



The Order of Things

Father James V. Schall

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Father James Schall, the well-known author and professor of philosophy at Georgetown University, inquires about the various orders found in the cosmos, the human mind, the human body, the city, and he seeks to reflect upon the unity of these orders.

In a world in which the presence of reason and order are denied - presumably in the name of science - in favor of chance explanations of why things are as they are, it is surprising to find that, in the various realms open to the human intellect, we find a persistent order revealed. At first sight, it may seem that this reality can be explained by chance occurrence, but after a point, there is a growing sense that behind things there is, in fact, an order. This order can be traced in the many areas that are open to the human mind. As Aquinas has noted, the order within the cosmos points to an order outside of it, since the cosmos cannot be the cause of its own internal order.

Philosophers have long inquired about the curious fact that the order of things implies not a mere relationship of one thing to another, but a hint that the universe is created with a certain superabundance. Why is the universe, and the things within it, not only ordered but, ordered with a sense of beauty?

Not only is there an order in things, but also the human mind seems attuned to this order as something it delights in discovering. This relationship implies that there is some correspondence between mind and reality. What is the relationship between the mind and reality? *The Order of Things* explores this question. Relying on common sense and the experience available to everyone, Schall concludes that it requires more credulity to disbelieve in order than to experience it. Finally, Schall explores the fundamental cause of order, what it is like? Having looked at the order of the created universe, it is not surprising that the revelation of the Godhead is itself ordered in terms of an inner relationship of Persons.

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