics involved in the miracle of life – whether it’s the “first expressions” of a newborn or a family

comfortable with itself and its quirks.

“When I take a photo of a child,” she said, “I see that a child is a product of a love between husband and wife. I can capture it on film, but I can’t

describe it. I see how precious this life is. When you see in someone’s soul through their eyes, I love to capture the expressions on their eyes and faces to see who these people are.”



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