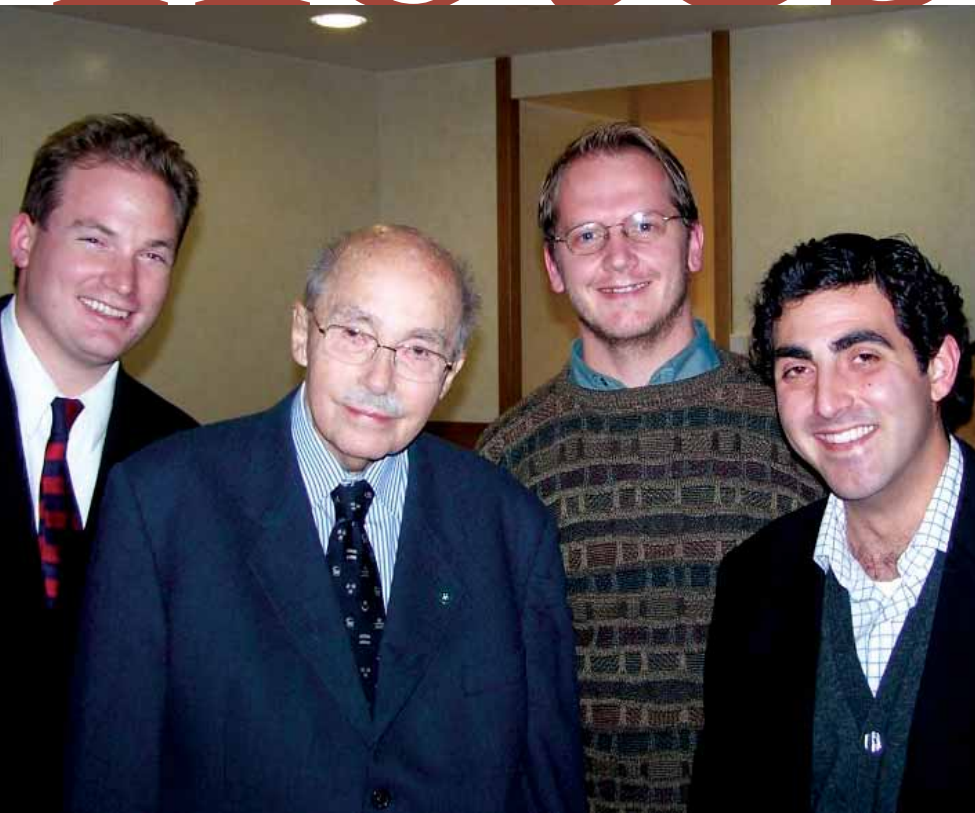


ACTON notes

The Newsletter
of the
Acton Institute
February 2007
Volume 18 Number 2



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Connecting good intentions with sound economics

President's Message

Dear Friends,

The flourishing of religion requires that it be supported by society's most productive people.

Have you met many upwardly mobile, high-income people who are also religious? I have. You have too. In fact, they are one of the reasons why American houses of worship are flourishing. So often they donate the funds, volunteer their time, and inspire local congregations with entrepreneurial ideas.

Compare what we know about these people with the commonplace wisdom. Many people believe that the more secure people are in their material lives, the less they find a need for religious commitment. They become less dependent on God in the belief that they can fully depend on themselves. This belief is plausible, and certainly wealth can be a distraction.

But does the commonplace wisdom stand without exception? Not empirically. Economist Jonathan Gruber examined census data and found that higher market density and family income is associated with increased religious participation. These people also tend to have a higher level of education, lower receipt of welfare, and lower levels of divorce.

Another way of putting this is that the data he examined indicates that people who are becoming more economically secure become more religious, not less. They also tend to exhibit stronger moral character in general. Their values are often derided as bourgeois, but their families stay together, they attend church regularly, and they are self-reliant.

We can argue cause and effect all day (does wealth breed religious commitment or is it the reverse?), but that doesn't capture the truly important point. What strikes me most is how unfriendly the religious intellectual scene is to wealth creation, when the empirical reality is that religious commitment and wealth creation can go hand in hand.

The flourishing of religion requires that it be supported by society's most productive people. What is missing is intellectual integration. We need to understand better how freedom and faith are integral concerns. This is a main focus of the Acton Institute's programs, and we are grateful to you for supporting our work in this and every area.

The mission of the Acton Institute is to promote a free and virtuous society characterized by individual liberty and sustained by religious principles.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Rev. Robert A. Sirico". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Rev. Robert A. Sirico, President

ACTONINSTITUTE

Centesimus Annus in Rome

On December 12, Acton held its final *Centesimus Annus* conference for 2006 at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University on the relationship between Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Centesimus Annus* and Benedict XVI's *Deus Caritas Est*. These important reflections mark the fifteenth anniversary of *Centesimus Annus*.

Nearly 300 participants—an astounding turnout for a Rome event of this sort—enjoyed hearing experts discuss the nuances of the two seminal documents on social doctrine. EPPC senior fellow George Weigel delivered the principal address, with responses from Dr. Jean-Yves Naudet, professor of economics at the Université d'Aix-Marseille III, and His Imperial Royal Highness Dr. Otto von Habsburg, a member of the European Parliament from 1979 until 1999. Included among the guests were a significant number of people from the diplomatic corps and other leading sectors of Roman society.

The following was taken from George Weigel's

speech, "From *Centesimus Annus* to *Deus Caritas Est*: The Free and Virtuous Society of the Twenty-first Century."

We fail to grow into the persons we ought to be... if charitable giving and charitable activity are not part of the rhythm of our lives.

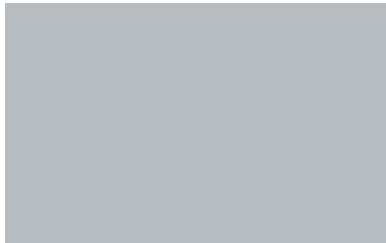
Addressing his fellow Catholics in a language that can be engaged by any morally serious person, believer or not, Pope Benedict made several key points in *Deus Caritas Est*.

First, he insisted that love of neighbor, expressed in works of charity that embody a personal

responsibility to the "other," cannot be outsourced to government agencies. Those agencies have their place, but we fail the test of our own humanity—we fail to grow into the persons we ought to be—if charitable giving and charitable activity are not part of the rhythm of our lives. Something is awry in our own hearts if we imagine that paying the taxes that support governmental social services fulfills the obligation of love-of-neighbor, however we conceive the source of that obligation.

More of George Weigel's speech and coverage of the event is available at:

www.acton.org/centesimusannus.



George Weigel speaks to an audience at Acton's Centesimus Annus conference

From Our Conference Participants

At Acton I had the chance not only to learn, but I had the marvelous opportunity of sharing meals, conferences and most important discussing ideas with people who may very well be the future leaders of their nations, as much as I hope to be of mine.

—Fernando Coronel Velasco
Universidad Catolica de Santiago de Guayaquil
Guayaquil, Ecuador

Without your support, my financial situation would have barred me from this opportunity to interact with scholars whose values I share and whose work crucially refines my own career goals. My experience at the Acton conference was invaluable.

—Kony Kim
Westminster Seminary
Escondido, California

Father Sirico Meets Pope Benedict XVI

On December 9, Pope Benedict XVI granted an audience to Fr. Robert Sirico while he was in Rome presiding at Acton's *Centesimus Annus* conference (see cover story). There Sirico addressed the Fifty-sixth National Conference of *I Giuristi Cattolici Italiani* (the Italian Catholic Lawyers) on "Benedict XVI and True Liberalism."

At the Vatican, the pope extended his Apostolic Blessing to Fr. Sirico, founder and president of the Acton Institute, and to collaborators, friends, and benefactors. The pope also gave Fr. Sirico his *zucchetto*, a small white skullcap.

Welcoming New Board Members

Since its founding, the Acton Institute has always been blessed by the care and inspiration of our board of directors. Last year, we were honored to welcome three new board members—Mr. Kenneth J. Muraski (confirmed June 14, 2006), and Mr. John C. Kennedy, III, and Dr. Gaylen J. Byker (both

provide top-quality precision-machined solutions for the automotive market." In addition to his services as an Acton board member, Mr. Kennedy serves on the board of the Van Andel Institute and holds an M.B.A. from the University of Michigan.

Dr. Byker, an Acton supporter since 1995, serves as the president of his alma mater, Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in addition to his services as an Acton board member. Dr. Byker received his M.A. in political science from the University of Michigan and his Ph.D. in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania.

Acton's staff would like to extend a warm welcome to these new board members and thank them for their active, leading roles in the promotion of a free and virtuous society.

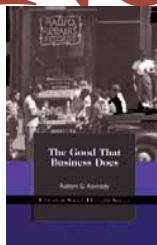
Announcing New Book

The Good that Business Does, by Dr. Robert Kennedy, is the latest book in Acton's Christian Social Thought series. In this book, Kennedy brings together man-

ACTON News



Fr. Sirico and
Pope Benedict XVI



The Good That
Business Does



Dr. Kennedy



confirmed October 26, 2006).

Mr. Muraski has been a supporter of Acton since 1994. In addition to serving on Acton's board, Ken is president and general manager of Kent Manufacturing Company, a family-owned business helping the local economy of Grand Rapids, Michigan, for over fifty years. Kent Manufacturing "specializes in the conversion of pressure-sensitive adhesive-coated materials for applications across a wide range of industries."

Mr. Kennedy, an Acton supporter since 1993, serves as chairman, president, and CEO of Autocam Corporation, a company he founded in 1988 "to

agement experience and theological expertise to examine the significance and responsibilities of business in contemporary societies. Dr. Kennedy applies economics, law, and the Christian tradition of moral reflection to elucidate the ways in which business enterprises contribute to personal and common goods.

The book is available for \$6.00 through the Acton Book Shoppe (www.acton.org/bookshoppe or call 616-454-9454).

2007 Acton Lecture Series Schedule

This month Acton Institute will launch the 2007 Acton Lecture Series. Admission for each lecture is \$15.00, which includes lunch. These events will be held in the David Cassard Conference Room on the lower level of the Waters Building (161 Ottawa Avenue NW) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The series will include the following lectures:



February 15, 2007

"The Irresponsibility of Corporate Social Responsibility" by Mr. Fred L. Smith, Jr.



March 7, 2007

"Capitalism and the Common Good: The Ten Pillars of the Moral Economy" by Rev. Robert A. Sirico.



April 10, 2007

"The Crisis of Europe: Benedict XVI's Analysis and Solution" by Dr. Samuel Gregg.

All lectures are from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m



May 17, 2007

"Intelligence Was My Line" by Mr. Ralph Hauenstein.



July 18, 2007

"Truth, Relativism and the Free Society" by Mr. Michael Miller.



August 23, 2007

"Myths Christians Believe about Wealth and Poverty" by Dr. Jay Richards.



September 27, 2007

"Christianity, Islam and Civil Society in Putin's Russia" by Prof. Yuri N. Maltsev.



January speaker Dr. Michael Casey



Lecture audience

ACTON in the News

The directness with which the bishops speak about corruption's evil causes and catastrophic effects is almost without precedent in Latin America

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg's article in *The New York Sun*

Dr. Stephen Grabill

Title: Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics
Program: *Acton Lecture Series*
Air Date: 12.14.2006

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse

Title: Proud to Follow
Publisher: *National Review Online*
Publication Date: 12.21.2006

Dr. Samuel Gregg

Title: Liberating Catholic Latin America
Publisher: *The New York Sun*
Publication Date: 12.29.2006

Reminder

You Can Still Give

If you have not donated to Acton yet, we hope you will consider it. Your help will make possible our continuing mission to promote a free and virtuous society. You may choose to donate using the envelope provided, or you may visit <https://secure.lexi.net/acton> to make a secure donation online. We send our heartfelt thanks to those who have already responded to our year-end appeal letter. You have a broad vision and a generous heart.



Otto von Habsburg at the *Centesimus Annus* conference



Otto von Habsburg with an audience member

Acton and You

Centesimus Annus conference

On December 9 during the *Centesimus Annus* conference, Mr. Michael Miller, director of programs at Acton, assisted His Imperial Royal Highness Otto von Habsburg, who spoke at the conference, with his stay in Rome. Pictured from right to left are Mr. Miller; the director of the Residenza Paolo VI, Otto von Habsburg; Dr. Hans-Albert Courtial; and Press Secretary to Otto von Habsburg, Ms. Eva Demmerle.



ACTON UNIVERSITY

JUNE 12–15 SYMPOSIUM OF FAITH, ECONOMICS, LIBERTY

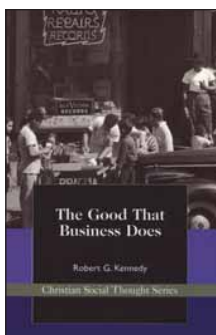
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Registration for Acton University is already filling up! If you or someone you know would like to learn about the foundations of a society sustained by freedom and virtue, apply today!

Travel, lodging, and registration scholarships will be offered to select students.

Sign up now at www.actonuniversity.org

ACTON Book Shoppe



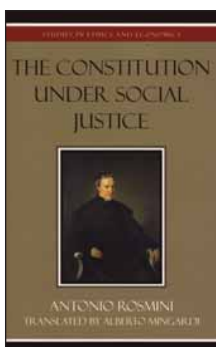
The Good that Business Does

by Robert G. Kennedy

One of the major political challenges of the modern era has been to manage the integration of business into the life of the civil community. Similarly, Christian social thinkers have struggled to integrate business activity into their account of morality, justice, and the common good. While the disciplines of economics and law teach us much about the character of contemporary business, their descriptions are limited. Drawing on the natural law conception of basic goods, this monograph offers a fuller treatment of the role of business in society and of its moral obligations.

Paperback 91 pages

Price \$6.00



The Constitution Under Social Justice

by Antonio Rosmini-Serbati

Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (1797–1855) was one of the first natural law scholars to bring natural law thinking into a conversation with the market economic order that was beginning to emerge in Europe in the nineteenth century. His reflections on matters such as the origin, nature, and limits of private property, the role of the state, and the nature of human reason show him to be a unique, innovative thinker who nonetheless was determined to work within the parameters of Catholic doctrine.

Paperback 191 pages

Price \$14.95

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visit www.acton.org/bookshoppe.**

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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Feb. 15	Acton Lecture Series “The Irresponsibility of Corporate Social Responsibility” Fred L. Smith, Jr., founder of the Competitive Enterprise Institute to speak	Grand Rapids, Michigan
Mar. 7	Acton Lecture Series “Capitalism and the Common Good: The Ten Pillars of the Moral Economy” Rev. Robert A. Sirico to speak	Grand Rapids, Michigan
Mar. 14	Centesimus Annus Lecture Series Pontifical University of Santa Croce Cardinal Julián Herranz Casado and Dr. Raphaela Schmid to speak	Rome, Italy

STAFF ACTIVITIES

Date	Event	Location
Feb. 10-11	Culture Campaign Lecture Dr. Jay Richards to speak	Wheaton, Illinois
Mar. 9	Speech to the Centurions Hosted by the Wilberforce Forum/Prison Fellowship Ministries Dr. Jay Richards to speak	Washington, D.C.

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