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INTRODUCTION

There has been a renewed and increasing interest in the thought of Jacques Maritain. An International Center has been founded in Rome; the American Maritain Association was established in May, 1977; the University of Notre Dame recently reorganized its Maritain Center; the Editor of Renascence is planning a special issue on Maritain's contribution to literary and artistic criticism; Le Cercle d'Etudes Jacques et Raissa Maritain (Kolbsheim, France) is planning a definitive edition of Maritain's works. Maritain continues to be the principal ideologue for the Christian Democratic parties of Latin America. These are but a few of the "signs of the times."

The American Maritain Association decided that this renewed interest in Maritain ought to be grounded in a careful study of Maritain's major works. It therefore organized a Conference-Seminar for an in-depth restudy of his master work, Les degrés du savoir. This work - his most thorough, systematic and scholarly work - has a unifying theme in Maritain's rethinking of Thomistic epistemology, yet it includes applications to most fields of human culture: metaphysics, natural science, mysticism, prayer, mathematics, ethics, etc. An intense concentration on this work provided an in-depth introduction to Maritain for those whose acquaintance with his ideas has been limited, as well as profound renewal for those who have

studied him in the past.

The purpose of the Conference-Seminar was not simply to present a symposium of independent papers on Maritain. Rather, it was to develop an integrated presentation of his major ideas with critical comment and projected developments through a serious discussion by Presentors, Discussants, and participants. Each Presentor undertook to provide an authentic presentation of Maritain's own thought. The Discussants tested the accuracy of the presentation, raised problems and questions, and directed the discussion toward evaluating Maritain's present and future contributions to culture. Since the purpose was to hold a true "seminar," a concentrated study, each participant was asked to reread and restudy Maritain's Degrees of Knowledge before coming to the Seminar.

The Seminar was held at Saint Louis University on May 9-10, 1980, with some 125 registrants in attendance. It was co-sponsored by the Department of Philosophy, the Metropolitan College and the McDonnell Professorship of Saint Louis University and the University of Notre Dame's Jacques Maritain Center.

The Executive Committee of the Association decided to publish selected papers from the Conference-Seminar.

The Association's Program Committee consisted of:

R. J. Henle, S.J., Chairman
Saint Louis University

Marianne Childress
Saint Louis University

Ralph McInerny
University of Notre Dame

Raymond Dennehy
University of San Francisco

Kenneth L. Schmitz
Trinity College (Toronto)

Desmond J. FitzGerald
University of San Francisco

Joseph J. Califano
St. John's University (Jamaica, New York)

The Local Arrangements Committee consisted of:

R.J. Henle, S.J., Chairman
Saint Louis University

Marianne Childress
Saint Louis University

George Friesen (Metropolitan College)
Saint Louis University

Dorothy Mattingly (Metropolitan College)
Saint Louis University

The Chronicler of the Conference-Seminar was Dr. Vukan
Kuic, University of South Carolina.

NOTE CONCERNING
THE AMERICAN MARITAIN ASSOCIATION

The American Maritain Association was established at a First Conference at Niagara University in May, 1977. Its purpose is stated in the Preamble to its Constitution:

This Association is founded by those who wish to perpetuate the wisdom, influence and inspiration of Jacques Maritain as a Catholic intellectual, a saintly Christian, and a classical creative exponent of the philosophia perennis which has a living Thomism as its main embodiment for today and the future. The intercultural and interdisciplinary range of Jacques Maritain's work provides inspiration and guidance to maintain the basic insights of the thought of Saint Thomas, to enrich Thomism with the fruits of modern culture both Western and world-wide, and to relate it in a mutually beneficial way to the contemporary intellectual and practical disciplines. In line with this inspiration, the Association will promote research, study, and critical interpretations of all aspects of Jacques Maritain's life and work, especially as that work continues and extends into broader areas the tradition of Saint Thomas' thought. In this way, Maritain's integral humanism can become a guiding vision for all time.

Current officers are:

President:	Donald A. Gallagher De Rance Foundation
First Vice-President:	R. J. Henle, S.J. St. Louis University
Second Vice-President:	Ralph J. Masiello Niagara University
Secretary-Treasurer:	Anthony O. Simon

The Association is not an exclusively philosophical society; those interested in any aspect of Maritain's thought are invited to enroll. Current dues are \$8.00 per year.

Send membership application and dues to:

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Mishawaka, Indiana 46554