The present volume brings to completion an eight-year project, one of whose two principal aims has been to make available in English translation the whole of the extensive tract on efficient causality contained in Francisco Suarez’s *Disputationes Metaphysicae*. The first part of this project, an annotated translation of the general account of efficient causality found in Disputations 17-19, appeared in the Yale Library of Medieval Philosophy in 1994.¹ The present volume contains an annotated translation of Disputations 20-22, which deal with the divine actions of creation, conservation, and concurrence.

The project’s second, and no less important, aim has been to present Suarez’s conception of metaphysical inquiry and his account of efficient causality as full-fledged alternatives to the standard accounts of philosophical inquiry and of causality that dominate contemporary Anglo-American philosophy. This I have tried to accomplish by means of a long introduction that begins with an exposition of Suarez’s conception of metaphysical inquiry within the context of the Catholic Faith, outlines his general ontology and account of efficient causality, compares that account with its contemporary empiricist rivals, and ends with an exposition of the three disputations on divine action.

The first aim requires no explanation or justification, given Suarez’s stature as the most important scholastic metaphysician of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and as the preeminent early modern successor of the likes of St. Anselm of Canterbury and St. Thomas Aquinas.² The *Disputationes Metaphysicae* were published in 1597 and soon afterwards were being studied at all the major European universities, including the Lutheran universities of Germany. What’s more, Suarez’s role as a key representative of Aristotelian scholasticism in the seventeenth century has been well-documented and is receiving increasingly careful attention from experts on early modern philosophy.

The second aim, on the other hand, does require some explanation. My colleagues scoff — or at least smile — when I profess not to have a ‘scholarly interest’ in medieval metaphysics and ethics. But the claim is nonetheless truthful. Even though I deeply appreciate the good work that many scholars of medieval thought have done and continue to do, my own interest in medieval thought stems — and has always stemmed — from the deep-seated conviction that the Catholic scholastics were fundamentally correct in their conception of philo-

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² Suarez’s status among Catholic thinkers was recently enhanced by the explicit and laudatory mention of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* in Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998), § 62.
sophical inquiry and in the broad ethical and metaphysical assumptions that set
the problematics within which their own lively debates occurred. Furthermore,
my deepest ambition as a philosopher has been to promote and, in my own small
way, to contribute to the Catholic intellectual tradition. So reading and studying
the works of Suarez or St. Thomas or St. Bonaventure is for me (more or less)
just ‘keeping up’ with my profession, on a par with perusing the latest issue of
*The Philosophical Review* or the *Journal of Philosophy*. Indeed, at this point in
my philosophical career I do not need much more in the way of historical infor-
mation to understand the point of scholastic arguments or the reason why partic-
ular questions are raised when they are. For they are arguments that I myself
might (under ideal conditions) have proposed or questions that I myself might
have asked, given all the assumptions that I share in common with scholastic
authors.

The first and most important of these shared assumptions is the Catholic
Faith itself, which — as Pope John Paul II has recently argued in the encyclical
*Fides et Ratio* — provides an astonishingly rich and, to my mind, unrivaled affec-
tive and intellectual context for philosophical inquiry. The second shared
assumption is a deep sympathy with the best of classical Greek philosophy as it
has been appropriated by the Catholic intellectual tradition. In particular, I take
Plato’s conception of philosophical inquiry and of the life of the philosopher,
along with Aristotle’s conception of an individual substance endowed with a
nature, to be of central and lasting importance for the pursuit of wisdom. The
third and final assumption is a confidence in the power of human reason, when
situated within a fitting moral and affective context, to lead us to the discovery
of, as well as a deeper appreciation for, crucial metaphysical and moral truths.

In some ways these sympathies put me out of tune with modes of thinking
that have become entrenched among Anglo-American professional philosophers.
My sense of partial estrangement from my own guild was magnified a few years
ago at a public meeting, when friendly rival William Hasker, responding to my
‘scholastic’ critique of his argument for a non-traditional ‘open’ conception of
God, looked down upon me from on high — all six feet seven inches or so — and
exclaimed very slowly and very loudly, “Do you really mean to be reintroducing
form and matter at this late date?” After my initial embarrassment at being per-
ceived as backward, I realized that this was in fact exactly what I meant to do and
that perhaps I should be a bit more straightforward about it in the future. Thus
the origin of what my publisher has fondly labeled the “lengthy introduction” to
this volume.

Now a few words about the translation and notes. The Latin text of the
*Disputationes Metaphysicae* that I have used is a photocopy reprint (Hildesheim:
Georg Olms, 1965) of volumes 25 and 26 of Carolo Berton’s edition of Suarez’s
*Opera Omnia* (Paris, 1866). Disputations 20-22 occupy 99 double-columned
pages of volume 25, specifically pp. 745-843. For easy reference I have includ-
ed within the translation itself page and column designations from the Berton
edition. For instance, the designation ‘789b/’ indicates the second column on p.
789. In a few instances, I have also made use of the Latin text published with the seven-volume Spanish translation of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* made by Sergio Rabade, Salvador Caballero, and Antonio Puigcerver. When I depart from the Berton text, I indicate this by means of asterisks. Interpolated words and phrases are bracketed when their appropriateness is not wholly obvious, but I have kept the use of brackets to a minimum. Lastly, I have included the paragraph titles from Berton’s edition of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, since they are for the most part accurate as well as helpful to the reader.

I have adopted certain conventions for Suarez’s references to the works of other authors. First of all, I have left the Latin names of these authors in the text and have provided full names and dates in the Index of Names. The titles of Greek works, along with ancient and medieval commentaries on those works, are rendered in English. When a work of Aristotle’s is attributed to some other author, the reference is to that author’s commentary on the relevant Aristotelian work. The titles of Latin works that are not commentaries on Aristotle are retained in the original language, except for commentaries on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, which are given the simple English title ‘*Sentences*’. When St. Thomas’s *Summa Theologiae* or *Summa Contra Gentes* is attributed to another author, the reference is to that author’s commentary on St. Thomas’s work. References to an author’s quodlibetal questions are given under the simple title ‘*Quodlibeta*’.

Many of the notes to the translation involve simple cross-references to other sections of the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, while others are explanatory in nature. In the notes to both the introductory essay and the translation, references to the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* have been standardized, so that the first number before a period designates the disputation, the second number designates the section, and the third number designates the subsection. For example, ‘*DM* 18.2.36’ refers to Disputation 18, section 2, subsection 36. When the notes to the translation contain cross-references to other places within the current section and disputation, the number refers to the relevant subsection. So, for instance, the reference ‘§6’ in a note to *DM* 20.3 refers to subsection 6 of section 3 of Disputation 20.

Finally, a few acknowledgments. This second half of my project was supported by a generous grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities. I also want to thank those among my colleagues at Notre Dame who have encouraged me to bring this project to completion, even if some them (David Solomon and David O’Connor come immediately to mind) were motivated by a desire to see me get on to what they deem more important issues in ethics and meta-philosophy. I especially appreciated Jeffrey Brower’s insightful comments on the earlier parts of the introductory essay.

I must express a special debt of gratitude to my publisher, Bruce Fingerhut of St. Augustine’s Press. I had not yet sought a publisher for this volume when

Bruce decided to sell *Books in Philosophy* and invest the earnings in a new press devoted to philosophy, theology, and the history of ideas, with a special emphasis on Catholic thought. As I saw things at the time, I was doing him a favor by offering him the present volume. But given the rapid growth of St. Augustine's Press and Bruce's brilliant entrepreneurial skills, I now see that it was he who was doing me a favor.

The first volume of this project was dedicated to my wife Debbie, a living saint and friend to all in time of need. The second volume is dedicated to our children—David, Katie, Michael, Stephen, and Peter. Though on occasion they have heard me protest in exasperation, "Yes, Lord, I wanted children, but not these children," the fact is that these very children have enriched my life beyond measure, and that I have come to identify myself principally as their father and the husband of their mother.

*Alfred J. Freddoso*