

ACTON notes

Acton Institute Newsletter

March / April 2015, Volume 25, Number 2



“connecting good intentions with sound economics”

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President's Message

The 40 days prior to Easter, known as Lent, are often filled with fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Fasting takes many forms: Some choose to abstain from a favorite food; others give up activities like watching television or gossiping.

“Even in the dullest of souls, there is a shimmer of Heaven.”

We fast so that, every time we reach for that piece of candy or begin to say something uncharitable, we are reminded of Christ's great sacrifice for us, and we attempt to be more and more like Him.

It is tradition in many places for families to bring baskets of the food they will be enjoying on Easter Sunday to church the day before for a blessing. It's a short, joyful rite; all of the goodies we've been avoiding for weeks will now be part of the Easter feast.

The foods in the baskets are all ordinary things: meats and breads, vegetables and fruits, a few sweets. It is Easter that makes them special—this celebration of the triumph of life over death.

John Donne, the masterful English poet of the 14th and 15th centuries, wrote about this in his “Holy Sonnets”:

*Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou are not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou'art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy'or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.*

The act of bringing food to church to be blessed is a human way of acknowledging that death has no place in our faith lives.

For those who are not believers, there is still joy in sharing a common meal, especially when those sharing the meal have toiled for the food being offered. Even in the dullest of souls, there is a shimmer of Heaven. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow, we live.

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 that reads "Rev. Robert Sirico". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rev. Robert Sirico, President

ACTONINSTITUTE

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Acton Lecture Series Explores Love, Happiness

It may only be spring, but it's already been an exciting year for the Acton Lecture Series, which has drawn almost 350 attendees so far. The series began with Jeffrey Tucker, author and chief liberty officer of Liberty.me, lecturing on why "capitalism is all about love." He started by defining capitalism as "a system rooted in free association and a private ownership of property." Everyone is valuable in a market economy, Tucker told the audience, explaining how even a lowly janitor in a department store—Tucker's first job—brings great value to the market. "Commerce provides a training ground for life," he argued. "It helps us understand value, other people, how to get along, how to love." The affection between a merchant and a consumer is the most basic type of love. We find value in people with whom we exchange goods and labor. Trade is not a zero-sum game. We value other people's goods more than our own, and other people value our goods more than their own, so we exchange and we both end up better off. Every voluntary exchange creates wealth and value and causes us to love one another.

So far the biggest event of the year occurred in

January when Arthur Brooks, the president of American Enterprise Institute (AEI), addressed a full house about the formula for happiness. During this lunch lecture, cosponsored by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy and AEI, Brooks explained the connection between free enterprise and happiness. The real problem in the United States, he said, is a "crisis of satisfaction." More and more Americans are dissatisfied with their country, despite being one of the most prosperous nations in history. The problem we have is attachment to money and material things. Brooks explained that "if you have markets you will not benefit unless you have morality." As long as an individual tries to attain riches without meaning behind it, he or she will never truly be happy.

In February, Gene Veith discussed Martin Luther's doctrine of vocation and Max Weber's misunderstanding of the influence the Reformation had on the rise of the free market. God is present and active in all economic activity, Veith noted, and exchange can be a means by which Christians can love and serve their neighbors. Check the back of this issue for upcoming lectures and events throughout the Midwest.



Jeffrey Tucker speaking at the Acton Lecture Series.



Martin Luther

From Our Conference Participants

I confess I went to Acton University as a disillusioned, communist-leaning intellectual desperately wanting to help my inner-city church. I left with a fire to truly help the poor, but most importantly a framework to actually help them.

—*Marcus*
Houston, Texas

As a professor of moral theology, I know how valuable and precious freedom is for all human beings regardless of any culture, nation, color, or religion. [Acton University] has intensified my belief and learning. It has opened new avenues for me to evangelize the Gospel ... in a new and fresh way.

—*Patrick*
Lahore, Pakistan

Acton University Keynote Speakers Announced

The snow has finally melted in West Michigan! Spring is here, and that means we're getting closer to Acton University. Participants can look forward to hearing from the following plenary speakers: Samuel Gregg, Joel Salatin, Rev. Robert A. Sirico, and Gregory Thornbury.

Dr. Samuel Gregg is director of research at Acton. He writes and speaks frequently on questions of political economy, economic history, ethics in finance, and natural law theory. His latest forthcoming book is *For God and Profit: Finance, Capital, and the Good Life*.

Joel Salatin is an entrepreneur and farmer. He is a passionate defender of free markets, small farms, and local food systems. Salatin and his family run Polyface, Inc., a farm where they do not use harmful chemicals, and sell meat by direct-marketing to private consumers and restaurants.

Rev. Sirico is Acton's president and cofounder. Members of the broadcast media often call upon

are due on or before Friday, May 22, 2015. No applications will be accepted after that date. The University will be held June 16-19 at the DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

2015 Novak Award Winner

Catherine Ruth Pakaluk, assistant professor of economics at Ave Maria University, has been named the 2015 Novak Award winner. Named after distinguished theologian, Michael Novak, this award recognizes outstanding scholarly research that examines the relationship between religion, economic freedom, and the free and virtuous society.

Pakaluk is founder-director of the Stein Center for Social Research at Ave Maria University in Ave Maria, Florida. Pakaluk earned her doctorate in economics at Harvard University (2010), where her dissertation under Caroline Hoxby examined the relationship between religion and educational outcomes. Pakaluk received a master's degree in economics from Harvard (2002), and a bachelor's degree in mathematics and economics from the University of Pennsylvania (1998).

ACTON News



Dr. Samuel Gregg, Dr. Gregory Thornbury, Joel Salatin, and Rev. Robert A. Sirico

him for statements regarding economics, civil rights, and issues of religious concern. He is the Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dr. Gregory Thornbury is the sixth president of The King's College in New York City. He's been called "Jonathan Edwards meets Rolling Stone" and "America's first hipster college president." He is also a senior fellow of the Kairos Journal and a visiting professor of philosophy at Ansgar Teologiske Høgskole in Norway.

To learn more or to apply for Acton University 2015, visit university.acton.org. Online applications



Catherine Ruth Pakaluk

Catherine Pakaluk is also a widely-admired writer and sought-after speaker on matters of culture, religion, gender, the social science of the family, the vocation of women, Catholic social thought, and the work of Edith Stein.

Recipients of the Novak Award make a formal presentation on a theme that deals with religion, economic freedom, and the free and virtuous society at an annual public forum known as the Calihan Lecture. The Novak Award forms part of a range of scholarships, travel grants, and awards available from the Acton Institute that support future religious and intellectual leaders.

Acton@25 Update

Acton is in the final phase of its Acton@25 Capital Campaign. With the ultimate goal of raising \$12.5 million from 400 donors, Acton has reached \$11.8 million from 303 generous donors (at the time of this printing).

The campaign was launched three years ago in response to an expanding demand for Acton's work. The funds raised by this campaign will support some exciting projects Acton hopes to complete, such as outfitting our media center with improved studios and high-quality cameras, as well as installing a rooftop garden.

Thanks to a generous donor, there is a capital campaign matching program that goes until the close of the campaign this summer. For every capital campaign donation Acton receives, there will be a two-to-one matching gift.

As Acton continues to reach goals and plan anniversary events, we'll keep you updated. Keep a look out in the mail for campaign updates and event invitations. Thank you to all of our gen-

erous Acton@25 Capital Campaign supporters! For information about the Acton@25 Capital Campaign, please contact Charles Roelofs by calling the office at 616.454.3080 or emailing him at CRoelofs@acton.org.



Thank You

TO ALL OF OUR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS!

Your support is critical in helping us reach millions of people with the message of free enterprise, limited government, and personal responsibility.



Artistic rendering of the Acton headquarters.



ACTON in the News

“The way that a culture understands the nature of God shapes its conception of man, reason, and society. Though this presents enormous challenges for the Islamic world, it also has significant implications for the sustainability of Western civilization.”

—Excerpted from Samuel Gregg's article in *Public Discourse*.

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: ISIL and the Lack of Outrage
Program: Your World with Neil Cavuto
Air Date: 2.27.15

Samuel Gregg

Title: Europe's Real Time Bomb
Publication: The American Spectator
Date: 3.02.15

Rev. Robert Sirico

Title: Discussing Pope Francis
Program: Fox News - Fox & Friends
Air Date: 3.15.15

Reminder

Help Acton Promote Freedom and Virtue!

The Acton Institute depends on the generosity of supporters like you. If you have not donated to Acton but enjoy *Acton Notes*, please consider helping us meet our goals! Your help makes possible our mission to promote a free and virtuous society. You may choose to donate using the envelope provided, or you may visit the Acton website to make a secure donation online. We send our heartfelt thanks to those of you who have been generous in the past with your strategic support as well as your prayers. You have a broad vision and a generous heart.

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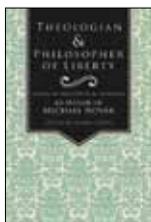
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ANNUAL DINNER 2014



ACTON Book Shop



THEOLOGIAN AND PHILOSOPHER OF LIBERTY

Edited by Samuel Gregg

Readers will find in this collection many words of praise as well as profound illustrations of the influence of Novak's writings. But the same papers also contain questions and criticisms to which Novak replies and, in doing so, explains much of the background to some of the central intellectual concerns of his life.

Softcover 279 pages Sale \$14.00

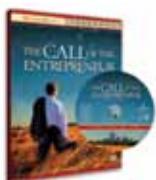


ACTON UNIVERSITY 2014 FLASH DRIVE BUNDLE

Produced by Acton Institute

Own all 107 of the lectures from Acton University 2014 on a USB flash drive with this inexpensive bundle. Valued at \$105.93, these lectures were recorded live at Acton University 2014 sessions. The drive itself comes with the lectures numbered, and includes the lecturer and course title in the file name.

USB flash drive Sale \$9.99

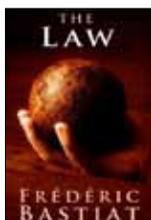


THE CALL OF THE ENTREPRENEUR DVD

Produced by Acton Institute

A merchant banker. A failing dairy farmer. A refugee from Communist China. One risked his savings. One risked his farm. One risked his life. Why do their stories matter? Because how we view entrepreneurs—greedy or altruistic, as virtuous or vicious—shapes the destinies of individuals and nations.

DVD Sale \$7.95



THE LAW

By Frédéric Bastiat

Many philosophers have made important contributions to the discourse of liberty, Bastiat among them. But Bastiat's greatest contribution is that he took the discourse out of the ivory tower and made ideas on liberty so clear that even the unlettered can understand them and statisticians cannot obfuscate them.

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THE CALL OF THE ENTREPRENEUR DVD	\$7.95		
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Calendar of Events

ACTON INSTITUTE EVENTS

Date	Event	Location
Apr 16	The Poverty of Nations: A Solution Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI
Apr 29	Gallery Exhibit & Lecture: Scarlet Cord—the Evils of Human Trafficking Feat. Art by Pamela Alderman, Elise Hilton to speak	Grand Rapids, MI
Apr 22	Movie Night in Milwaukee featuring “Poverty, Inc.”	Milwaukee, WI
Apr 23	Between Church and Market: Some Points of Clarification Rev. Robert Sirico to Speak	Chicago, IL
May 6	Pope Francis and the Modern Papacy George Weigel to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI
May 21	J.R.R. Tolkien’s Vision of Freedom Jonathan Witt to Speak	Grand Rapids, MI