

# Notes

September/October Vol. 30 No. 5



**POVERTY CURE SUMMIT**  
AN ACTON INSTITUTE EVENT

**ENHANCE  
OPPORTUNITY.**

**REMOVE  
BARRIERS.**

**PROMOTE HUMAN  
FLOURISHING.**



**NOVEMBER 18-19, 2020 | A VIRTUAL EVENT**

For event details and registration, visit [povertycuresummit.org](https://povertycuresummit.org)

# A message from our president

Rev. Robert A. Sirico

When so much about our lives has been disrupted – from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, continuing civic unrest and now a contentious election season – it is easy to lose sight of the things we can control. In a time of great economic disruption and change, the poor are especially vulnerable as material poverty undermines the conditions that allow all humans to flourish.

It is the conviction of the Acton Institute that the best means of reducing poverty is through the creation of wealth. Under a system of private property rights and the rule of law,

the potential to serve others through our vocations is unleashed in the form of creative service.

In this issue, I am happy to share a recap of a recent editorial of mine on the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett published by the Dallas Morning News titled “There should be no religious test for the Supreme Court.” There is also a feature story on our upcoming Poverty Cure Summit, which will bring together many diverse religious, business and philanthropic leaders from around the world to discuss and learn more about the problem of poverty and innovative solutions to help the world’s poor. We encourage you to join us for this exciting virtual event!

Two small briefs round out the issue. The first is

about the new approach we are taking to our Annual Dinner this year as a special one-hour livestreaming event. Lastly, we are excited to announce this year’s recipient of the 2020 Novak Award, Dr. Gregory M. Collins. Dr. Collins is an accomplished young scholar and a postdoctoral associate and lecturer at Yale. His deep, balanced and wide-ranging scholarship – sensitive to both freedom and virtue – is a privilege to recognize.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of our donors. Thank you! Your support is more important than ever in these trying times. If you are just learning about Acton, be sure to check out our website, and please prayerfully consider supporting us in our mission. [N](#)

Acton Events <a href="https://acton.org/events">REGISTER AT ACTON.ORG/EVENTS</a> • <a href="https://acton.org/live">WATCH ONLINE AT ACTON.ORG/LIVE</a>		
DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
NOV 5	<b>Acton Lecture Series: David French, Speaker</b> Divided we fall: America after the 2020 election	Online
NOV 18-19	<b>Acton Poverty Cure Summit</b> Discussions with experts on how we can effectively alleviate poverty	Online
NOV 18	<b>Acton Institute’s 30th Annual Dinner</b> Livestreaming event hosted by Acton president Rev. Robert Sirico	Online
MAR 25	<b>A Liberty &amp; Markets Colloquium</b> Conference Series Adam Smith on Ethics and Economics	Holland, MI

# Rev. Sirico in Dallas Morning News: No religious test for Supreme Court

This past month, Rev. Robert Sirico wrote an article for the Dallas Morning News titled, “There should be no religious test for the Supreme Court.” The piece was featured in an ongoing opinion commentary on faith called Living Our Faith.

In the article, Rev. Sirico addresses how the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has led to debate among both politicians and the public over when the vacant court seat should be filled, and by whom.

The piece explains how President Trump has nominated Amy Coney Barrett to the seat, noting how the President appointed her to the Chicago-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in May 2017. Following this announcement there has been an onslaught of anti-Catholic sentiment directed at Barrett, “revealing America’s history of anti-Catholic bigotry.”

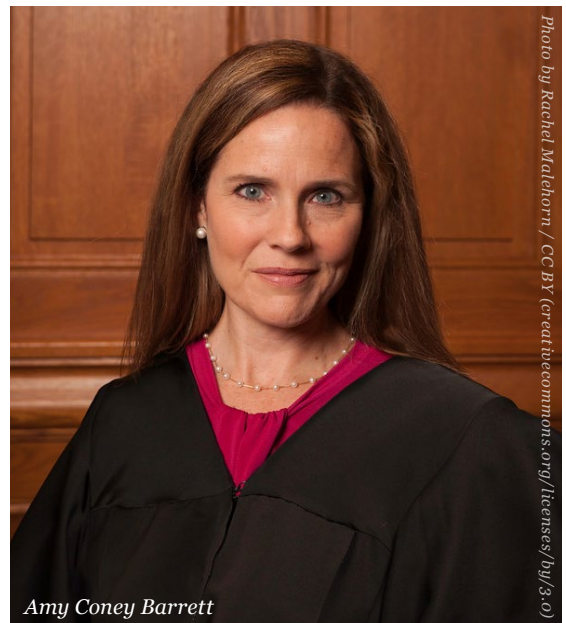
During Barrett’s confirmation hearing, prior to her appointment to the Court of Appeals, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, voiced this prejudice most memorably when she said, “and I think in your case, professor, when you read your speeches, the conclusion one draws is that the dogma lives loudly within you. And that’s of concern.”

Sirico notes that Feinstein did not succeed in blocking Barrett’s appointment, but her statement indicates an “almost invisible bigotry,” which illustrates a painful truth that “anti-Catholicism may still be employed in polite conversation.”

Practically, argues Sirico, this is a distraction, because here’s the only meaningful question at hand: Is Barrett qualified to serve on the Supreme Court? Her professional and scholarly accomplishments give us the answer to that question. The alternative of a religious test would mean that anyone with any faith commitment could be disqualified from any similar position, including membership in the Senate. **N**

*“The nomination of Barrett is a challenge and opportunity for an America presently in need of soul-searching regarding the scars of intolerance and bigotry, which have been with us since the American founding.” –Rev. Robert Sirico*

Read the full article at: [acton.is/dmn](https://acton.is/dmn)



Amy Coney Barrett

Photo by Rachel Malhorn / CC BY (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0)



FEATURED STORY

# Acton Institute announces Poverty Cure Summit

**W**e are excited to announce the Acton Institute will be hosting our first ever Poverty Cure Summit November 18-19, 2020, and we invite you to participate. For the past 30 years, the Acton Institute has been the foremost authority on providing a moral defense of free enterprise and individual liberty as ways to lift people out of poverty worldwide. This is truly vital work considering the misconceptions regarding how to best help those dealing with financial instability.

And, sadly, the primary intervention strategies involve various forms of charity and aid, but poverty is not solved by generosity. Poverty does not end because people are charitable.

We are called to care for and serve the poor. Yet for many of us with a heart for the poor, the statistics are overwhelming. Nearly one billion people live on less than \$1.90 a day. Every year, millions die from AIDS, malaria and other preventable diseases. Tens of millions lack clean water and go to bed hungry.

Despite the good intentions of many charitable institutions, we often fail to see lasting change because we don't ground the battle against local and global poverty in a proper understanding of the human person and society. We need to encourage solutions that foster opportunity and



unleash the entrepreneurial spirit that already fills poverty-stricken areas of the developed and developing world.

Our vision is a future in which people find their path out of poverty through satisfying and fruitful work. This is accomplished through adherence to the economic foundations that allow for human flourishing, which include rule of law, private property, free association and free exchange, strong churches and communities and a culture of trust.

Without the presence of these foundations, individuals will be unable to rise out of poverty and into satisfying and fruitful work.

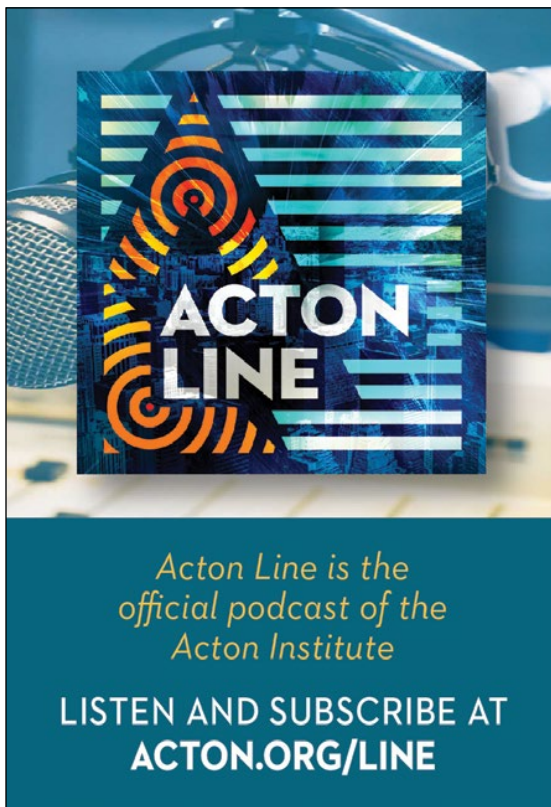
By leveraging our successful new high-impact online learning platform, we will have more than a dozen panel discussions with experts in economics, law, prison reform, entrepreneurship and community development to share their experiences and insights on how we can effectively alleviate poverty. Through effective moderation, panel discussions will trace ideas back to foundational principles of anthropology, politics, natural law and economics and thereby illustrate how we can reduce poverty and promote human flourishing.

Additionally, we will have pre-recorded “Lectures-in-a-Box” that provide foundational talks on each subject. Topics will include (1) the legacy and future of capitalism, (2) the impact of philanthropy and (3) achieving abundance through entrepreneurship.

We are hosting debates on the topics of universal basic income, technology and work, and how faulty systems (such as mass incarceration or socialism) create or exacerbate poverty.

Finally, no conference on poverty would be complete without hearing the voices of the (formerly) poor and learning from the experience of practitioners who have had a long-run impact on improving people’s lives.

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The graphic features a blue background with a microphone and a city skyline. A central logo consists of a stylized 'A' made of concentric circles in orange and yellow, with the words 'ACTON LINE' in white text across it.

Acton Line is the  
official podcast of the  
Acton Institute

**LISTEN AND SUBSCRIBE AT  
ACTON.ORG/LINE**

The graphic has a red border and a white background. It features a logo with a yellow and orange circle and the text 'POVERTY CURE SUMMIT AN ACTON INSTITUTE EVENT'. Below this is a collage of images showing a man working and children, with text overlays: 'ENHANCE OPPORTUNITY.', 'REMOVE BARRIERS.', and 'PROMOTE HUMAN FLOURISHING.'. At the bottom, it says 'NOVEMBER 18 - 19, 2020' and provides a website for event details.

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**BRIEF**

## Livestreaming: Acton's 30th Annual Dinner

Ben Stoner

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Mark your calendars! The Acton Institute's 30th Annual Dinner will be held on Wednesday, November 18, 2020, from 6-7 p.m. EST. Because we cannot gather in person this year, the special event will be livestreamed online. And so you are cordially invited to join us as we celebrate Acton Institute's 30th anniversary – from the comfort of your home. We have an engaging one-hour virtual evening planned, hosted by Acton president and co-founder, Rev. Robert Sirico, and executive director and co-founder, Kris Alan Mauren. The event will celebrate Acton's accomplishments over the past three decades, promoting faith and freedom, and will include an interactive toast to continued success, alongside our friends, family and alumni. If you would like to participate in the end-of-event toast, we would love to include you. Simply send a photo toasting (holding your favorite glassware) with a friend, spouse or loved one/ones to [events@acton.org](mailto:events@acton.org), and we will select many to display.

Tickets for the event are \$30 for an Individual Ticket; \$300 for a Couples Ticket, which includes two commemorative 30th-anniversary champagne flutes (mailed to you); and \$3,000 for the Host Committee Ticket Package, which includes registration for ten, commemorative glasses and recognition during the event.

To reserve your spot at the Acton Institute's 30th Annual Dinner, please visit [acton.org/dinner](https://acton.org/dinner). **N**

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**BRIEF**

## Dr. Gregory M. Collins wins 2020 Novak Award

Dan Hugger

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In recognition of Dr. Gregory M. Collins' outstanding research in the fields of ethics, politics and economics, the Acton Institute has awarded Dr. Collins the 2020 Novak Award.

Dr. Gregory M. Collins is a postdoctoral associate and lecturer in the program on ethics, politics and economics at Yale University. His book on Edmund Burke's economic thought, *Commerce and Manners in Edmund Burke's Political Economy*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2020 and has already garnered significant attention inside and outside the academic community. Topics of his recently published or forthcoming articles include Burke, Adam Smith, Leo Strauss, Britain's East India Company and Frederick Douglass. His current book project is a comparative study of Burke and the Enlightenment.

The Acton Institute's director of research, Dr. Samuel Gregg, reviewed Collins' book on Burke earlier this year for *Law & Liberty*, praising its scholarship:

"Refreshingly devoid of ideological agendas, *Commerce and Manners in Edmund Burke's Political Economy* refrains from trying to shove Burke's economic ideas into contemporary categories. The result is the definitive account of Burke's economic thought, one which shows how Burke's political economy displays "an underlying coherence that incorporated elements of prudence, utility, and tradition."

It is precisely this sort of deep, balanced and wide-ranging scholarship – which is sensitive to both freedom and virtue – that the Novak Award seeks to recognize. **N**



# ACTON

## LECTURE SERIES



DIVIDED WE  
FALL:  
AMERICA  
AFTER THE  
2020  
ELECTION

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*David French, The Dispatch*  
**SENIOR EDITOR**

## JOIN US ONLINE

**November 5, 2020 • 12:00PM**

The Acton Lecture Series has gone virtual. Stream this exciting event free from the comfort of your home!

Just two days after the 2020 election, French will address the impacts the election outcomes (to the extent that they are known) will have on an increasingly divided and tribalistic nation, with each faction believing their distinct cultures and liberties are being threatened by an escalating violent opposition.

**LIVESTREAM @ [ACTON.ORG/LIVE](https://acton.org/live)**

98 East Fulton Street, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 USA

THE ACTON INSTITUTE INVITES  
YOU TO A SPECIAL VIRTUAL  
EVENT WITH

REV. ROBERT SIRICO

President and Co-Founder

AND SPECIAL GUESTS



ACTON BUILDING

30th  
Annual Dinner

**NOVEMBER 18, 2020**

**LIVESTREAMING - 6-7PM EST**

**RSVP: [www.acton.org/dinner](http://www.acton.org/dinner)**