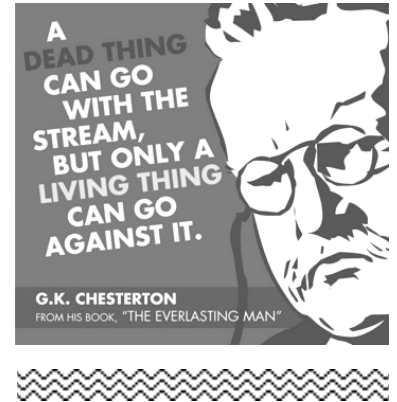


Prayers for the Faithfully Departed

Pray for the repose of the souls of: **Margaret Kunitz** (Spouse of David) and **Val Dreffs** (Spouse of Shirley). *Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.* **Contact the parish office if you wish to have the names of recently deceased loved ones published in the bulletin.**

Need Marian Workers

Volunteers are needed to work the "Mary, Mother of God" booth at the Ann Arbor Art Fair (July 21-24). The booth is located in the nonprofit section of the fair and will offer free rosaries and Catholic literature to those passing by. It will be open from 10am-9pm on July 21-23 and from noon-6pm on July 24. To sign up for a shift, please contact Joe Lipa at 734-255-3893 or joeli-pa@umich.edu.



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To think is, whether you want or no, to exaggerate. If you prefer not to exaggerate, you must remain silent; or, rather, you must paralyze your intellect and find some way of becoming an idiot.

—Ortega y Gasset,
Spanish philosopher
of the 20th century

The Scholar versus The Thinker in Modernity

I've always appreciated this thought of the philosopher Gasset. I saw it first as a college student in a book by Harry Blamires who was a friend of C. S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. Here is the quote in context from the book *The Christian Mind*. —Fr. Gerald

[I]t is a feature of our culture generally that as we are rich in scholars so we are poor in thinkers. Occasionally, very occasionally, a man may be both a first-rate scholar and a first-rate thinker. But the nature of our modern educational system is such that this happy combination arises ever more rarely. Potential thinkers are turned into mere scholars by the pressures of conformity so strong both in the educational world and in society at large.

The thinker challenges current prejudices. He disturbs the complacent. He obstructs the busy pragmatists. He questions the very foundations of all about him, and in so doing throws doubt upon aims, motives, and purposes which those who are running affairs have neither time nor patience to investigate. The thinker is a nuisance. He is a luxury that modern society cannot afford. It will therefore naturally, and on its own

terms justifiably, strive to keep him quiet, to restrict his influence, to ignore him. It will try to pretend that he does not exist.

Since the lot of the thinker in the secular world is so unattractive and frustrating, it is not surprising that we lack thinkers. But the Church cannot do without thinkers—or prophets, as she is wont somewhat pompously to call them. She cannot afford to ape the secular world in suppressing the thinker, in trying to replace him by the scholar. She destroys herself in doing so. For the secular world is true to itself in rejecting the thinker. It serves the laws of its own preservation in rejecting him.

But the Church is false to itself when it rejects the thinker. And therefore, in so far as it adopts the fashion of the secular world and tries to submerge thought under learning, prophecy under scholarship, wisdom under know-how, it strives to secularize itself; in other words to destroy itself.

The scholar and the thinker are in some ways mutually antithetical types. Scholarship cannot endure exaggeration. Thinking cannot thrive without it. **There is no thinking without exaggeration.** As Ortega y Gasset puts it —

To think is, whether you want or no, to exaggerate. If you prefer not to exaggerate, you must remain silent; or, rather, you must paralyze your intellect and find some way of becoming an idiot.

(The reader will note that I am more indulgent than Gasset in that I allow

the scholar as well as the idiot to eschew exaggeration.)

The scholar evades decisiveness; he hesitates to praise or condemn; he balances conclusion against competing conclusion so as to cancel out conclusiveness; he is tentative, skeptical, uncommitted. The thinker hates indecision and confusion; he firmly distinguishes right from wrong, good from evil; he is at home in a world of clearly demarcated categories and proven conclusions; he is dogmatic and committed; he works towards decisive action.

To typify the extremes in this way is useful, but must not be taken too literally. For the scholar, as thus characterized, is not the only man who studies: and the thinker, as thus characterized, is not the only man who thinks. Obviously there is no scholar who does not think; and there is no thinker who is quite devoid of scholarship. Nevertheless the distinction between Scholarship and Thinking is a fruitful one to ponder: and at least it will serve to indicate that just as there is a dearth of Christian thinking [among Christians], so in our secular culture there is a dearth of pure thinking as opposed to that recording, commenting, and elucidating which constitute scholarship.

From *The Christian Mind* by Harry Blamires. © 1963 Harry Blamires. 2005 edition published by Regent College Publishing. This is excerpted here with permission obtained from the publisher for Old St. Patrick's parish bulletin.