

Notes

May/June Vol. 29 No. 3



A message from our president

Rev. Robert A. Sirico

We are not made to be alone. After God formed man and breathed into him the breath of life He said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him” (Gen. 2:18). We are, quite literally, made for each other. Because of this, the Acton Institute has always emphasized the social nature of the person.

People find their ultimate fulfillment only in communion with God, but one essential element of our development as persons is our relationships with our neighbors. We gain the capacity to act for disinterested ends by interacting

with others in shared moral goods such as promises, friendships, marriage, and family life. Through the stewardship of our time, talents, and material gifts, we not only create economic value through exchange but also incarnate our moral values in the world. We are always looking for ways to make our ideas accessible to both those simply curious about and those seriously committed to the principles that form the foundation of a free and virtuous society.

This issue of *Acton Notes* has a new look, which we hope you enjoy. With larger pictures and a simpler, sleeker design, *Acton Notes* will help us continue to effectively bring you information about ongoing events and news from Acton.

Inside this issue there is

a lovely feature story about how Cecilia Sanders, a Catholic high school teacher, has been incorporating Acton-produced curricula into her classroom. There is also a brief write-up of our recent Detroit luncheon at which I gave the keynote address titled “Moral and Practical Problems with the Resurgent Socialism” and a notice on forthcoming books.

To those of you who are just getting acquainted with our work, be sure to check out our website and podcast for additional resources at acton.org. Special thanks are due especially to those whose financial support makes the work of the Acton Institute possible. To those who have not donated to Acton before, please prayerfully consider doing so. **N**

Acton Events

[REGISTER AT ACTON.ORG/EVENTS](http://ACTON.ORG/EVENTS)

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
JUN 18	Acton University Four-day event. 100+ courses. 60+expert speakers.	Grand Rapids, MI
JUL 18	Acton Lecture Series Child, Family and State: Religious Liberty in a Secular Age	Grand Rapids, MI
JUL 25	Acton on Tap Professor Harry Veryser to speak	Bloomfield Hills, MI
AUG 8	Acton Lecture Series The Fall of Rome and Modern Parallels	Grand Rapids, MI
SEP 19	Acton Lecture Series Ride-Sharing, Fatal Crashes and Crime : Uber and the Social Good	Grand Rapids, MI

Rev. Robert Sirico speaks about socialism at Detroit Luncheon

Caroline Roberts

On Wednesday, May 1, Acton was proud to host its annual Detroit luncheon at the Detroit Athletic Club, with nearly 100 friends and supporters of Acton in attendance.

Rev. Robert Sirico gave the afternoon's keynote address on "Moral and Practical Problems with Resurgent Socialism."

Rev. Sirico stressed the troubling socialist ideology taking shape with the rise of self-professed democratic socialists in Congress, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders. "Fifty-three percent of Americans of a millennial age under 30 are in favor of socialism in one form or another," Sirico began. "These young people have never seen real socialism and don't see it even when they look at Venezuela." Many university students from Venezuela have attended Acton University and have given witness to the human rights atrocities that take place in their home country.

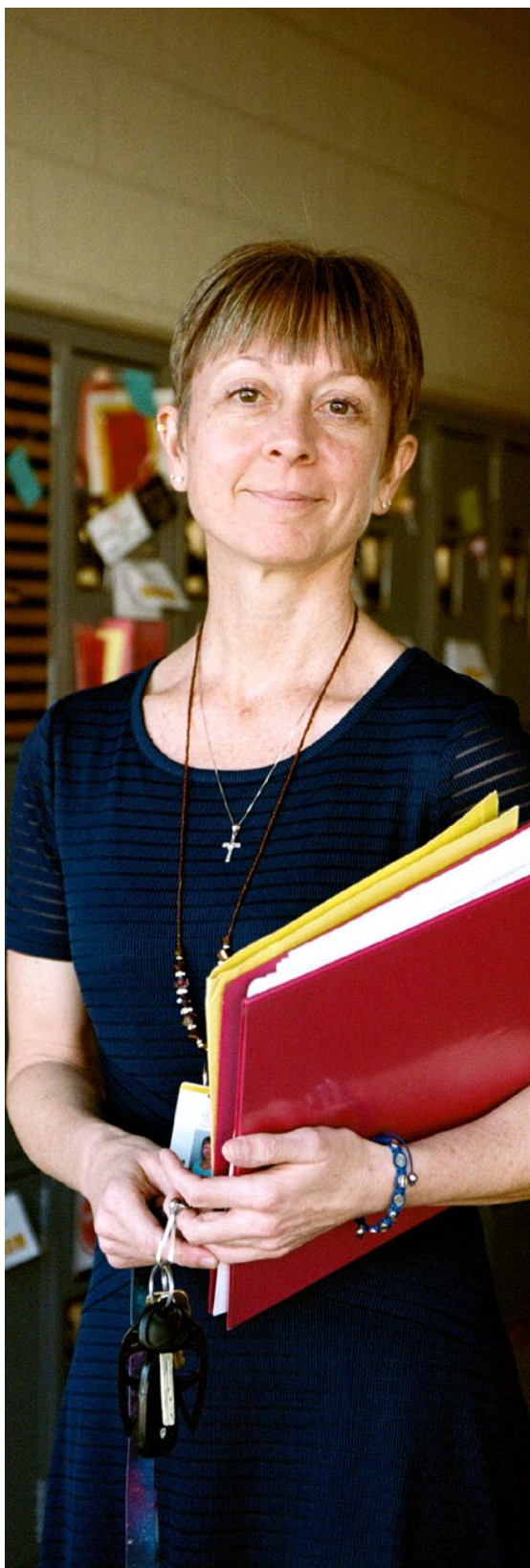
Sirico encouraged the audience to think of the problems at the root of the current attraction to socialism as being two-fold: practical and moral. "There are very few people who aren't concerned about human well-being, about the poor, or about the vulnerable," Sirico pointed out. "The first question is not where we want to go. The question is, how do we get there?"

Practically, argues Sirico, economic issues involve many factors and many people, making broad centralized planning an inefficient tool when it comes to approaching economic problems arising from the ground

level. The knowledge of government officials, at the federal or state level, is limited. "This is what happens in a socialist economy; it's the presumption of knowing at the practical level what the needs are and how to satisfy those means."

Socialist governments also fail to realize the intrinsic dignity of the human person, stripping individuals of freedom in work and business. Each person has the capacity and mandate to reflect his or her creator in their work and entrepreneurial efforts, a deeply moral calling. "Good impulses shouldn't be coerced by a bureaucracy that enforces it," Sirico said. **N**





FEATURED STORY

Interview with Cecilia Sanders on Acton curricula

Sara Aldworth

It was a sunny day in Chandler, Arizona, when a team from Acton visited Seton Catholic Preparatory High School. As the bell rang, students filled the courtyard, joining their friends for lunch. But several students had other plans, heading off to Cecilia Sanders' math classroom. Each Monday, they join her for an extra-curricular "lunch and learn." Along with her colleague Tom Darby, Sanders has been hosting the Faith and Freedom Club.

The idea came out of Sanders' and Darby's experiences at Acton University. As recipients of an Acton University fellowship geared toward high school educators, they were encouraged to think about how they could take Acton ideas back to their workplace. Creating a club provided the right framework for them to engage students, showing how Christian beliefs inform a proper understanding of economics, liberty, and the role of government.

"Our students learn many principles in their individual classes, but they aren't always synthesized together well," Sanders told us. "Acton's resources help bridge that gap. Students are often surprised that what they learned in their theology class is vitally related to what they learned in their economics class."

During Acton’s visit, students showed up eager to watch the next episode of “The Good Society,” Acton’s latest media project. “The Good Society” is a series of free, short films exploring the economic, moral, political, social and theological foundations of a flourishing society. As the students gathered, Sanders dimmed the lights and began screening the short film. Through a mix of animation and live action, the episode she chose laid the groundwork for viewing economics as a person-centered endeavor.


Sanders kicked off the discussion using “The Good Society” study guide. Shy at first, the students began to warm up, talking to both Sanders and one another about the social nature of economics and a Christian vision of freedom.

“When you say economics has to be based around the human person, that’s interesting,” said one girl. “It reminds me of the episode where Father Sirico compared the free market to economic systems that don’t respect human dignity. It shows why we’re better off to have a society that puts the rights of an individual first, instead of a system like fascism.”

Another student chimed in, “Free markets wire people to cooperate. It makes so much more sense than socialism.”

For Sanders, these insights are precious. “Many of our students are bombarded with the message that business and free markets are bad. When they have that ‘aha’ moment watching a video or in classroom discussion, it makes me proud not only as a teacher but also as a citizen who wants to see a free future for America.”

To hear more of Cecilia’s story, watch the video at <https://offers.acton.org/ceciliasanders>.

To make a gift to support the work of Acton, visit acton.org/donate. 

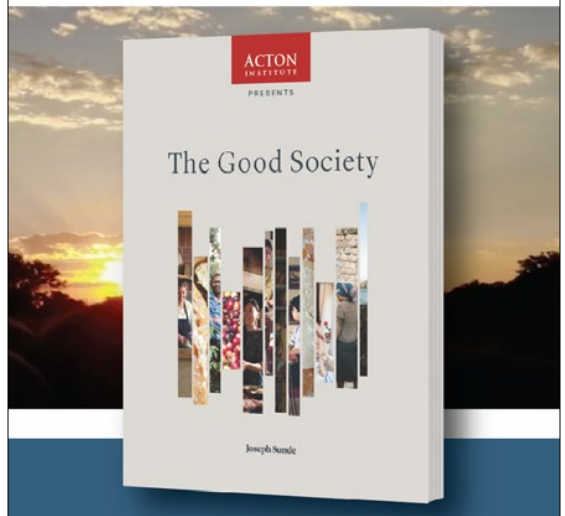


tgs

The Good Society

Watch free episodes at acton.org/tgs

USE THE GOOD SOCIETY
IN YOUR SMALL GROUP
OR CLASSROOM



Study Guide available at shop.acton.org

Upcoming book releases

Each year the Acton Institute is pleased to publish numerous books on subjects ranging from economics to theology to business, and this year is no exception.

In June, two new titles will be available for purchase in Acton's online book shop.

Written by the Dutch-born Jesuit priest Martinus Becanus in 1607, *On the Duty to Keep Faith with Heretics* offers an extraordinary perspective on the early modern debates about toleration and the binding force of agreements between people of different Christian faiths. Drawing on principles of contract law developed by jurists and theologians from the School of Salamanca, Becanus argues in favor of the duty to honor promises beyond confessional boundaries.

This first English translation of Becanus's *De fide haereticis servanda* allows modern scholars to discover a major work of one of the most prominent advocates of a permission concept of tolerance in the early modern period.

Wisdom's Work: Essays on Ethics, Vocation and Culture, by J. Daryl Charles, will also be available for purchase in June. In this new essay collection, Charles explores the earthiness of the Christian life through essays on vocation, work, ethics, education and the calling of believers to be salt and light in the world – the real world that we inhabit every day. What does life in Christ have to do with the stuff of our daily lives? Charles shares insights from nearly thirty years of reflecting on these and related questions.

All titles can be purchased at shop.acton.org. N

Acton alumnus awarded highest civilian honor in Brazil

On the morning of May 3, Acton University alumnus Marcel van Hattem was awarded the Order of Rio Branco, the highest civilian award in Brazil, by President Jair Bolsonaro. The award, established in February 1963, is named after the Brazilian diplomat, Barão do Rio Branco and given to “distinguish meritorious services and civic virtues.”

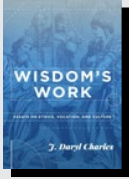
Van Hattem has proved to be one of the most influential leaders in Acton's broad alumni network consisting of more than 8,500 people. Since 2011, van Hattem has experienced a fast rise in Brazilian politics, now serving as a member of the New Party and a Federal Deputy from Rio Grande do Sul. The New Party was formed in 2011 around classically liberal principles, promoting limited government reform at every level.

In addition to his political activities in Brazil, van Hattem has been actively involved in the work of the Acton Institute, attending Acton's many events around the world. van Hattem and Acton's alumni network in Brazil are working tirelessly to promote a more free and moral society.

At Acton University 2018, serving as the master of ceremonies for one of the four evening plenaries, van Hattem had this to say about his first experience with Acton six years ago: “Much in my life has changed since my first participation in [Acton University] ... I was granted additional intellectual support and motivation to defend a free and virtuous society.”

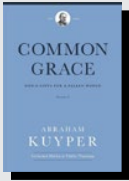
Please join us in congratulating van Hattem on this great honor. N

Acton Book Store - Top Sellers



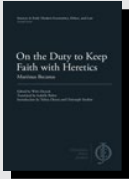
Wisdom's Work: Essays on Ethics, Vocation and Culture Sale \$14.95
By J. Daryl Charles

In this wide-ranging collection, J. Daryl Charles shares insights from nearly thirty years of reflecting on these and related questions. *Wisdom's Work* explores the earthiness of the Christian life through essays on vocation, work, ethics, education and the calling of believers to be salt and light in the world. **Softcover, 200 pages**



Common Grace: God's Gifts for a Fallen World: Volume 2 Sale \$49.99
By Abraham Kuyper

Common Grace is often considered Abraham Kuyper's crowning work, an exploration of how God expresses grace even to the unsaved. Kuyper firmly believed that though many people in the world will remain unconverted, God's grace is still shown to the world as a whole. **Hardcover, 864 pages**



On the Duty to Keep Faith with Heretics Sale \$29.95
By Martinus Becanus

This work offers an extraordinary perspective on the early modern debates about toleration and the binding force of agreements between people of different Christian faiths. Drawing on principles of contract law, Martinus Becanus (1563–1624) argues in favor of the duty to honor promises beyond confessional boundaries. **Hardcover, 180 pages**



BOOK TITLE	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Wisdom's Work: Essays on Ethics, Vocation and Culture	\$14.95	_____	_____
Common Grace: God's Gifts for a Fallen World: Volume 2	\$49.99	_____	_____
On the Duty to Keep Faith with Heretics	\$29.95	_____	_____

Make checks payable to "Acton Institute." For orders in the United States, Canada and Mexico: for the first item, add US \$6.75 for shipping, plus US \$1.00 for each additional item. Overseas orders: US \$8.75 for the first item, plus US \$1.75 for each additional item.

6% sales tax (MI residents): \$ _____
Shipping (see left): \$ _____
Total: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Security Code: _____

Master Card Visa Amex

Signature: _____

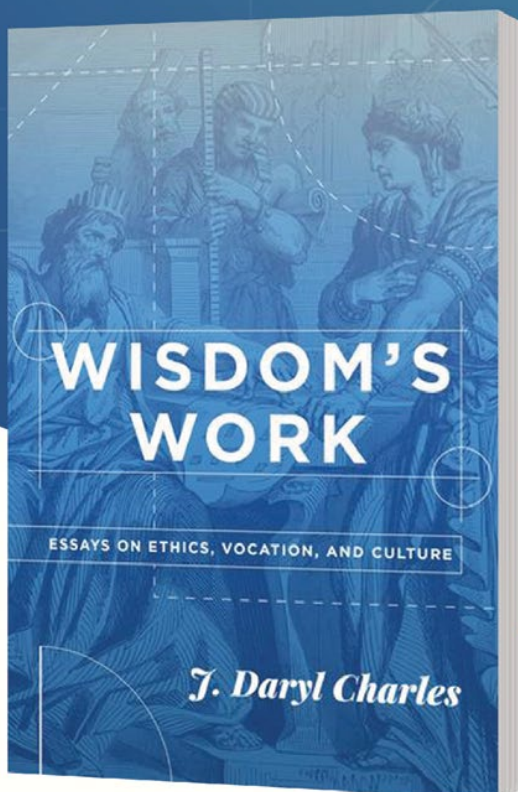
Expiration Date: _____

CALL 616 454 3080

FAX 616 454 9454

MAIL Acton Institute, 98 E. Fulton St, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

98 East Fulton Street, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 USA



IN THIS COLLECTION,
J. DARYL CHARLES explores
the earthiness of the Christian
life through essays on vocation,
work, ethics, education, and the
calling of believers to be salt
and light in the world—the real
world that we inhabit every day.

\$14.95 PAPERBACK • 200 PAGES

On Sale Now

shop.acton.org