

# *Marcel Studies*

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Hello again to all Marcel scholars around the world, and to all friends of Marcel and fellow travelers! I am very pleased to introduce what is now the ninth issue of *Marcel Studies*. As we have often noted, Marcel's ideas are still relevant to our contemporary concerns in any number of areas, from worries about the effects of technology, to responses to the modern epidemic of alienation and loss of meaning, to the effects of war and destruction on the human race and on our planet, to the continued attempts to understand the nature of the human person.

The first article in Volume 9, by Andrew Parrish, deals with a very timely issue—that of hospitality in modern culture. Parrish presents a reconstruction of Gabriel Marcel's philosophy of hospitality, and some elements of his underlying philosophical anthropology. He provocatively challenges the general understanding that hospitality should be conceived primarily in terms of a gift offered from a "possessor" to a "needer." Drawing on the work of both Sartre and Marcel, the author suggests that this conventional approach to "hospitality" can conceal a profound and exploitative egotism. Counter to some readings of Marcel, Parrish develops the argument that Marcel offers a radically inverse account of hospitality in which it is the host who possesses nothing, and the guest who gives the gift of remembrance of "being on the way," the human condition of pilgrimage. Parrish's intriguing research raises a series of provocative reflections about what hospitality means, what we intend when we practice it, how it is received, and its role in human relationships.

Technology, of course, is a topic on everyone's mind these days. The article by Nathan Tartak turns to a renewed consideration of Marcel's views on this topic and their continued relevance as we try to navigate our way through the many implications of technology for the modern world. After an overview of the phenomenological aspect of Marcel's approach to philosophy and how it flows into a traditional understanding of *teleology*, Tartak then introduces the sacral dimension which, he argues, is key to understanding Marcel's critique of technology. He then considers the role and usefulness of technology in light of the human person's need to maintain an ontological dimension, before turning to a comparative exchange between Marcel and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Tartak brings his discussion to a conclusion by examining whether or not our continued pursuit of technology is justified.

In our *Philosophical Notes* section, Teofilo Giovan S. Pugeda III, offers a comparative study of Marcel's metaphysics of hope and German theologian, Jürgen Moltmann's, theology of hope in order to develop a narrative of hope for our time. Pugeda argues that Marcel's understanding of the human disposition to hope is complemented by Moltmann's account on how that hope may

be fulfilled. The paper highlights the notion that the Christian experience of hope necessitates the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth through compassionate solidarity with others, especially the poor, lost, and least.

This issue also contains a reprint of an influential article from the past reflecting on Marcel's view of prayer by the Belgian Jesuit scholar, Fr Roger Troisfontaines, S.J. Originally published in French in 1953 and here translated by Professor Matthew Del Nevo, Troisfontaines approaches the phenomenon of prayer, based on reading and reflection on Marcel's work, not as a technique for producing results but as a mode of being and as a personal participation in the Transcendent. Developing the notion that prayer is a humble communion with God—integrating worship, sacrifice, petition, and fidelity—aimed at presence rather than possession, the author, drawing on Marcel's various notes and papers, rejects any scientific or psychological measures of efficacy, arguing that prayer “works” by transforming the believer in the order of being, and not by any measureable “causality.” Troisfontaines suggests that, for Marcel, prayer is experienced as an existential encounter in which suffering, hope, and joy are integrated into a lived relationship with God, accessible through the order of faith. We are most grateful for Dr Del Nevo's translation of this rich set of reflections on what is a key dimension of human life.

In our Book Review section, Martin Robb reviews a recent collection of essays that take up themes that consider Marcel as both philosopher and dramatist, alongside his philosophical and literary contemporaries Jean-Paul Sartre and Jean Wahl. Geoffrey Karabin reviews Petruschka Schaafsma new work on the nature of the family. Eschewing the framework of worry and renewal that currently dominates family studies, she explores the topic through the concepts of “givenness” and “dependence.” “Givenness” highlights the fact that family is not chosen; “dependence” refers to being intimately included in each other's identities and lives, her analysis invoking Marcel's ideas along the way.

Our “News and Views” section is again packed with interesting notices, reports and updates on all things Marcel! As well as reports on the *Gabriel Marcel Society* meeting at the University of Notre Dame as well as the Third Annual Conference at the *Gabriel Marcel Institute* Sydney, Australia, there is also an obituary of Fr Thomas Flynn, long time scholar of Marcel and of Continental Philosophy. Also, what are Marcel's thoughts on hope? The answer can be found in this section of the Journal!

We are grateful for the support of all of our contributors and readers over the years, and we encourage those working on Marcel to consider submitting their work to the Journal. I want to remind all potential contributors that *Marcel Studies* is an on-line peer reviewed, international Journal dedicated to furthering understanding and appreciation of the work of Marcel. We welcome submissions from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives on topics and themes that pertain to any aspect of Marcel's thought. We encourage younger scholars especially to submit their work to the Journal. The editors will make a special effort to work with younger scholars in an attempt to bring the fruits of their scholarship to a worldwide audience. The aim of our Journal is not only to promote, but to encourage, Marcel scholarship, and, keeping in mind also

that the Journal is interdisciplinary, one of our goals is to help prospective authors in a variety of fields bring their work to publication.

For those wishing to become a member of the Society, please send an email to the address below.

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