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Editor's Note

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Providence

Sed necesse est dicere omnia divinae providentiae subjacere, non in universali tantum, sed etiam in singulari.
St. Thomas (ST Ia.22.2)

by LEONARD P. HINDSLEY, O.P.

THE IDEA FOR *PROVIDENCE: Studies in Western Civilization* arose from the delight our teams of faculty members took in teaching the core curriculum course entitled "Development of Western Civilization." Lively discourse in the areas of history, literature, philosophy and theology with occasional forays into music and art ensued as a result of the interdisciplinary work and cooperation of the professors. Why not create a forum for intellectual discourse with a broadly interdisciplinary approach for colleagues throughout the world?

We hope that this will be the journal that one reads in addition to the scholarly periodicals in one's own field. The editors wish to produce a periodical that is scholarly yet not overly technical so that with each issue an educated reading public will be delighted with essays and articles from many disciplines.

The establishment of a journal of this kind will be a useful and unique addition to the academy. *Providence* devotes attention to the entire scope of Western Civilization from the beginning of time to the present. The journal includes the thought and ideas of the three major forces included in the tradition: Christian, Jewish and Muslim. Although *Providence* supports a religious viewpoint and recognizes the importance of the role of religion in the course of Western Civilization it is not limited to religious topics.

Further, Western Civilization has come to exert an influence of worldwide significance. If that influence is to be positive and useful to the rest of the world then a reassessment of the roots of Western Civilization requires both a critical analysis and a rediscovery of all that is noble, true and good from the tradition. In the midst of debate on multiculturalism and curriculum review throughout the country, the editors wish to re-assert the lasting and perennial importance of the bases and development of thought in the West. Out of our enthusiasm for the goodness of the rich and varied Western Heritage we present this new journal.

In the inaugural issue we offer five diverse essays on topics having deep roots in Western Civilization, but which also bear upon contemporary debate.

Christopher Lasch presents his viewpoint on the American work ethic, showing its history as a concept and the result brought about by the devaluation of work from a vocation to merely a job. The results of this change do not bode well for the future. Perhaps a return to a sense of vocation and an appreciation of the necessity and dignity of human work may help.

William E. May examines some contemporary definitions of "Persons, Sex and Family" and finds them wanting when compared with the traditional Christian definitions. Society has the duty to support the family bond based upon the conjugal covenant of husband and wife and to recognize it as a "sanctuary of life" in which authentic human growth may develop.

When Joaquin de Aristequi, Consul General of Spain, addressed the participants of the Conference on Human Rights and the Quincentenary held at Rosary College in June 1992, he asserted that the year 1492 was not the date of the discovery of America, but the year in which the world discovered itself. It was the year in which the Old World and the New World became one. This merger is reflected both in the clash of cultures which ensued and in the mutual enrichment of both worlds. Three essays from that conference appear in this issue. Since they are all written by scholars from

the Spanish-speaking world readers will find them interesting because of the unique perspective presented with regard to the "discovery of the world."

Felicísimo Martínez Diez contrasts "official" and "prophetic" models of evangelization which were used in the sixteenth century and continue to be present in Latin America today. He condemns neither approach for its mistakes, but seeks to determine what elements of each will benefit the people of Latin America. He wants to know what will help to foster solidarity and the spreading of the Gospel and its values.

Luciano Pereña Vicente offers the results of years of research and investigation into the life and writings of Francisco de Vitoria and the "School of Salamanca." What the Dominicans of Salamanca were able to accomplish in forming Spanish colonial policy is simply amazing. It invites one to dream of what might have been had those policies been fully implemented throughout the Spanish dominion.

Henrique Urbano investigates the implementation of the ideals of Bartholomé de Las Casas and his Dominican brothers of the sixteenth century in the Andean region. He shows their "largeness of soul" which helped them to appreciate and promote Indian culture while preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The preaching of the Good News of Jesus Christ sometimes entails reproof and admonishment. We have included in this issue a sermon delivered in 1511 by Dominican Friar Antonio de Montesinos. In it he judges the attitudes and actions of the *conquistadores* against the native population of Hispaniola. He demands that the Spanish recognize the human dignity of the Indian. He asks, "Are they not humans? Do they not have rational souls? Are you not obliged to love them as you love yourselves?"

Why Providence? We believe that there is a Divine Providence that oversees the course of history, lamenting our mistakes and fostering our goodness. Providence College is dedicated to the concept of a liberal education, a part of which is learning about and

delighting in our own heritage. Divine Providence can use Providence to discover what is good, noble, true and even beautiful about God, the human person, society and the destiny of all men and women. In so doing we hope to respond to Montesinos, that "we love our neighbor as ourselves."

