



The New Integralists

What they get wrong, and why we can't ignore them

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do integralists envision the Catholic tradition? How does it differ from the Second Vatican Council's vision for what the Church is, and how it exists in history?

2. Troutner says that the ideas that integralists now champion were once thought "dead and buried," dismissed as something not to be taken seriously. Why are they returning now? Where have you seen their influence?

3. What does integralism have in common with Trumpism or Orbánism? Where might they diverge?

4. Why might young people be interested in integralism? What are they looking for that they think it can provide? Why does integralism flourish, as Troutner says, "outside establishment channels"?

5. Debates about the role of temporal power within Christianity—whether Christians can participate in secular government, how the papacy should relate to temporal power, etc.—are nearly as old as the Church itself. How have Christians answered these questions throughout history? How do you answer them? What traditions and ideas help you answer them?

6. Why is religious liberty valuable? How do you enact and discuss your beliefs in a pluralistic society?

7. Arguably, integralism is a response to many genuine issues in our political life—for example, that politics as we know it does not envision and work toward the common good, or that religious and political beliefs are not always separable. Do you agree with any characterizations of liberalism or modernity that integralists make? How do you respond to the real problems they raise?

8. How can Catholics gain a better knowledge of their tradition? How can Catholic tradition, in its continuity and its variety, enlighten questions, issues, or problems in your own life and thinking?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Jason Blakely, "Not Catholic Enough," October 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/not-catholic-enough>

Slavica Jakelic, "Nationalism Without Idolatry," November 2019: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/nationalism-without-idolatry>

Tara Isabella Burton, "Bad Traditionalism," July/August 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/bad-traditionalism>

Paul J. Griffiths, "Under Pressure," May 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/under-pressure-0>

Francis Oakley, "Throne & Altar," August 9, 2019: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/throne-altar>

George Dennis O'Brien, "The Risks of History," May 3, 2019: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/risks-history>