

Dissertation Abstract:
“For God So Loved the World: Christian Responsibility in Romano Guardini”

Candidate: Christine Myers

Director: Dr. Nicholas Healy

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This dissertation investigates, through the works of Romano Guardini, the fundamental nature of Christian responsibility for the world. Uniting philosophical and theological reflection, this 20th century theologian provides the necessary principles for showing the nature and importance of this responsibility. Ultimately, its source and summit is found in the liturgy, where Christians come to share in God’s own love and responsibility for the world. **Chapter 1** introduces Guardini’s thought through his chair of Christian *Weltanschauung*, where he united the commitment to truth for its own sake with the grace of conversion. Following this same path, Christians come to participate in the gaze of Christ mediated by the Church. It is the contemplative foundation of Christian responsibility. In **Chapter 2** our attention turns to the human person. Responsibility is rooted in man’s embodied-spiritual nature with its constitutive relation to truth and its polar-unity with the world. Yet, even more profoundly, Guardini locates responsibility at the level of the person, existing as a “response” to God’s “call”. The relationship between God, the person, and the world are then examined from the perspective of Guardini’s critique of modern culture in **Chapter 3**. At the center of the modern and post-modern world, he discerns a grasp for absolute autonomy that ultimately denies truth and its Source. Where truth is denied, the world and the person are left vulnerable to sheer power. This culture of power contradicts the true logos of reality, which Guardini describes in terms such as mystery, encounter, gift, and reverence. Finally, Guardini identifies the roles of the individual, the state and the university in maintaining a culture of truth. **Chapter 4** leads us into the heart of Guardini’s theological reflection on God and the world. The creation accounts in *Genesis* reveal the value God himself gives to his creation, as well as his act of entrusting his “work” to humanity. In Christ, God shows his eternal love for finite being and his willingness to suffer a “destiny” shaped by created freedom. Christian responsibility is seen to include oneself, the others, the world, and even God. Yet, this responsibility is borne in and with Christ. It is

ultimately God who takes upon himself responsibility for the world and for humanity and its sin. **Chapter 5** attempts to interpret Guardini's writings on the liturgy in light of the preceding chapters. Human culture – by its own interior logic and that of personal being – is meant to culminate in the worship of the true God. Christ's Real Presence is the "New Beginning", capable of transforming its fallen reality. Within this absolute priority of the efficacious action of God, worship and culture mutually inform and influence each other. Yet, Guardini would remind us that the Church and each individual Christian follow a humiliated and crucified Lord. Where Christian responsibility for the world can be frustrated in its exterior realization, prayer and suffering in union with Christ retain their hidden fruitfulness.