

Words of Wisdom
A Philosophical Dictionary

In his encyclical *Fides et ratio* (1998), John Paul II called on philosophers who would have their efforts meet the demands of the “word of God” (i.e., revelation) to pursue forms of thought that are truly “sapiential”—by contrast, e.g., with certain historicist, scientific, and/or nihilist trends of the day. While the Pope recognized that this task may appear “daunting,” he noted that today’s philosophers are not without resources: we can and should undertake our efforts “in organic continuity with the great tradition which, beginning with the ancients, passes through the Fathers of the Church and the masters of Scholasticism and includes the fundamental achievements of modern and contemporary thought” (#85).

Over the past several years, I have developed a philosophical dictionary inspired by the call of *Fides et ratio*. With the working title *Words of Wisdom*, its distinctiveness lies precisely in its being ordered to a contemporary renewal of the “great tradition” to which John Paul referred—a classical Christian tradition of reflection in which philosophy plays an integral role. If a dictionary is to serve this tradition, it must contain essential terms, together with their distinct uses, of key figures alluded to in the above quotation (in particular, but not exclusively, St. Thomas Aquinas and his school). If it is to be contemporary, it must include references to salient elements—both complementary and competing—of today’s intellectual culture. The present volume seeks to do these things.

Currently in print are more than a dozen books that their publishers call “philosophical dictionaries.” Some of these might rather be characterized as one-volume encyclopedias, since they focus on philosophical topics and figures, rather than on terms and meanings as such. Regarding the others, a search of their entries for terms of special significance to the great tradition—e.g., act, being, conscience, end, good, intellect, moral precept, natural, perfection, subsistence, transcendental, voluntary, and wisdom—reveals that, in spite of containing much useful information, these dictionaries lack essential resources for a new generation of students of the “perennial,” or, as John Paul II also called it (*Fides et ratio*, #106), “enduringly valid philosophical tradition.”

As far as the present author can determine, the last effort to produce a comprehensive dictionary of the present sort was undertaken a half-century ago by Bernard Wuellner, S.J., in his *Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy* (Bruce, 1956). Only a few used copies of this volume are to be found; and, quite apart from the older book’s scarcity, the new state of Western intellectual culture, along with developments within the perennial tradition itself, make a new effort seem eminently worthwhile.

The dictionary I have prepared contains approximately 1200 distinct entries (not counting ones that simply refer the reader to other entries). It runs to more than 320 manuscript pages. An Introduction (appended) reviews the points noted above and explains the principles of selection and construction of the entries.

INTRODUCTION

The Nature of This Dictionary

The present volume offers readers a philosophical dictionary. Its distinctiveness in part lies in its being shaped by the understanding of rational reflection articulated in John Paul II's encyclical Fides et ratio (1998).¹ The dictionary focuses on the movement of thought referred to by the late Pope as the “enduringly valid philosophical tradition” (Fides et ratio, #106). Many proponents of this tradition, especially within the Thomist school (i.e., the school that follows principles developed by St. Thomas Aquinas), have called it “the perennial philosophy.”² It should be noted, however, that if one is to pursue John Paul's approach, one's interest must not be limited to a single school; moreover, the “enduringly valid” stream of philosophy both draws from and contributes to a wider body of reflection—one which is referred to in Fides et ratio simply as the “great tradition,” and which might be characterized more fully as the “classical Christian tradition,” or, to use a phrase of Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J., the tradition of “integral Christian wisdom.”³

In a key passage from the encyclical, the late Pope remarked that “philosophers who wish to respond today to the demands which the word of God [i.e., revelation] makes on human thinking should develop their thought...in organic continuity with the great tradition which, beginning with the Ancients, passes through the Fathers of the Church and the masters of Scholasticism and includes the fundamental achievements of modern and contemporary thought.” (Fides et ratio, #85.) Within this great tradition, the work of Aquinas indeed occupies a special place (although not a point of final completion): “In an age when Christian thinkers were

rediscovering the treasures of ancient philosophy, and more particularly of Aristotle, Thomas had the great merit of giving pride of place to the harmony which exists between faith and reason”—and to ways in which reason, when properly attuned to reality, can make substantive contributions to this harmony. Thus, says John Paul, “the Church has been justified in consistently proposing St. Thomas” as a “master” of Christian wisdom and a “model” for other thinkers to follow. (Fides et ratio, #43.)

This dictionary seeks--through a careful exposition, discussion, and noting of relations among philosophical terms--to contribute to the ongoing renewal of the classical Christian tradition; it also seeks to assist in making this tradition available to students, scholars, and other interested readers.

In order to specify our project further, let us situate it within the overall genre of the specialized dictionary.

Among materials developed to facilitate student learning and scholarly activity, specialized dictionaries have come to occupy an important place. This is perhaps most obviously so in relation to disciplines of the natural sciences, along with associated areas of technology and bio-medical practice. In these areas, positive knowledge and the language used to express it make regular and commonly agreed upon advances—advances that need to be accessible in an organized fashion to practitioners, students and others. For somewhat similar reasons, one also finds dictionaries of technical terms related to the law and other areas of professional practice.

What should be said in this regard about the discipline and practice of philosophy? Here well-crafted dictionaries also can play an important role—although in somewhat different ways and for somewhat different reasons.

Philosophy is a disciplined search for, and attempt to articulate, answers to ultimate questions—in particular, ultimate questions about how things are (the subject matter of “speculative” philosophy), and ultimate questions about how human persons should act (the subject matter of “practical,” e.g., moral and political philosophy). Philosophy does not—except in an incidental way, via the history of its theories and systems—result in a body of positive knowledge. Further, given the intrinsic difficulty of philosophical topics, along with a variety of cultural factors, this enterprise, while disciplined, only rarely produces commonly agreed upon advances. Thus a dictionary of philosophy will have other purposes, and will gain its importance in other ways, than a dictionary of positive science or technology. At one level, this type of dictionary also presents and defines specialized terms; but its deeper purpose is to serve as a resource for those wishing to master—and to participate in—a comprehensive tradition (or traditions) of thought.⁴

In their efforts to address ultimate questions, philosophers and philosophical traditions often use everyday words in extended or novel ways. In addition, new forms of language are regularly developed to express a philosopher’s or a tradition’s insights. The result is a profusion of conflicting terminologies—or of conflicting interpretations of terms used in common; and this in turn makes it difficult for the student—and even, at times, for the academic specialist—to confidently follow the discussions.

In part to address the need for clarity and understanding, a number of philosophical dictionaries have appeared in English in recent years. Those in print at the time of this writing include the following: Adler's Philosophical Dictionary, by Mortimer J. Adler (New York: Touchstone, 1995); Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy, by Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu (New York: Blackwell, 2004); The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, general ed. Robert Audi (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1995); A Dictionary of Common Philosophical Terms, by Gregory Pence (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000); A Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Antony Flew and Stephen Priest (London: Pan Books Limited, 2002); A Dictionary of Philosophy, 3rd ed., by A. R. Lacey (London: Routledge, 1996); The Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Citadel Press Reprint, 2001); Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought, expanded ed., by William L. Reese (New York: Humanity Books, 1998); The HarperCollins Dictionary of Philosophy, 2nd ed., by Peter A. Angeles (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); The Oxford Companion to Philosophy, ed. Ted Honderich (New York, Oxford University Press, 1995); The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, by Simon Blackburn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy, by Thomas Mautner (London: Penguin Books, 2000); Philosophical Dictionary, enlarged ed., by Mario Bunge (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003); The Philosopher's Dictionary, 3rd ed., by Robert M. Martin (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2003); and A World of Ideas—A Dictionary of Important Theories, Concepts, Beliefs, and Thinkers, by Chris Rohmann (New York: Ballantine Books, 2000).

Also to be noted are more focused dictionaries devoted to the specialized terminologies of individual historical figures, as well as glossaries appended to introductory textbooks in philosophical subject areas and to volumes of selected writings.⁵

The dictionaries of philosophy listed above manifest a great diversity in both style and content. Some of them—e.g., The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy and the Oxford Companion to Philosophy—might more accurately be characterized as one-volume encyclopedias.⁶ These works incorporate articles (some of them very lengthy) by scholars representing various schools and areas of interest. The articles themselves are generally self-contained and only minimally connected with one another. Moreover, while these volumes certainly undertake some explanation of philosophical terms, their focus is rather on the topics, approaches, and thinkers being surveyed.

Other recent philosophical dictionaries focus more directly on terms and their meanings. However, in general they make little effort to give a systematically ordered presentation—let alone one that coheres with the vision of John Paul II and the tradition of integral Christian wisdom. Indeed, a search of these volumes' entries for philosophical terms of special importance to the perennial tradition—e.g., *act, being, conscience, end, existence, good, intellect, moral precept, natural, perfection, subsistence, transcendental, voluntary, and wisdom*—reveals that, despite containing much useful information, these dictionaries are only marginally helpful if one's specific aim is to master the “great tradition.”⁷

Moreover, while glossaries of terms are welcome additions to recent philosophical texts, they are neither sufficiently broad nor sufficiently detailed for present purposes; even the most accurate of them do not facilitate a grasp of the classical Christian tradition in its comprehensiveness, its depth, and in the relations among its key concepts.

Another genre of scholarly dictionary should be noted: that of the linguist or literary scholar. Such a work contains very detailed accounts of all words (sometimes including an exhaustive list of actual occurrences) that appear in the original writings of a historical figure or movement. An excellent example of such a literary dictionary—and one relevant to our own subject matter—is the magisterial Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas, prepared by Roy J. Deferrari in 1960 and maintained in print by the Daughters of St. Paul.⁸

To situate the present volume within the above context, the following points may be made. First, this dictionary is less universal in scope than the philosophical encyclopedias and also less universal than some (although not all) of the other genuine dictionaries.⁹ At the same time, however, it is much more systematically organized than current instances of either type of volume. (For example, while some of the other dictionaries offer, as does this one, etymological accounts of key philosophical terms, none of them note the terms' respective parts of speech—or the significant differences in meaning that can attend a single word when it is used as different parts of speech. As discussed below, the present dictionary takes care to do these things.) Moreover, regarding the “perennial tradition” on which it focuses, this book in fact is significantly more comprehensive than any other philosophical

dictionary in print. It also, of course, is both more comprehensive and more systematic than the topical or historical glossaries. And, while it is less exhaustive in its treatment of linguistic items than the work of a literary scholar, this is due to its being grounded in a distinctive set of intellectual concerns and its being aimed at a distinctive set of audiences. These last points call for elaboration.

As a comprehensive dictionary, this volume seeks to present a relatively complete account of the (sometimes multiple) uses of philosophical terms regularly employed in the classical tradition, with attention to ways these terms have arisen in the context of, and contributed to the development of, Christian and specifically Catholic doctrine. Further, the present volume seeks to enable the reader to compare and contrast these philosophical ideas with those of other traditions of thought—especially ones that compete for the allegiance of the contemporary mind. In all of this, the book proceeds in a highly systematic manner and from a consistent point of view.

Such features are perhaps especially appropriate in a work that seeks to build on the traditions of the Church Fathers and St. Thomas Aquinas. As Yves R. Simon remarked concerning the latter, Thomists hold that there can be no substitute for “clarity in the statement of questions and principles, firmness in inference, ..., appropriateness in predication, integral preservation of past developments, lucid order, and the unique defense against error that rational forms alone can provide.”¹⁰

As far as the present writer can determine, the last attempt to produce a comprehensive dictionary for the perennial tradition was undertaken a half-century

ago by Bernard Wuellner, S.J., in his Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy.¹¹ Wuellner's volume, while still useful, has long been out of print. Moreover, given certain dramatic changes in Western intellectual culture, as well as developments within the "great tradition" itself, a new effort along this line seems eminently warranted.

As has been noted by scholars, one key development in the great tradition over the past half-century has been a renewed recognition of historical relations between philosophy and theology, and an interest in greater interaction between these disciplines today. Thus, speaking of a "Thomistic renaissance" and a "new Scholasticism" in recent decades, Aidan Nichols, O.P., notes that one of the "distinguishing features of the new movement" is "a desire to integrate the philosophy more thoroughly within an essentially theological vision."¹²

Such a desire coheres fully with John Paul II's understanding of the relations between reason and faith. In Fides et ratio, he referred to certain "requirements of revelation" for philosophers who wish their work to contribute to Christian reflection—e.g., that they seek to develop a philosophy of genuinely metaphysical range (see ## 80-84); he also referred to certain "demands of philosophical reason" regarding work of theology—e.g., that theological concepts be formulated in a critical and universally communicable way (see ##64-67). (It may be noted that in his only extended discussion of this encyclical, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger—now Pope Benedict XVI—stressed these very points; and he remarked that, given Christianity's universal claims and universal destiny, "it must stand in dialogue with philosophy."¹³) Finally, responding to an issue debated throughout the 20th C., John Paul articulated a multi-faceted account of a mode of thought that would merit the name

“Christian philosophy” (#76). (For detailed accounts of these notions, see the respective entries in this Dictionary.)

Commenting on the late Pope’s vision, Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J., suggests that—due to inhospitable features within the contemporary intellectual climate —“philosophers and theologians who wish to implement [this vision] must resolutely struggle against mighty odds;” but he also proposes that “a measure of success is attainable, especially in universities that stand within the Christian and Catholic tradition.” He adds that “a revitalized Christian philosophy could reinvigorate our nation and our culture.”¹⁴

Regarding the intended audience, or audiences, for this Dictionary, there first should be mentioned students and teachers of philosophy and theology, insofar as they wish to participate in—or at least to grasp more clearly—the philosophical dimension of the classical Christian tradition. It seems likely that (as suggested by Cardinal Dulles) such students and teachers will primarily be found at institutions that maintain a Christian, and in particular a Catholic identity. A second audience for the Dictionary consists of certain broadly educated readers—specifically, ones ones with some knowledge of these matters, and at the same time a desire to pursue the perennial philosophy in greater comprehensiveness and depth. Finally, but very importantly, the author hopes that Catholic seminaries and institutes of theological formation will find the volume a useful resource. Certainly, the pursuit of integral Christian wisdom has been a subject of repeated exhortations by the Church’s hierarchy. For example, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council wrote, “Philosophical subjects should be taught in such a way that students are first of all gradually

led to a solid and coherent account of human nature, the world and God, guided by the philosophical tradition of lasting value [i.e., the perennial tradition]” (Optatam totius, #15). In accord with this statement, John Paul II regularly called for the great tradition—suitably open to newer forms of reflection—to be a central part of priestly training. Near the end of Fides et ratio, the late Pope spoke of the “grave responsibility to provide for the appropriate training of those charged with teaching philosophy both in seminaries and ecclesiastical faculties;” and he added that “teaching in this field [sc. philosophy] necessarily entails...a systematic presentation of the great heritage of the Christian tradition, and due discernment in the light of the current needs of the Church and the world” (#105).¹⁵ Also worthy of note is the revised Program of Priestly Formation (5th ed.), adopted by the American Catholic Bishops in June of 2005. In addition to retaining philosophy requirements in the college seminary curriculum, the Bishops called for the completion of a minimum 30 credits in philosophy as part of a two-year pre-theology program for candidates who enter the seminary after collegiate studies.¹⁶

Selection and Internal Structure of the Entries

The present volume, prepared under the title “Words of Wisdom,” contains approximately 1200 distinct entries (not counting ones that simply refer the reader to other entries). Each entry is a term—i.e., a word or phrase, together with its philosophical use(s)—judged significant in light of the intellectual concerns articulated above. Terms of the following general types have been selected for inclusion.

First, the majority of entries are ones that have specific meanings for philosophers in what we have identified as the perennial tradition (and, more particularly, the school of St. Thomas Aquinas). Where no other contextual indication is given, the reader may assume that the term in question, together with its definition or definitions, represent standard usage within this tradition. (Of course, a number of philosophical terms—e.g., basic terms of logic such as *deduction*, *premise*, *validity*, etc.—are shared by diverse intellectual traditions; thus there is nothing peculiarly Aristotelian, or Thomist, or Scholastic—or Christian—about them.)

Secondly, there are included a number of terms related to other major figures and movements in Western philosophy, especially ones with which the Christian tradition has had significant interaction. Among these terms are adjectival forms of the names of key historical figures—e. g., *Cartesian*, *Humean*, and *Kantian*—as well as standard designations for some of their leading doctrines—e.g., *rationalism*, *empiricism*, and *categorical imperative*. As is sometimes noted in the entries themselves, many of the latter philosophical doctrines should, to one degree or another, be contrasted with positions that have been developed by perennial philosophers.

Thirdly, there are included a number of terms representing what John Paul II called “the fundamental achievements of modern and contemporary thought” (*Fides et ratio*, #85). The late Pope urged that these achievements be incorporated as fully as possible within the ongoing “great tradition.” Examples from this category would be the names of certain recent philosophical movements (e.g., *phenomenology*, *personalism* and *linguistic* or *analytic philosophy*), together with technical terms

developed within these movements (e.g., *bracket*, *horizon*, *self-transcendence*, *necessary and sufficient conditions*, and *family resemblance*).

Fourthly, there are included terms representing significant contemporary challenges to a philosophy (and, therefore, a theology) rooted in the classical authors. As it happens, a number of these challenges are mentioned in passing in Fides et ratio itself (see especially ## 86–91)—e.g., *eclecticism*, *historicism*, *scientism*, *positivism*, *post-modernism*, and *nihilism*. The contemporary student and practitioner of the perennial philosophy should have access to the meanings of these contrary views, as well as the intellectual movements that support them.

Fifthly, in light of this Dictionary's setting within the Christian and specifically Catholic tradition, there are included certain terms that have arisen in theological and doctrinal contexts—e.g., *gifts of innocence*, *hypostatic union*, and *Real Presence*. In all such cases, the author's judgment is that the terms merit inclusion because they represent significant and still pertinent encounters between philosophy and the Christian tradition. (Needless to say, the accounts of the meanings of the terms in question should be compared with those given in reliable dictionaries of theology and Christian doctrine.)

Four additional remarks should be made concerning the selection of entries for this Dictionary.

First, it frequently happens that a single root word gives rise to more than one term of philosophical significance. In such cases, if the meanings of the terms in question differ importantly from one another, each is given its own entry in the present volume—e.g., *act*, *action*, and *actual*. (Similarly, in cases in which a single

word is used as more than one part of speech, and the meaning in the second instance is not simply derivative from that in the first, each part of speech is given its own entry—e.g., *abstract* (adj.), and *abstract* (v.).) On the other hand, in cases in which root-related words are such that one of them can be regarded as primary, and the meanings of the others can readily be construed by reference to it, the latter words (or parts of speech) are simply gathered together at the end of the single entry. In these latter cases, the identification of the “primary” word has been made in part by way of an assessment of the frequency of the words’ respective occurrences, and in part by way of an assessment of the structures of and relations among the words’ respective meanings.¹⁷ Judgments of these sorts are, of course, fallible—and even, in some cases, arbitrary. The author’s chief concern in dealing with such matters has been to make sure that all the words (and parts of speech) in question are somehow represented in the Dictionary, and that their respective meanings are rendered intelligible, without thereby producing any unnecessary multiplication of entries.

Next, it should be stressed that this Dictionary is intended to serve as an adjunct to—not as a substitute for—a careful reading of actual texts of Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and others in the “great tradition.” (The intelligent apprehension of these texts will sometimes involve identifying which of various meanings best fits particular occurrences of key terms.)

Further, it should be noted that this volume does not contain entries for many words of interest used in non-Western philosophies, as well as other world religions—e.g., “Atman,” “Brahman,” “karma,” “moksha,” “samsara,” “Tao,” etc.

This is not because of disdain for the other traditions; indeed, the reverse is the case. As John Paul II himself frequently noted, perennial philosophers, and the classical Christian tradition generally, must increasingly come to engage in fruitful contact with these forms of thought. (See the discussions in this Dictionary's entries for *world religions* and *inter-religious dialogue*.) Rather, the absence of terms such as those listed above is due to their treatment in other dictionaries and glossaries—e.g., specialized volumes devoted to Eastern philosophies and religions,¹⁸ as well as comprehensive volumes such as Reese's Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought, noted earlier. Such resources can serve the important purposes of comparison and contrast at least as well as any new set of entries that might be composed by the present author.

Finally, it should be added that many words of significance for philosophy do not appear in this—or in any—philosophical dictionary. These are words that form the common heritage of educated persons. In fact, it seems likely that, at least for many readers, a full understanding of the accounts offered in the present volume will require occasional consultation with another, more general wordbook. Thus the adept student of philosophy (like the adept student of most other disciplines) will have access to a good standard dictionary of the English language.

In keeping with the above points, this Dictionary's entries are constructed according to a common pattern. Each entry includes some or all of the following elements, arranged in the order indicated.

- a) The term is introduced, in *italic* type, with its (primary) part of speech

indicated in parentheses. Standard abbreviations for parts of speech are used: “adj.” for “adjective,” “n.” for “noun,” “v.” for “verb,” and “adv.” for “adverb.” (A number of entries here treated as linguistic units are, from the standpoint of grammar, compound terms or phrases rather than individual words and parts of speech.) After this basic information, there sometimes follows an etymological note. Given historical factors related to the classical Christian tradition, many philosophical terms that have been selected for the Dictionary are of Greek or Latin origin. (Where Greek origins are noted, the words in question are transliterated and anglicized according to the usual custom; readers interested in the Greek orthography should consult a dictionary of Ancient Greek, or a Greek/English lexicon.)

b) An account of the term’s meaning follows. Where a term has more than one meaning of philosophical significance, these are introduced separately by Arabic numerals: e.g., “*absolutely* (adv.): (1)....(2)....;” and “*natural* (adj.): (1).... (2).... (3).... (4)....” Within each account, any word placed in *italics* has an entry of its own, to which the interested reader may refer. (It is hoped that this system of internal cross-referencing will be an especially helpful feature of the present Dictionary.) Of course, not all possible cross-references are explicitly indicated—if they were, many terms would have definitions expressed almost entirely in italics! Rather, there have been selected for cross-referencing certain terms that are intrinsically important and whose connections might otherwise be overlooked. In cases in which an italicized term has two or more distinct and numerically separated meanings, and it is judged that the reader may have difficulty identifying which meaning is

pertinent, the one in question is indicated by a following Arabic numeral: e.g., “*being* (2)” or “*matter* (3).”

c) The account of meaning may be followed by a phrase or sentence that illustrates the term in actual use. Such phrases or sentences are marked by diamond-shaped brackets: i.e., “<...>”—with the term in question underlined.

d) In some cases, the entry includes further elaboration and discussion.

Where such discussion primarily serves to clarify the meaning of the term by way of historical or other information, it is placed in parentheses: i.e., “(....)” Where such discussion involves critical comments from the standpoint of perennial philosophy and/or the classical Christian tradition, it is placed in square brackets: i.e., “[....].”

e) After the account of meaning(s) and the additional discussion(s), if any, there sometimes occur indications of synonyms (preceded by “Syn:...”) or antonyms (preceded by “Ant:...”), as well as other entries that are of special relevance (preceded by “Compare....,” “Contrast....,” or “See....”). All such cross-references are italicized and placed in parentheses.

f) Finally, words of philosophical interest which are formed from the same root—and which do not receive distinct entries because their meanings are derivative and readily construed in light of the meaning(s) already given—are listed together, with their parts of speech, as follows: “Also:...”

Following the Dictionary proper is a general Bibliography. It includes works by and about the main figures of perennial philosophy, and the classical Christian tradition more generally; it also includes works representative of this tradition’s

interlocutors, past and present. All writers mentioned in Dictionary entries are cited in this Bibliography.

NOTES

¹ John Paul II, Fides et ratio (On the Relationship between Faith and Reason), Vatican Translation (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1998).

² The idea of “perennial philosophy” was nicely explained by the 20th C. Thomist Jacques Maritain, who is mentioned at *Fides et ratio* #74. Maritain wrote that this tradition, while it is rooted in ancient sources, it “is eternally young and always innovative, and involves a fundamental need, inherent in its very being, to grow and renew itself” in every age. (Jacques Maritain, A Preface to Metaphysics (London: Sheed & Ward, 1945), p. 2.) See also the discussion by Ralph McInerny (“RM”) in the article “*Philosophia perennis*,” in The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, general ed. Robert Audi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 580. Interestingly, in Fides et ratio itself, John Paul II nowhere used the expression “perennial philosophy.” But he had used it (under his given name, Karol Wojtyła) in his philosophical writings as a professor at the University of Lublin; and vestiges of it are to be found in the present encyclical (as in references to an “enduringly” or a “perennially” valid tradition.).

³ Avery Dulles, S. J., “Can Philosophy Be Christian?” in The Two Wings of Catholic Thought: Essays on Fides et ratio, ed. David Ruel Foster & Joseph W.

Koterski, S.J. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of American Press, 2003), p. 20.

⁴ As we shall see just below, the word “dictionary” is sometimes applied to volumes that in effect are encyclopedias; in the case of the latter works, the aims are somewhat different from the ones articulated here.

⁵ Regarding historical figures, see the Blackwell Philosopher Dictionaries Series, which currently includes volumes on the specialized terminologies of Descartes, Rousseau, Hobbes, Hegel, and Wittgenstein. (Significantly, there are no such works devoted to Aquinas or other Scholastics.) For a glossary appended to an introductory text, see, e.g., the one by Louis P. Pojman in Ethical Theory: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 4th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson, 2002). For glossaries in editions of selected writings, see in particular that by Peter Kreeft in A Summa of the Summa [i.e., the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas] (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990); and those by Richard J. Regan, S.J., in Thomas Aquinas: On Law, Morality, and Politics, 2nd ed., and in Thomas Aquinas: A Summary of Philosophy (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002 and 2003, respectively). See as well the glossaries appended to the 60 volumes of the mid-20th C. translation of the full Summa Theologiae by the Dominicans of the English Province, general ed. Thomas Gilby, O.P. (London: Blackfriars, 1965 et seq.). (A difficulty with the last set should be mentioned, however: since each volume’s list of words was prepared by the individual translator of the texts in question, when one reads across the respective glossaries one sometimes discovers that a single term is given rather different accounts.)

⁶ For more formally encyclopedic works, see The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward Craig (New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2005), as well as the older, but still useful eight volumes of The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, editor in chief Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

⁷ To take just one range of examples—but a crucial one. The present dictionary develops complex accounts of *be* (v.), *become* (v.), *being* (n.), *essence* (n.), *exist* (v.), and *existence* (n.). It also has separate entries on *act* or *actuality* (n.), *reality* (n.) and *subsistence* (n.), as well as on *time* (n.) and *eternity* (n.) as modes of existence (or, more strictly, of duration). Regarding “being” in particular, five different uses are here distinguished: 1) as a term that corresponds to “that which is;” 2) as a term that refers to the first of the transcendental perfections; 3) as a term that names the formal subject matter of metaphysics; 4) as a term that indicates the very act through which a thing exists; and 5), in the context of logic, as a term that expresses the uniting of a predicate with a subject. Now, some of the dictionaries mentioned earlier—e.g., Runes’ The Dictionary of Philosophy, and Reese’s Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion—although not marking all of these distinctions, provide helpful discussions of historical approaches to the topic of being, including those of Aristotle and the medieval Scholastics. Other dictionaries, however, are from the present perspective truly disappointing. For example, the Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy offers no accounts of either “be” or “being;” and its entry for “existence” simply identifies this concept as “the main subject-matter of metaphysics.” Again, The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy opens its discussion of “being” with the following statements: “Everything real and nothing unreal belongs

to the domain of Being. But there is little useful that can be said about everything that is real, especially from within the philosopher's study, so it is not apparent that there can be such a subject as Being by itself." And it adds, "A central mistake in the area is to treat Being as a noun that identifies a particularly deep subject-matter." From the standpoint of the perennial tradition, such remarks themselves reveal a deep misapprehension. Finally, in the entry for "existence" in his Philosophical Dictionary, Mario Bunge distinguishes "conceptual" from "material" existence, then offers the opinion that "an object exists materially (or really) iff [short for 'if and only if'] it is changeable" (emphasis added)—and thus he rules out by definition the very type of existence (viz., eternal) that the tradition of integral Christian wisdom identifies as supremely real and the source of all other existence!

⁸ Roy J. Deferrari, A Latin-English Dictionary of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Paul Editions reprint (Boston, MA: Daughters of St. Paul, 1986).

⁹ In particular, the present dictionary treats considerably more terms than those of either Adler or Pence, mentioned above. (This of course is not to deny the value of those volumes. Adler, in particular, gives well-crafted and engaging discussions of "125 Key Terms.")

¹⁰ Yves R. Simon, "Forward" to The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas, trans. Simon et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. xxiii.

¹¹ Bernard Wuellner, S.J., Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1956). (One also might note a unique book published during the following decade. Called Thomas Aquinas Dictionary, ed. Morris Stockhammer (New York: Philosophical Library, 1965), this volume consists entirely of quotations

from Aquinas's works—without any comment or elaboration—related to an alphabetized list of words from “Abstinence” to “Zeal.”)

¹² Aidan Nichols, O.P., Discovering Aquinas (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 142.

¹³ See Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, “Culture and Truth: Some Reflections on the Encyclical Letter, *Fides et Ratio*,” given as a lecture at St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, CA, and published in the Seminary quarterly The Patrician (Winter, 1999). (Available on-line at <http://www.stpatricksseminary.org/patwin99/ratzinger.html>.)

Consider as well this admirable passage in Cardinal Ratzinger's Principles of Catholic Theology, trans. by Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987): “The Christian mission [from the earliest period] sought to persuade men to abandon false religions and turn to the true one....In the struggle for the human soul it regarded, not the existing religions, but rational philosophy as its partner, and, in the constant disputes among the various groups, it aligned itself with philosophy” (p. 327).

¹⁴ Avery Dulles, S.J., “Can Philosophy Be Christian?” pp. 20-21.

¹⁵ See also similar remarks in John Paul II's Sapientia Christiana (1979), Ex corde ecclesiae (1990), and Pastores dabo vobis (1992).

¹⁶ As reported in the National Catholic Register, July 3 – 9, 2005, p. 11. (At this writing, the Bishops' document awaits formal approval by the Vatican.)

¹⁷ In many but not all cases this has resulted in taking a noun form as primary in relation to an adjectival form—e.g., “abundance” in relation to “abundant,” and “agnosticism” in relation to “agnostic” (but see “alienable” in relation to “alien-

ability”). Similarly, in many (but not all) cases this has resulted in listing a shorter word-form as primary in relation to a longer word-form—e.g., “act” in relation to “active,” and “accidental” in relation to “accidentally” (but see “aversion” in relation to “averse [to]”).

¹⁸ See, for example, a number of volumes in the series “Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements,” from Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

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