

## Letter From President James Hitchcock

Old-fashioned history books written under Protestant or secularist auspices had a stock version of the history of the Catholic Church, which could be used in whole or in part, depending on the needs of the author.

The history went something like this: Jesus came to preach love and brotherhood. However, within a generation or two an organized Church had distorted His message. From the time of Constantine this Church virtually surrendered all real claim to continuity with Christ and became merely a worldly institution dedicated to wealth and political power. For centuries this Church was dominated by the Inquisition.

The Renaissance, however, saw a new celebration of human freedom and creativity, a rejection of the narrow pietism of the Middle Ages. (In this version of history the medieval Church is seen as somehow both worldly and cynical and also narrowly pious.) The Protestant Reformation marked a serious attempt to return to the purity of early Christianity, along with a new and bold assertion of freedom from ecclesiastical tyranny.

Unfortunately the Catholic Church responded to the Reformation, whose leaders were eager for ecumenical dialogue, with defensive aggressiveness. The Church retreated into a fortress and eyed the modern world with suspicion, systematically blocking the advance of science, political liberty, and all the other good things of the modern world.

When I was in a secular graduate school nearly twenty years ago, the professor of medieval history, who was said not to be a believing Christian of any kind, took pains to be as objective as possible about his chosen period, pointing out its genuine achievements to students most of whom were probably prejudiced against it. As the ecumenical thaw of the Second Vatican Council started, it looked as though partisan or sectarian approaches to history were being quickly forgotten.

It comes as a shock, therefore, to notice that this classic stereotype is alive and well, and one of its main loci is now students in Catholic colleges. Increasingly in recent years I have noticed how students seem to take this view of history, insofar as they have any view of history, simply for granted. In most cases it does not seem to be the result of any conscious animosity towards the Church. It is innocently held, roughly on a par with belief that the earth is round.

This is extremely puzzling, because most of these students are entirely products of the Catholic educational system. Insofar as they have any training in history, it has been in Catholic institutions. It appears, therefore, that somehow or other it is Catholic teachers, possibly supplementing Catholic textbooks, who are purveying this highly distorted and outmoded view of the Church.

Some of this seems theologically motivated – this classical stereotype fits in admirably with the belief that “real” Christianity has only been rediscovered in the past twenty years. Some of it may also reflect the teacher’s or the textbook writer’s own unresolved resentment against the Church.

More is at stake here than the study of history itself. Catholic students are deprived of the rich sense of tradition which is essential to genuine Catholicism. They are led to think that the Catholic past is essentially shameful and everything handed down from that past dubious if not pernicious. In the end they cannot face the future hopefully unless they have been enabled to build on the foundations their spiritual ancestors laid. At present it is doubtful if their educations enable them to do this.

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## Dr. Joseph Scottino Acting General Secretary

As of October 1st, 1980 Dr. Joseph Scottino, president of Gannon University Erie, Pa., by appointment of President Hitchcock, will become Acting General Secretary for the Fellowship, pending elections of new officers at the 1981 convention. In this capacity Dr. Scottino will process all applications of membership and conduct correspondence with members on general Fellowship business.

Dues collection will be continued with Msgr. Kelly until the 1981 convention, as will the editorship of the Quarterly Newsletter.

We are grateful to Dr. Scottino and to Gannon University for assuming an important share of the administration of Fellowship affairs.

## The Cardinal Wright Award

The Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, a society of Catholic Intellectuals in various disciplines who see their intellectual work as an expression of the service that they owe to God, presents the Cardinal Wright Award each year.

This award, in the form of a plaque, is given to a Catholic scholar whose substantial contribution to the intellectual life of the Church is characterized by those qualities that the Fellowship stresses – supporting the renewal of the Catholic Church undertaken by Pope John XXIII, shaped by Vatican II, and carried on by subsequent Pontiffs; upholding the teachings of the magisterium.

The Cardinal Wright Award was established to honor the memory of John Cardinal Wright (1909-1979), Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy (1969-1979), an American prelate whose intellectual service of the Church was a model of loyalty and devotion. The recipient of the award is designated by the Board of the Fellowship at its annual fall meeting.

The first award was given in 1979 to Msgr. George A. Kelly of St. John's University, New York for the contribution made by his book *The Battle for the American Church*.

The second award will be presented in Chicago on Sunday, September 21, 1980. The Fellowship's Directors had not made the 1980 selection as the Newsletter went to press.

## Significant Convention Statements

### *Fr. Donald J. Keefe, S.J. on "Toward a Hermeneutic of Sexuality"*

" . . . The proper and true meaning and significance of our sexuality is its sacramentality. As male or female, masculine or feminine persons, we are existential symbols of the holy; more, that symbolism is intrinsic to the truth of the revelation, Christ in his Church. Its truth then is mystery, as Paul has insisted: the fundamental mystery of the New Creation, the New Adam and the New Eve. So deeply rooted is the truth of our sexuality in the truth of the Catholic faith that any neglect of the former, any dilution of its splendor, imports some failure in the latter. This is a failure on the level of our sacramental worship, not to be remedied by further education or a higher level of sophistication, whether secular or theological. In short, we have here to do with sin, with the mystery of iniquity, the 'impossible possibility' of rejecting our own imaging of God. This possibility is always before us: that refusal to be which is the dark side of our dignity, a refusal of the light which enlightens all men.

"The recognition that our humanity is sacramental, and that all true statements about it must respect this sacramentality, must then govern our discussion of sexual morality, as it governs our understanding of the meaning of sexuality itself. We are forbidden a simple-minded reliance upon the results of scientific inquiry for the understanding of the language bearing upon sexuality, sexual activity, masculinity and femininity, for no empirical science is interested or can be interested in the sacramentality of humanity. To recognize this is not to dismiss the value of the sciences; it is only to remember that there is only one source of truth adequate to our needs: Christ in his Church, which no scientific methodology may be permitted to supplant. The various sciences may well provide indispensable questions, but even this they cannot do apart from their prior subordination to a transcendent truth which is beyond the range of any methodology. By this subordination, the science becomes theologies; lacking it, they can only continue to refuse to interest themselves in the sacramental truth of our humanity."

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### *Fr. Michael Wrenn on "Catholic Education in a Pagan Society"*

"*Sharing the Light of Faith* was the first Catechetical Directory to be submitted by a National Hierarchy to the Holy See for approval. It is evident from the letter from the Congregation of

the Clergy approving it that there was deep satisfaction with the final product, the fruit of the most extensive consultation in the history of the Catholic Church in this Country.

"Here was a catechetical tool that not only expressed a keen awareness of the contemporary Catholic scene in the United States. Whether the issue was that of content vs. experience; the inductive vs. the deductive method; religious education as a cognitive vs. affective enterprise; the community vs. the institutional model of the Church, the *Directory* exhibited a balanced approach. It did this by showing how each of the aforementioned dichotomies could be blended to achieve a catechesis that would consistently be both authentic in doctrine and moral practice as well as contemporary in tried and proven methodologies.

"Unfortunately, the ink was barely dry on this attractively printed document before many of the solid positions expressed in it began to be questioned or explained away. Catechetical revisionism had begun in earnest.

"In April of last year, a *Discussion Guide to Sharing the Light of Faith*, commissioned by the *National Conference of Diocesan Directors - CCD*, was distributed by the Department of Education of the United States Catholic Conference in Washington, D.C.

"Upon reading the *Discussion Guide* and especially the manner in which the questions for discussion are phrased it soon becomes apparent that this *Guide* is really an advocacy text justifying the continued retention in catechetics of a number of viewpoints which were considered to have been either sufficiently clarified, properly nuanced or even corrected in the final published version of the *National Catechetical Directory . . .*"

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### *Professor William A. Stanmeyer on "Moral Values and Law"*

" . . . Let me summarize quickly what is at stake in the pornography fight, because in my judgment it involves nothing less than the future of Western Civilization itself. I will state as fact matters which I assure you I could prove if time permitted, so that I can reflect on these facts to demonstrate the enormity of the scholarly abdication and failure to defend first principles. The facts are: (1) pornography is both anti-Christian and anti-Civilization; (2) pornography does sometimes cause sex crimes; (3) immersion in pornography always causes a warped, perverted attitude toward life and toward the opposite sex;

(4) it can render those addicted to it utterly psychotic; (5) it will spill out one's psychic energies so that he invariably fails to fulfill his intellectual promise because he is too dissipated; (6) it encourages imitation and experimentation leading to venereal disease; (7) it inculcates an unrestrained selfishness which utterly despoils the moral sensibility of those addicted, and carries over into their attitudes toward the Common Good, toward civic responsibility, and toward any form of sacrifice whether for their family, their country, or their God. Ultimately, a nation immersed in pornography will produce a youth incapable of stirring themselves to work for or protect any value or interest beyond immediate hedonistic self-gratification. And it scarcely needs saying that hard-core pornography, which is as literal an 'occasion of sin' as any moral theologian could imagine, is utterly antithetical to Christian asceticism and the spiritual life.

"Yet where are the articles in the scholarly journals demonstrating these truths? One is hard put to find law journal articles defending the ancient values the Supreme Court, as recently as 23 years ago, took for granted as virtually self-evident. It is hard to find extensive comment by clinical psychologists and psychiatrists as to the real harms which flow from pornographic involvement. When the landmark pornography cases went before the Supreme Court over the 1960's and 1970's, where were the Bishops, the Catholic universities, the various associations of philosophers and theologians and, for that matter, laymen, filing their well-reasoned *amicus curiae* briefs urging the case for public morality? Answer: by and large, they were nowhere to be seen . . ."

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*Professor Paul C. Vitz (New York University)  
"Christian Moral Values and Dominant  
Psychological Theories: The Case of Kohlberg."*

" . . . In spite of Kohlberg's attempt to defend the very existence of his stages many psychologists are quite dubious. Professor Robert Hogan (John's Hopkins), an especially lucid critic of Kohlberg, quite flatly states that there is no evidence that Kohlberg's stages exist. Of course, different patterns of moral reasoning or explanation exist, but the evidence for stage sequence, especially with respect to the higher stages does not exist, according to Hogan. Hogan bases his position partly on the fact, still true as of late 1979 as far as he knew, that Kohlberg's scale for measuring stages has not met the necessary standards of reliability,

validity, etc. to justify any conclusions about stage existence, much less the order of supposed natural development. Hogan also bases his criticism on evidence from his own research that strongly suggests, for example, that the difference between Stage 5 and Stage 6 individuals is a difference in personality type. To claim it is a difference in a level of moral maturity is, Hogan argues, simple an unacceptable expression of Kohlberg's political beliefs.

"In conclusion the empirical support for Kohlberg's model is very tenuous at best and although the issue is still an active one, at present the system is beleaguered and quite possibly it is already fading away. One prominent researcher, Joseph Adelson of the University of Michigan, commented "I suspect the system (of Kohlberg) is beginning to fall apart." Kohlberg himself describes his model as a "leaky boat" requiring much patching and which may sink."

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## Items of Interest

- The annual meeting of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians Guilds will be held at the Hyatt Regency, Chicago, September 19-21, 1980. The Board of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars will jointly meet with the NFCPG at a time still to be determined. The keynote address will be given by Fr. Charles Corcoran, O.P. and Fr. William Smith, Dunwoodie moralist, will speak on the formation of conscience on bio-ethical issues. Dr. Hitchcock, Dr. Ratner, Dr. Diamond, Dr. William Marshner, Fr. Joseph Mangan, Dr. William Lynch — all Fellowship members — are featured on the program.

Further information is available from the NFCPG at 850 Elm Grove Road, Elm Grove, Wisconsin 53122.

- *Communio* — The international Catholic review is in the process of expanding its readership and its influence. In these stormy Catholic days, *Communio* is a unique scholarly publication. One of the last of the Pope's efforts as a bishop in Poland was to attempt a Polish edition.

A \$10.00 subscription to *Communio* can be acquired by writing to Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington 99258. You may also arrange for subscriptions as Christmas presents for your friends. Since there is no billing, an advance check would be appreciated.

## George Santayana on Modernism

George Santayana wrote *Winds of Doctrine* in 1913 (Dent). Though baptized as an infant in his native Spain, he remained an unbeliever all his life, requesting at the end burial in the unconsecrated ground of Rome. His world fame as an agnostic Harvard professor co-existed with his fascination with the Catholic Church.

Chapter II, entitled "Modernism and Christianity" was written just about the time Pius X was suppressing that movement within official Catholic circles. Some of the poignant observations of this philosopher and literateur make interesting reading in 1980.

"Prevalent winds of doctrine must needs penetrate at last into the cloister. Social instability and moral confusion, reconstructions of history and efforts after reform, are things characteristic of the present age; and under the name of modernism they have made their appearance even in that institution which is constitutionally the most stable, of most explicit mind, least inclined to revise its collective memory or established usages — I mean the Catholic church . . ." pg. 25

". . . In more recent times we have heard of liberal Catholicism, the attitude assumed by some generous but divided minds, too much attached to their traditional religion to abandon it, but too weak and too hopeful not to glow also with enthusiasm for modern liberty and progress. Had those minds, been, I will not say intelligently Catholic but radically Christian, they would have felt that this liberty was simply liberty to be damned, and this progress not an advance towards the true good of man, but a lapse into endless and heathen wanderings. For Christianity, in its essence and origin, was an urgent summons to repent and come out of just such a worldly life as modern liberty and progress hold up as an ideal to the nations . . ." pg. 26

". . . The most primitive Christian faith consisted in a conversion of the whole man — intellect, habits, and affections — from the life of the world to a new mystical life, in answer to a moral summons and a prophecy about destiny . . ." pg. 29

". . . A supernaturalistic faith of this sort, which might wholly inspire some revolutionary sect, can never wholly inspire human society. Whenever a nation is converted to Christianity, its Christianity in practice must be largely converted into paganism. The true Christian is in all countries a pilgrim and a stranger; not his kinsmen, but whoever does the will of his Father who is in heaven is his brother and sister and mother and his real compatriot. In a nation that calls itself Christian every child may be pledged, at baptism, to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; but the flesh will assert itself notwithstanding, the devil

will have his due, and the nominal Christian become a man of business and the head of a family, will form an integral part of that very world which he will pledge his children to renounce in turn as he holds them over the font . . ." pg. 35-36

"In every age in which a supernaturalistic system is preached we must accordingly expect to find the world standing up stubbornly against it, essentially unconverted and hostile, whatever name it may have been christened with; and we may expect the spirit of the world to find expression, not only in overt opposition to the supernaturalistic system, but also in the surviving of supervening worldliness of the faithful . . ." pg. 37

"Modernism is the infiltration into minds that begin in being Catholic and wish to remain so of two contemporary influences: one the rationalistic study of the Bible and of church history, the other modern philosophy, especially in its mystical and idealistic forms. The sensitiveness of the modernists to these two influences is creditable to them as men, however perturbing it may be to them as Catholics; for what makes them adopt the views of rationalistic historians is simply the fact that those views seem, in substance, convincingly true; and what makes them wander into transcendental speculations is the warmth of their souls, needing to express their faith anew, and to follow their inmost inspiration, wherever it may lead them . . ." pg. 40-41

". . . The modernists' criterion of probability in history or of worthiness in philosophy is not the Christian criterion. It is that of their contemporaries outside the church, who are rationalists in history and egotists or voluntarists in philosophy. The biblical criticism and mystical speculations of the modernists call for no special remark; they are such as any studious or spiritual person, with no inherited religion, might compose in our day. But what is remarkable and wellnigh incredible is that even for a moment they should have supposed this non-Christian criterion in history and this non-Christian direction in metaphysics compatible with adherence to the Catholic church. That seems to pre-suppose, in men who in fact are particularly thoughtful and learned, an inexplicable ignorance of history, of theology, and of the world . . ." p. 43

". . . The modernist first chooses the path which must lead him away, steadily and for ever, from the church which he did not think to desert. He chooses a personal, psychological, variable standard of inspiration; he becomes, in principle, a Protestant. Why does he not become one in name also? Because, as one of the most distinguished modernists has said, the age of partial heresy is past. It is suicidal to make one part of an organic system the instrument for attacking another part;

and it is also comic. What you appeal to and stand firmly rooted in is no more credible no more authoritative, than what you challenge in its name. In vain will you pit the church against the pope: at once you will have to pit the Bible against the Church, and then the New Testament against the Old, or the genuine Jesus against the New Testament, or God revealed in nature against God revealed in the Bible, or God revealed in your own conscience or transcendental self against God revealed in nature; and you will be lucky if your conscience and transcendental self can long hold their own against the flux of immediate experience . . ." pg. 45-46

" . . . The Protestants, taking the Bible as an oracle which personal inspiration was to interpret, could reform tradition in any way and to any extent which their reason or feeling happened to prompt. But so long as their Christianity was a positive faith, the residue, when all the dross had been criticised and burned away, was of divine authority. The Bible never became for them merely an ancient Jewish encyclopedia, often eloquent, often curious, and often barbarous. God never became a literary symbol, covering some problematical cosmic force, or some ideal of the conscience. But for the modernist this total transformation takes place at once. He keeps the whole Catholic system, but he believes in no part of it as it demands to be believed. He understands and shares the moral experience that it enshrines; but the bubble has been pricked, the painted world has been discovered to be but painted. He has ceased to be a Christian to become an amateur or if you will a connoisseur of Christianity. He believes — and this unquestioningly, for he is a child of his age — in history, in philology, in evolution, perhaps in German idealism; he does not believe in sin, nor in salvation, nor in revelation. His study of history has disclosed Christianity to him in its evolution and in its character of a myth; he wishes to keep it in its entirety precisely because he regards it as a convention, like a language or a school of art; whereas the Protestants wished, on the contrary, to reduce it to its original substance, because they fondly supposed that the original substance was so much literal truth. Modernism is accordingly an ambiguous and unstable thing. It is the love of all Christianity in those who perceive that it is all a fable. It is the historic attachment to his church of a Catholic who has discovered that he is a pagan . . ." pg. 48-49

"The modernist, then, starts with the orthodox but untenable persuasion that Catholicism comprehends all that is good; he adds the heterodox though amiable sentiment that any well-meaning ambition of the mind, any hope, any illumination, any science, must be good, and therefore compatible with Catholicism. He bathes himself in idealistic philosophy, he dabbles in liberal politics, he accepts and emulates rationalistic exegesis and anti-clerical church history. Soon he finds himself,

on every particular point, out of sympathy with the acts and tendencies of the church to which he belongs; and then he yields to the most pathetic of his many illusions — he sets about to purge this church, so as not to be compelled to abandon it; to purge it of its first principles, of its whole history, and of its sublime if chimerical ideal.

The modernist wishes to reconcile the church and the world. Therein he forgets what Christianity came into the world to announce and why its message was believed. It came to announce salvation from the world; there should be no more need of just those things which the modernist so deeply loves and respects, and blushes that the church should not be adorned with — emancipated science, free poetic religion, optimistic politics, and dissolute art . . ." pg. 50-51

" . . . In a frank supernaturalism, in a tight clericalism, not in a pleasant secularization, lies the sole hope of the church. Its sole dignity also lies there. It will not convert the world; it never did and it never could. It will remain a voice crying in the wilderness; but it will believe what it cries, and there will be some to listen to it in the future, as there have been many in the past. As to modernism, it is suicide. It is the last of those concessions to the spirit of the world which half-believers and double-minded prophets have always been found making; but it is a mortal concession. It concedes everything; for it concedes that everything in Christianity, as Christians hold it, is an illusion . . ." pg. 56-57

## Requiescat in Peace

Fr. Martin Hopkins, OP  
of  
The Dominican House of Studies  
River Forest, Illinois  
died suddenly  
and  
was buried August 14th.  
Fr. Hopkins only recently  
attended our convention.

Pray For Him.

## Cardinal Newman on the Catholic University

“ . . . These Discourses have only professed to be preliminary, being directed to the investigation of the object and nature of the education which a University professes to impart, at the same time I do not like to conclude without making some remarks upon the duties of the Church towards it, or rather on the ground of those duties. If the Catholic Faith is true, a University cannot exist externally to the Catholic pale, for it cannot teach Universal Knowledge if it does not teach Catholic theology. This is certain; but still, though it had ever so many theological Chairs, that would not suffice to make it a Catholic University; for theology would be included in its teaching only as a branch of knowledge, only as one out of many constituent portions, however important a one, of what I have called Philosophy. Hence a direct and active jurisdiction of the Church over it and in it is necessary, lest it should become the rival of the Church with the community at large in those theological matters which to the Church are exclusively committed, — acting as the representative of the intellect, as the Church is the representative of the religious principle . . .” p. 190

“ . . . It is not sufficient security for the Catholicity of a University, even that the whole of Catholic theology should be professed in it, unless the Church breathes her own pure and unearthly spirit into it. and fashions and moulds its

organization, and watches over its teaching, and knits together its pupils, and superintends its action. The Spanish Inquisition came into collision with the supreme Catholic authority, and that, from the fact that its immediate end was of a secular character; and for the same reason, whereas Academical Institutions (as I have been so long engaged in showing) are in their very nature directed to social, national, temporal objects in the first instance, and since they are living and energizing bodies, if they deserve the name of University at all, and of necessity have some one formal and definite ethical character, good or bad, and do of a certainty imprint that character on the individuals who direct and who frequent them, it cannot but be that, if left to themselves, they will, in spite of their profession of Catholic Truth, work out results more or less prejudicial to its interests.

“Nor is this all: such Institutions may become hostile to Revealed Truth, in consequence of the circumstances of their teaching as well as of their end. They are employed in the pursuit of Liberal Knowledge, and Liberal Knowledge has a special tendency, not necessary or rightful, but a tendency in fact, when cultivated by beings such as we are, to impress us with a mere philosophical theory of life and conduct, in the place of Revelation . . .” (pp. 191-192)

(*Idea of a University, Discourse IX*)

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## More on Hans Kung

Two students of Hans Kung have written a little known book (in the United States at least) entitled *Hans Kung: His Work and His Way* (Glasgow, William Collins and Sons 1979). The aim of the book is to have people become better acquainted with the man. But as the authors — Hermann Haring and Karl Joseph Kuschel — explain: “This book is also meant to be a small token of gratitude from pupils to their master, from staff to their ‘boss’, an expression of thanks from those who for many years have in a spirit of critical loyalty joined with him in treading the difficult path of the renewal of theology and the Church.” (p. 9)

Sixty of the 125 pages of text are devoted to an interview with Kung himself, while an additional 60 pages form a bibliography of all that the Swiss theologian has written or has had translated into nine languages. The list is impressive and evidence of Kung’s influence in vast areas of the Catholic world. It is also a witness to his popularity as a salesman for his understanding of Christianity.

Kung traces his “breach” with Catholicism to his seven years in Rome (1948-1955): his disillusionment with the late years of Pius XII’s pontificate, dissatisfaction with neo-scholasticism, resistance to ecclesiastical obedience (“Whether I should follow the system or my own personal convictions” — p. 130), and his conflict with college authorities. (He does not mention that he had difficulty getting his dissertation approved in Rome). Kung very early decided: “the supreme norm for my attitude and behavior should not be some earthly, worldly or ecclesiastical authority and discipline but, if you will allow me the grandiloquent but very precise expression, only the will of God — in other words what in a particular situation I recognize as God’s will for me.” (p. 133)

Very early in his career he decided that Yves Congar’s distinction between true and false Church reform was itself false: “It struck me even then as important that we should set about a reform of doctrine.” (p. 149)

## A Fellowship Committee Report on the Significance of *Sapientia Christiana*

The Apostolic Constitution, *Sapientia Christiana*, was issued by Pope John Paul II on April 15, 1979. Authorized at the same time was the publication of *Norms of Application* prepared by the *Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education*.

This new Constitution, with its accompanying Norms of Application, will go into effect on the first day of the 1980-1981 academic year. By January 1, 1981, each Ecclesiastical University or Faculty must present its own Statutes, revised in accord with the Constitution, to the *Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education* for approval.

Since its publication *Sapientia Christiana* has been the subject of intensive and extensive discussion within Roman Catholic educational and academic communities. It has been severely criticized by some and enthusiastically welcomed by others.

Here an effort will be made (1) to summarize some of the principal features of *Sapientia Christiana* and its *Norms of Application*; (2) to reflect realistically upon the existing situation in ecclesiastical faculties which provides the context of the Constitution and its discussion; and (3) to offer commentary and reflection.

### I. *The Principal Features of Sapientia Christiana.*

The document applies directly to those Universities and Faculties "which have been canonically erected or approved by the Apostolic See, which foster and teach sacred doctrine and the sciences connected therewith, and which have the right to confer academic degrees by the authority of the Holy See" (SC, 2). It applies indirectly to other institutions of higher learning in the Church concerned with the teaching of "sacred doctrine and the sciences connected therewith," in particular seminaries preparing students for the priesthood.

The canonically erected and/or approved institutions to which the Constitution directly applies have the responsibility "of preparing with special care students for the priestly ministry, for teaching the sacred sciences, and for the more arduous tasks of the apostolate" (SC, Foreword, III). These Universities and Faculties are particularly important to the life of the Church. Not only do they serve the academic needs of those preparing for the priesthood but they are also primary sources for the education of future professors of theology within seminaries and other institutions of higher learning and of individuals who will exercise responsible offices within the local churches.

Because of the particular significance of these institutions, they are "ordered to the common good of the Church and have a valuable relationship with the whole ecclesial community" (SC, Foreword, IV). They have, in fact, "been constituted in the Church for the building up and perfecting of Christ's faithful" (SC, Foreword, IV). Precisely because of their significance and because of their intimate association with the mission of the Church to teach all nations the saving truths revealed through Jesus Christ and committed to His Church, such institutions must always regard this apostolic task "as a criterion in the carrying out of their work" (SC, Foreword, IV). For these reasons, too, the Pope insists that "there must be in these faculties that adherence by which they are joined to the full doctrine of Christ, whose authentic guardian and interpreter has always been through the ages the Magisterium of the Church" (SC, Foreword, IV).

Such institutions are governed through a Chancellor, a Rector and/or President. The Chancellor, who frequently is the Ordinary of the diocese in which the University or Faculty is located, "represents the Holy See to the University or Faculty and equally the University or Faculty to the Holy See" (SC, art. 12). It is his responsibility, among other things, "to ensure that Catholic doctrine is integrally followed" (Norms, 8.1). In the event that the local Ordinary is not the Chancellor, he nonetheless has the duty, "since he has the pastoral responsibility of his Diocese," "whenever something in the University or Faculty is known to be contrary to doctrine, morals, or ecclesiastical discipline, to take the matter to the Chancellor so that the latter may take action," and should the Chancellor do nothing, "have recourse to the Holy See" (Norms, 10).

In these ecclesiastical institutions "those who teach matters touching on faith and morals are to be conscious of their duty to carry out their work in full communion with the authentic Magisterium of the Church, above all, with that of the Roman Pontiff" (SC, art. 6.2). Moreover, because such teachers are closely related to the apostolic mission of the Church, they must receive "a canonical mission from the Chancellor or his delegate, for they do not teach on their own authority but by virtue of the mission they have received from the Church" (SC, art. 27.1). In addition, these teachers "before they are given a permanent post or before they are promoted to the highest category of teacher, or else in both cases . . . must receive a



declaration of *nihil obstat* from the Holy See" (SC, art. 27.2). Finally, because the institutions are authorized to confer degrees in the name of the Holy See, or pontifical degrees, teachers in such institutions must themselves possess such degrees, at least in the ordinary situation (Norms, 17).

In the above paragraphs some of the principal features of *Sapientia Christiana* and its Norms of Application have been described. It is now important to examine, briefly but realistically, the existential situation providing the context addressed by this Constitution.

## II. The Existing Situation

In the past decade and a half, many of the teachings of the Church authoritatively proclaimed by the Magisterium in the exercise of its mission to bring the full truth of the gospel to all mankind and to protect the body of doctrine committed to its trust have met serious opposition within the Church. This has been true not merely of peripheral questions or new problems but of substantive issues of faith and morals that have been received as Catholic teaching for centuries and that have been strongly reaffirmed in recent years after careful deliberation. At times certain teachings of the Church have been rejected by scholars as erroneous or historically and culturally conditioned. Among those opposing and even rejecting the authoritative and authentic teaching of the Church are theologians, some of whom are engaged in teaching seminarians. Newly ordained priests and seminarians are at times of the opinion that their special mission within the Church is to liberate the faithful from what they consider to be the intolerable and unnecessary burdens imposed upon them by the magisterium. In their turn hitherto faithful Christians have been led to believe it now is right and proper to depart from the authoritative teaching of the Church on many questions.

Serious questions, enough to engender doubt among faithful Catholics, have been raised in recent years about important doctrines of the Church – e.g. the divinity of Christ, the origins and infallibility of the Church, the importance of sacraments to Christian life, the relevance of the priesthood and religious life itself. The area of Christian morality has been rendered particularly confusing for those faithful who consider it a privilege to be members of a Church divinely authorized to teach in Christ's name. It is not uncommon today for some theologians, to claim that there are no moral absolutes, that the teaching authority of the Church has no competence in speaking on concrete moral issues, and that it is

morally permissible deliberately and of set purpose to do evil so that good may come about. It is commonly taught, but erroneously, that contraception is morally permissible for married persons for a variety of reasons; that contraception is a prudent choice for nonmarried persons who may at times rightly choose to have sexual relations. It is by no means uncommon for theologians and others to claim that abortion is justifiable for a wide range of reasons, that homosexually inclined persons may, under given conditions, rightly choose to engage in homosexual acts, that masturbation to avoid sexual tension is morally good, and even that creative adultery may possibly be licit. Suicide and mercy killing have also been advocated by some theologians as morally good acts in certain situations.

Besides these issues in moral theology, many also question today the divinity of Christ and the pre-existence of the Eternal Word; others reject the doctrine of infallibility or reinterpret it in so radical a way that it is not recognizable as the teaching of the Magisterium. Still others present ideas on the sacraments, in particular on the Eucharist and on Holy Orders, that not only depart widely from but are antithetical to the teaching of the Magisterium.

In addition, theologians at times argue that authority within the Church is basically of two sorts. Certain authorities, namely theologians, they say, are qualified by their experience and scholarly competence to determine what is true; other authorities, the Pope and bishops, are qualified by their jurisdictional power to decide what will be done within the ecclesial community. When the latter authorities propose teachings on questions of faith and morals – unless they should choose to propose these through solemn definitions – the faithful are to judge these teachings primarily in terms of the philosophical or theological reasons used to support them. Should the teachings of Pope and bishops conflict with the teachings of scholars, the faithful have the right to choose which teachings to accept. In such cases both sets of teachings are to be properly considered as *Catholic*. Those who reject the doctrine of infallibility or who maintain that no propositions can sufficiently express the truth sometimes even reject solemnly defined doctrines.

The situation described in the previous paragraphs is not a figment of anyone's mind. It is a realistic description of what goes on in many theological faculties. This *de facto* situation, acutely experienced in the lives of Catholics today, provides the background against which *Sapientia Christiana* and its Norms of Application must be seen and evaluated.

### III. Commentary and Reflection

In the judgment of this *Committee of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars* the situation just described is regrettable and calls for rectification. At times theologians appeal to the need of "legitimate dissent in and for the Church" to justify the positions they have taken. This appeal is simplistic. Frequently the teachings called into question or *replaced* by contemporary theological opinions are so central to the life and history of the Church that it is reasonable to maintain that they are infallibly proposed by the ordinary magisterium of the Church (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25). Older theologians did not recognize any broad right to dissent from teachings proposed in a noninfallible mode by the authentic Magisterium. Rather did they speak of the possibility of withholding internal assent to such teachings while they studied certain questions. Vatican Council II insisted on the serious obligation that the faithful, including theologians, have to give a religious assent to the teachings of the Magisterium. In the pastoral (*Human Life in Our Day* – 1968) that uses the term "dissent" in a broad sense, the U.S. Bishops make clear that despite any kind of "responsible dissent," respectfully and with docility presented, "authentic doctrine . . . remains binding and carries with it a moral certitude." The Bishops of the United States, and with them the Bishops of Canada in an important pastoral on conscience, expressly hold that no teacher in the Church is excused from the obligation of faithfully presenting the authentic doctrine of the Church. Unfortunately, this faithful presentation is not being given today in many institutions of higher learning, including Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties.

Those advocating the replacement of authentic Catholic teaching with contemporary theological opinions claim at times that their right to do this is rooted in the ecclesiology of Vatican Council II. Yet no texts from the documents of the Council have been brought forth to support this contention. The Dogmatic Constitutions of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) of Vatican Council II clearly and firmly teach that the Magisterium, vested in the Roman Pontiff and the Body of Bishops under his headship, alone has the right to determine questions of faith and morals and to speak in the name of Christ. Advocates of change, confronted with texts from Vatican Council II, now argue that the texts in question are themselves defective, merely reflecting an erroneous 19th century neoscholastic ecclesiology. This claim is itself erroneous.

The arguments used to justify contemporary dissent and the replacement of authentic Catholic teaching with theological opinions are fallacious and contribute to the deplorable situation of today's Church. It is the clear teaching of the Church – and not only a teaching *within* the Church – that "the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God . . . has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 10). When others within the Church – pastors, teachers, and the ordinary layperson – profess the faith taught by the Magisterium they speak as Catholics and bear witness to the mind of the Church and the mind of Christ. Academics advancing views contrary to the authentic teachings of the Church cannot propose these views as Catholic. The faithful have a God-given right to hear the authentic teachings of the Church, to discover reasons supporting these teachings, and to be supported in their desire to adhere to these teachings, and shape their lives in accordance with them. But this right of the faithful demands that those who are privileged to teach in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties are faithful in carrying out their obligation to set forth the teachings of the Church in all their power and splendor.

*Sapientia Christiana* is fundamentally an effort on the part of the Apostolic See to help secure for the Catholic faithful their right to hear the voice of the Church, the Church that speaks through the mouth of Peter, of Leo, of Paul, of John Paul II. This right of the faithful is jeopardized when those who teach in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties – and in other institutions publicly recognized as "Catholic" – believe that it is their mission to replace the teachings of the Magisterium with the speculations of academics.

For these reasons *Sapientia Christiana* is an unusually important document. It is, as it were, a gift of the Church to the people of the Church, a *magna carta* protecting the rights of the faithful to receive the living bread of Catholic truth.

There is a legitimate need to protect the rights of scholars to advance the pursuit of truth. Some members of the Catholic academic community are concerned, and rightly so, about protecting these rights and about respecting legitimate academic freedom, a concern that Pope John Paul II explicitly recognized himself in his address at the Catholic University of America on October 6, 1979. A spirit of cooperation between Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties and the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education is essential so that the rights of the faithful and of Catholic scholars can both be respected.

Yet the substantive purpose and guiding norms of *Sapientia Christiana* are both eminently reasonable and realistically necessary. To claim, as some do, that *Sapientia Christiana* is "alarming and ominous", that "the number, extent and severity of extrinsic interventions provided by the Constitution are simply unacceptable" and "seriously jeopardize the integrity of the educational undertaking" is, in the judgment of this Committee, seriously wrong. These allegations also ignore the history leading to the promulgation of *Sapientia Christiana*.

One little known fact about *Sapientia Christiana* is that a majority of academicians throughout the Universal Church concurred with what three Popes were prepared to prescribe for their institutions. Few people realize that this document was approved by Paul VI, under whom it was to be first issued, then by John Paul I who also died before it could be published, and finally by John Paul II. *Sapientia Christiana*, therefore, must be seen as a carefully conceived document which reflects the judgment of three different Popes from three different backgrounds, all of whom agreed on what the Church of the future and its theological faculties need.

More significantly, *Sapientia Christiana* was preceded by the *Second International Congress of Universities and Faculties of Ecclesiastical Studies* (Rome, November 23-December 3, 1976), which endorsed in convention those sections of the *Apostolic Constitution* to which some American academicians now object. Only eight of the 105 delegates at the 1976 Roman Congress were Americans. With American assistance four substantive questions were brought before the delegates for a decision: Should there be an academic law of the Church for ecclesiastical faculties? Should that law recognize theological faculties established only by civil authority? Should there be a *nihil obstat* for appointments and promotions in canonically erected faculties? The substantial majority of the Congress voted yes on all these issues. Once these issues were decided, the delegates were further asked to decide whether the *nihil obstat* should be reserved to the local ordinary or regional authority (e.g. National Conference of Bishops) or to the Holy See. Again, a substantial majority requested that the Holy See reserve this authority to itself.

*Sapientia Christiana* is an Apostolic Constitution issued by the Pope in his own name for institutions which are canonically erected or which professedly claim to teach Catholic theology. It was preceded by widespread discussion among Catholic academic leaders throughout the world, discussion which resulted in a call for the implementation of norms similar to these ultimately adopted. For these reasons *Sapientia Christiana*

deserves deep respect, popular support, and immediate implementation in Catholic institutions of the United States.

Much of the criticism of *Sapientia Christiana* has centered on its insistence that teachers in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties receive a canonical mission to teach. Yet this requirement imposes no burdens; to the contrary, it is one that reminds all of the ecclesial dimension of the teaching of theology and of those sciences intimately associated with it. Much criticism has focused also on the authority that *Sapientia Christiana* and its Norms give to the Chancellor and to the local Ordinary. Yet such authority is necessary for the Church and for the Theological Faculty which calls itself Catholic. The Chancellor and/or Ordinary is a witness to the authentic teachings of the Church. As such he is rightly concerned with the instruction given in institutions erected and/or approved by the Apostolic See; he has the responsibility to see that the authentic teaching of the Magisterium is effectively communicated to students in such institutions. To meet this responsibility he needs authority.

Others, too, have criticized the Constitution for its requirement that teachers in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties ordinarily have a canonical degree themselves. Some of the undersigned teach in such institutions and do not possess canonical degrees. Yet they do not believe that they are threatened by this requirement. It is, in itself, quite reasonable, since the institutions in question confer canonical degrees, and one would normally expect that teachers in programs leading to such degrees would themselves have the appropriate degree. Thus one expects that professors of medicine have medical degrees and that professors of law have legal degrees. Since the requirement is reasonable, and since the language of the Norms of Application implies that there may be reasonable grounds for permitting qualified persons to teach in such institutions without canonical degrees, there is no reason to consider the requirement menacing or absurd.

Beneath the specific criticisms noted above, there seems to be manifested here irritation over *Sapientia Christiana's* insistence that teachers in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties keep foremost in mind the teachings of the Magisterium in carrying out their responsibilities. Yet this, above all, is absolutely necessary if the institutions in question are to realize the purpose for which they exist. Their purpose is to communicate, as efficiently and competently as possible, the truth of the Catholic faith. Not only have they been established by the Apostolic See, they are also supported by the Catholic faithful, by those who in faith proclaim that the Magisterium of the

Church is a loving gift from our Redeemer. the faithful look forward to the contributions that graduates of these institutions will make to the life of faith today; they anticipate that such graduates will profess Catholic truth and be capable of providing the evidence and arguments capable of showing its credibility. Obviously graduates from such institutions will possess such ability only if they have, during the course of their studies, been imbued with a love for the teachings of the Church. If, on the contrary, they are imbued with an animosity toward those teachings, with an

attitude that regards those teachings as erroneous and burdensome, to be replaced by the speculations of academics, the institutions will have failed their purpose and will have in truth given scandal to the Catholic faithful.

*Sapientia Christiana* is a document that will strengthen the Church, prevent the replacement of Catholic teaching with academic opinion, and protect the right of the faithful to hear the Word of God as this is proclaimed by His Church. As such it meets a crucial need in the Church today and merits speedy and full implementation.

\* \* \*

The report on *Sapientia Christiana* was prepared and signed by a Committee of College Presidents and Academic Administrators, members of the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars*.

*Presidents*

1. Sr. Janet Fitzgerald, O.P.  
President  
Molloy College, New York
2. Fr. John Harvey  
Former President  
DeSales School of Theology, Md.
3. Fr. Francis J. Klauder, S.D.B.  
President  
John Bosco College, New Jersey
4. Sr. M. Marcella Ripper  
President  
Mallinckrodt College  
Illinois
5. Dr. Joseph P. Scottino  
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Erie, Pa.

*Academic Administrators*

1. Fr. Giles R. Dimock, O.P.  
Chairman of Religious Studies  
Providence College, Rhode Island
2. Sr. Julitta Heinen, S.C.C.  
Dean of Assumption College  
New Jersey
3. Dr. Robert B. Nordberg  
Dean of Education  
Marquette University  
Milwaukee
4. Dr. William J. Parente  
Dean of Arts and Sciences  
University of Scranton, Pa.
5. Fr. Earl Weis, S.J.  
Chairman of Theology  
Loyola University  
Chicago

The report was authorized and released by the Chairman of the Committee on September 1, 1980.

Professor William May, Chairman  
Catholic University of America

Fr. Richard Roach, S.J., Secretary  
Marquette University

\* \* \*

The report is receiving many endorsements from academic administrators who have seen the advance copy. Among those who registered approval prior to the time this Newsletter went to press were Fr. Ronald Lawler, Director of the Center for Thomistic Studies and Fr. Victor B. Brezik, CSB, Chairman of Philosophy of the University of St. Thomas, Texas; Dr. LeRoy

Wauck, Dean of Social Sciences at Loyola University, Chicago; Jeffrey Mirus, Director of Academic Affairs, Christendom College, Va.; Fr. Michael Wrenn, Director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Institute, New York; Fr. Paul Marx, O.S.B., Director, Human Life Center, Collegeville, Minn., Fr. Raphael Simon, OCSO, Dean of Theology at the Spencer School of Theology, Mass.

## Other Reactions to *Sapientia Christiana*

### 1. *Committee of the Catholic Theological Society of America*

#### *Recommendations of the Committee*

In the present context of the preoccupations and directions taken by the leaders of our church, your Committee views this Constitution as alarming and ominous. Several of its provisions are potentially very troublesome. Hence, we make these suggestions to the membership:

- 1) Sound academic customs and practices should be permitted to remain in force. When local standards and procedures are academically and indeed ecclesiastically healthy, as we believe them to be in North America, then subsidiarity demands that they be respected. If it would be judged useful, dispensations from some of the more troublesome provisions of the Constitution could be sought from local Ordinaries or from the Congregation.
- 2) In view of the serious concerns raised in this Report, our canonically erected or approved schools may be asked to pay a very high price for the privilege of granting pontifical degrees in the name of the Apostolic See. One obvious and prudent consideration must be for those faculties to ask whether the privilege is worth the price.
- 3) The American and Canadian theological communities should enter into an active, sustained and structured dialogue with their respective episcopal conferences and religious leadership conferences. The CTSA should take leadership in working out appropriate modes of mutual accountability.
- 4) We must all be on guard against any extensions of the provisions of the Constitution to those faculties which are not canonically erected or approved. Non-pontifical faculties, especially college and university departments of theology, should remain watchful in this regard. However, the proposed Canon 64 of the *schema de Ecclesiae munere docendi* deserves even more urgent attention for the reasons mentioned in footnote 3. [Footnote 3 reads: Even more menacing, because more sweeping in its application, is the canon proposed for the new *Code of Canon Law*: "Those who teach any theological courses or courses connected with theology in institutions of higher learning require a canonical mission." (*Qui in studiorum superiorum Institutis quibuslibet*

*lectiones tradunt theologians aut cum theologia connexas missione egent canonica.) Canon 64, Schema Canonum Libri III De Ecclesiae Munere Docendi.]*

- 5) Legal research should be initiated in order to anticipate the civil ramifications of the Constitution's norms. Consultations should be held with the Association of Theological Schools, the regional accrediting associations, the American Association of University Professors, and collective bargaining agents. Then some conclusions could be drawn about the potential impact of the norms or necessary modifications of them in academic practice.
- 6) The most suitable reaction to *Sapientia christiana* is the realization that it cannot be implemented in the North American context without serious harm. An attitude which permits the Constitution to fall into desuetude is neither disrespectful nor alien in this area; the Apostolic Constitution *Veterum sapientia*, on the Promotion of the Study of Latin, was thus greeted for similar reasons; some elements of *Deus scientiarum Dominus* were allowed to lapse without objection from Roman authorities. In many places both enactments were recognized to be inappropriate legislation which were not fully received by the church.

Your Committee is convinced that the entire theological community should be deeply concerned about *Sapientia christiana* and the proposed Canon 64 on the teaching office, not simply because of individual dire effects and potential extensions, but because they threaten the general state of theological education and research.

David Burrell, C.S.C.; Notre Dame University  
James Coriden; Washington Theological Union (Chair)  
Andre Guindon, O.M.I.; St. Paul's University  
Frederick McManus; Catholic University of America  
John Padberg, S.J.; Weston School of Theology

2. *The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities* (Formerly NCEA) has decided not to pursue further a statement on Catholic identity. It endorsed the paper prepared by a committee of CTSA on "Ecclesiastical Academic Legislation". Says ACCU Update (June 1980) "It is important for our members to be aware of the distinction between ecclesiastical faculties and the ordinary type of Catholic college or university in the United States. In the opinion of the Board, the analysis done by the CTSA committee was a very good one."

*NCEA on Catholic Colleges in ORIGINS,*  
April 29, 1976

“The language of ‘juridical relationship’ and ‘canonical establishment’ found in recent documents from the Congregation for Catholic Education does not seem to find focus in the vocabulary and the substance – and, indeed, the spirit – of Vatican Council documents and declarations. The former appears to conceive of the university as ‘an arm of the church,’ rather than the locus for interplay between church and world, a canonical and juridical concept rather than the dialogic approach of *Gaudium et Spes*.

“We do not think a juridical relationship between the church and Catholic institutions in the exercise of their proper autonomy is desirable or even possible at this stage of American history, given the prominence of church-state issues. Since we have been asked to comment on the forthcoming conference in Rome in 1976 concerning ‘an academic law of the church,’ we do not consider appropriate nor legally feasible the extension of jurisdiction over non-canonically established institutions, at the expense of existing rights of local bishops or the institutions themselves.

“It is our collective experience that the Rome 1972 document clearly identifies the essential characteristics of American Catholic colleges and universities. We concur that ‘all universities (and colleges) that realize these fundamental conditions are Catholic universities, whether canonically erected or not.’ We cannot speak for Catholic institutions in other lands; their circumstances and cultures differ from ours. We can only say that juridical, canonical, statutory relationships which would infringe upon proper institutional autonomy are not in keeping with our circumstances and would make no positive contribution to our efforts to maintain and strengthen Catholic higher education and its service to the American church.”

3. *James H. Provost of CUA in America*  
(June 7, 1980, p. 476)

“... The recent Apostolic Constitution permits the use of usual academic procedures to hire new faculty. It calls for procedures to be set up within the faculty to handle questions of dismissal. But it does not bind the chancellor to follow these procedures and the canonical mission he gives or takes back is equivalent to hiring or firing. The proposed new code contains no procedures a local bishop would have to follow to withdraw canonical mission from a faculty member in a Catholic institution of higher education within his diocese.

The net effect is to eliminate what United States colleges and universities mean by legitimate autonomy and self-regulation. An outside procedure would be substituted for the standard internal discipline in the case of faculty who teach matters of doctrine or morals, and this outside procedure need not explain its reasons or provide other safeguards standard in the American academic community.

At the very least, if the legal institution of canonical mission is to be the internal church procedure to balance the interests of theologians, hierarchy and faithful, the role of the local bishop (or, where applicable, chancellor) needs to be carefully described in the institution’s own rules. The Rome statement insists on this: ‘any action taken by ecclesiastical or religious superiors should conform exactly to their authority as established in the university statutes and should be carried out according to those procedures of due process established in the statutes and recognized as general university common law in the geographical region of the particular university.’

The inadequacies of the current approach to canonical mission could well jeopardize the academic respectability of Catholic colleges and universities in this country. Paradoxically, some of those same institutions that canonical mission was designed to protect in less free societies now find themselves considering giving up their Catholic identity in order to preserve their academic respectability.”

4. *John C. Reedy, C.S.C. (New York Catholic News,*  
*June 10, 1980)*

[Concerning religious issues in Catholic higher education]

“One is the work of theological scholarship and the education of professional theologians. This work must be free to investigate any problem, to re-examine the basis for any belief. It provides a creative, scholarly resource for the church as it formulates the authoritative expression of faith in terms of contemporary problems and knowledge. . . .”

“The second function is a general education of young Catholics in the teachings, the history, the symbols of stories of their religious tradition . . .”

“The purpose is to provide the ordinary Catholic university student with a knowledge of the church which is appropriate to his or her general level of education. We expect such students to acquire a knowledge of American history, government and literature which is superior to that of the student who ends his formal education with high school. . . .”

"Prior to Vatican II, there was precious little theological scholarship here in America. The Catholic universities focused almost entirely on the second purpose, advanced religious education.

"Since the Council, theological scholarship has become respectable; it has become jealous of its own integrity; often it has become ecumenical and inter-religious; and it has resisted the responsibility for what might be called advanced catechetics.

"As a result, the general student is often introduced to a fairly sophisticated exploration of a few theological issues or problems, possibly from an ecumenical rather than a Catholic viewpoint, while remaining basically illiterate about huge sections of Catholic teaching and tradition."

## Publications of Interest

- Donald W. Wuerl *The Priest: Witness of God's Presence* (Alba House Communications, Canfield, Ohio 44406)

Rev. Donald W. Wuerl has developed this excellent series of ten talks on the charisma of the priest. He explains the primary function of priesthood as witness. In these cassettes he addresses both the spiritual, sacramental and vertical aspects of witness and the social, cultural and communitarian dimensions of priesthood.

An articulate spokesperson on theology, history, philosophy and current events, Father Wuerl brings a profound understanding to his subject. Those who experience these talks are constantly reminded of Father Wuerl's deep spirituality and dedication to the priesthood.

Father Wuerl was, for twelve years, the secretary of John Cardinal Wright, head of the Sacred Congregation of the Clergy at the Vatican.

Alba House has put together a very attractive package for these cassettes whose titles in the order of presentation are: God's Witness Today, The World of the Spirit, Sign of Life to Come, Teaching the Faith, Mary and the Priest. As Maryknoller Vincent Mallon said in *L'Osservatore* here is "a reliable guide to lead us through today's theological jungles".

The price of this lovely package is \$34.95.

- Fr. Ralph M. Wiltgen S.V.D. whose book *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber: A History of Vatican II* was something of a best seller (20,000 copies), has published a new book *The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania 1825 to 1850*

(using mostly Vatican archival material). It is available through Books Australia, Norwalk, Connecticut, although it is not likely to sell many copies in the U.S. at \$27.

Incidentally, Fr. Wiltgen can be reached at the Collegio Del Verbo Divino, Cas. Post 5080, Rome, Italy 00153.

- Recent articles by President James Hitchcock "Beyond 1984: Big Brother versus the Family," *Human Life Review*, Winter 1980.

"Postmortem on a Rebirth: The Catholic Intellectual Renaissance," *The American Scholar*, Spring 1980.

"Does Christianity Have a Future?," *New Oxford Review*, June 1980 and July-August 1980.

"Kung and the Vatican," *National Catholic Register*, June 15, 1980. (A survey and analysis of the German bishops' dossier on the Kung case.)

"The Imperial Self," *New Covenant*, July 1980.

"The American Press and Birth Control: Preparing the Ground for Dissent," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, July 1980.

- Representative Henry Hyde's arguments on Tax-Funded Abortions are well presented in "The Human Life Review", Summer, 1980. Available from Room 540, 150 East 35th Street, New York, New York 10016 \$3.00

- Fr. Henri DeLuBac, S.J. recently forwarded to the Fellowship a copy of his new book *Petite Catechese Sur Nature Et Grace* (Fayard-Paris-1980). Much of the material first appeared in the French edition of *Communio* (1977). The appendices are especially relevant: *Supernatural at Vatican II, Sacrament of the World? Council and Paracouncil, The Cult of Man, Apropos of the Sacred*.

### Fr. Ronald Lawler, OFM

- The first president of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, on a two year leave from the Catholic University of America, is presently the Director of the *Center for Thomistic Studies* in Houston, Texas.

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## Book Reviews

### TWO RECENT BOOKS ON BIOETHICS: ONE ON SEXUALITY

It is worthwhile to reflect, even briefly, on two recent works in bioethics. The one is *An Introduction to Bioethics* by Thomas A. Shannon and James J. DiGiacomo (New York: Paulist Press, 1980); the other is *Bioethics and the Limits of Science* by Sean O'Reilly, M.D. (Front Royal, Va.: Christendom College Press, 1980). It would be difficult to find two more divergent works on this subject.

The Shannon-DiGiacomo volume is notable for its superficiality and for its cavalier dismissal of relevant teaching of the Church on many of the issues taken up for consideration. O'Reilly's work, although it suffers from the lack of a developed moral theory upon which to ground the norms central to bioethical questions, is on the other hand, marked by a profound faith in the truths about human existence and the reverence for human life set forth in the teaching of the Church pertinent to issues in bioethics.

Shannon-DiGiacomo touch, but very superficially, on a host of questions: the technological revolution, ethical concepts, abortion, the definition of death, euthanasia, the care of newborns with defects, organ transplants, genetic engineering, etc. They do not explicitly set forth *any* moral theory, but it is evident to any reader familiar with recent debates in normative ethical thought that they subscribe to a kind of consequentialism: do the least evil necessary in your efforts to maximize good for everyone.

In discussing "ethical concepts" they take up the "principle of double effect." Here they first summarize the elements to be fulfilled in the use of this principle (as this was traditionally understood by Catholic authors), although they make no effort to set forth the reasons *why* these elements are crucially important; and they then conclude by *explaining* the principle of double effect on the grounds cited by Richard McCormick to justify the deliberate, intentional doing (not merely permitting) of evil for the sake of some "proportionate good." They fail to let readers know that the position taken by McCormick is in no way an explanation of the principle of double effect, but is rather its *replacement* by an entirely different principle, the principle of proportionate good; nor do they even indicate the enormous difference this replacement entails in our understanding of the meaning of human acts. (cf. pp. 21-23).

Likewise, in discussing very briefly "ethical concepts" Shannon-DiGiacomo consider the "role of the Church." Here they advise their readers that they should avoid two extremes: the first would be

"simply to dismiss the Church as irrelevant," whereas the second would be to "accept its teaching without question." They advocate an "open critical attitude" (p. 27). One of their reasons for this is that "there have been no infallible statements" on moral issues (p. 28), with the implication that all Church teaching on specific issues is therefore fallible, that is, capable of being erroneous. Here I think it sufficient to say that their attitude seems quite cavalier in the light of *Lumen Gentium* 25, and it totally ignores the question of the likelihood that much Church teaching on questions of life and death and on the significance of human sexuality may well be infallibly proposed by the exercise of the Church's ordinary magisterium.

But this section on the "role of the Church" is simply window-dressing because the balance of the book Shannon-DiGiacomo simply ignores the teaching of the Church. Thus, in considering the question of abortion, nothing is said about the very firm teaching in *Gaudium et Spes* that abortion and infanticide are infamies indeed. Rather the chapter on abortion seems to leave matters on abortion up for grabs. They outline different "approaches" — the conservative, the liberal, and the "nuanced" moderate view (pp. 41-42), and since the "moderate" view is alone qualified by the commendatory adjective *nuanced*, one can reasonably infer that the authors share this view. According to this position there is always some element of tragedy and suffering in abortion, but naturally it could be the morally right option should the "weighing" of different factors lead to the conclusion that it would, on the whole, promote values. Their position on abortion, in short, is roughly analogous to that of Daniel Callahan, although hardly as "nuanced" as his. Yet it is a position that, in my judgment, is directly contrary to the firm, indeed solemn, teaching of the Church, and their analysis of the different "approaches" is surely superficial.

In discussing the care to be given to children born with serious defects Shannon-DiGiacomo erroneously claim that the Catholic tradition has justified war, the taking of interest, the right of a worker to a just wage, and the use of periodic abstinence to regulate conception on the grounds of a *quality-of-life* calculation of consequences or "weighing" of rights. This is simply not true. But on this basis they then infer that it might be legitimate, on the grounds of quality-of-anticipated-life calculations, to refuse or withdraw treatment from children with severe birth defects. And it is clear that they would justify this — or one can at least reasonably draw this conclusion — even if the child *is not dying*. In short, their "ethical



reflections" would warrant what Paul Ramsey has called the killing of children by "benign neglect." Their chapter on this issue is a serious trivialization of it (cf. pp. 79-90).

The Shannon-DiGiacomo book, in short, is one that simply brushes under the rug the substantive issues concerning the meaning of human existence, masking them in rhetoric over the agonizing difficulty of ethical decision-making, leaving the reader with no clear principles but rather with a fuzzy "weighing of values" as the criterion. Although they claim that one ought not simply to "dismiss" the teaching of the Church, they in fact do so because they do not present this teaching or the reasons behind it. The Paulist Press, by publishing this work, seriously fails to educate the faithful.

O'Reilly's book is quite different. It is evident from it that the author is concerned with the substantive issues in bioethics: the dignity and sanctity of human life, the irreplaceable preciousness of human persons made in the image and likeness of God. The first six chapters of the book focus on questions of scientific inquiry and their relevance to issues in bioethics. These chapters offer a good review of physics and biology, along with a critique of some of the central presuppositions in a doctrine of uniformitarian evolutionism. In my judgment what is of most significance in these chapters is the massive scientific evidence O'Reilly assembles to support the judgment that an individual human life begins at conception. There is, in being, from the time of conceptualization, a new living entity identifiably a member of the human species, with the potential of a human being. O'Reilly's faith leads him to the judgment that this entity is an irreplaceably precious person, a being made in the image and likeness of God and destined for life with God. This being is, subsequently, a being of moral worth, the bearer of a dignity surpassing that of any material object and the subject of rights to be recognized by others. Reverence for this unique and irreplaceable human life is the underlying theme that is developed in the early chapters of O'Reilly's work. The inference is that a human person is a being of *incalculable* worth and that we cannot rightly judge the morality of our acts bearing on the life of a human person by weighing the consequences or by balancing off incommensurable and incalculable values against each other.

The final four chapters of the work are concerned with ethics. Here, in my judgment, the work suffers from an inability to articulate in rigorous fashion a theory of morality, grounded in principles of practical reasonableness, that will enable human persons and human societies to reverence and protect human lives and persons.

O'Reilly rather argues that certain basic values are intuitively known, and he then proceeds basically to argue that these values will best be protected and honored if we make our own the teaching of the Church, a teaching rooted both in divine revelation and one that can be intelligently supported. Here I think that O'Reilly's work is weak. He seeks to provide some ethical support for the positions he develops by utilizing the analysis of object, end, and circumstances. Yet his basic approach could be criticized, in my view, on the grounds that he seeks to derive some "oughts" from "facts," and that the underlying yet not clearly articulated moral theory with which he works is the kind of natural law theory rooted in Suarez, one subject to serious criticism.

Despite this, however, O'Reilly's work is of substantive nature. It is particularly helpful in marshalling the scientific evidence to support the judgment that a particular, not-to-be-repeated human life comes into being at conception; and it is notable for the arguments it develops to show that this life is precious, a reality that evokes a response of awe and wonder, a reality that is simply of incalculable worth. Here O'Reilly's work sharply contrasts with Shannon-DiGiacomo's, for these authors set forth a position in which the irreducible preciousness of human life simply becomes one value to be thrown into a mix, to be weighed and balanced against other values.

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*Human Sexual Ecology: A Philosophy and Ethics of Man and Woman.* (By Robert E. Joyce. Washington: University Press of America, 1980. \$12.00), is an important work which attempts to initiate a Copernican Revolution in our understanding of ourselves as sexual persons. At the same time it seeks to develop a sexual morality rooted in the moral theory of Germain G. Grisez and open to the good news of the life made possible for us through the saving death and resurrection of Christ. It is thus a very ambitious work, and one that definitely provokes thoughtful consideration.

Joyce's Copernican revolution consists in urging us to put aside a biology-based personhood, in which Genital coition becomes obsessively the focus of our understanding of sexuality, and in its place consider a person-based biology. Put into this framework, *sexuality* is understood as a *personal* power (supremely present in God) to share the gift of self with self and others, while *genitality* is the personal and social power to share the gift of life with a new human being and *coitality* is the personal power to share the gift of genital life with a person of the opposite sex. Man and woman

differ in their sexuality because they share the gift of self with others in distinctly different ways: the man, by giving himself in a receiving sort of way; the woman, by receiving others selves in a giving sort of way. Much of the work consists in an explanation, powerful and detailed, of what all this means and signifies. The illustrations Joyce uses to help communicate his ideas are truly excellent, drawing much from the best in contemporary psychology and phenomenological analysis.

The sexual morality he develops is rooted in the truth that a human act is the result of a choice whereby we determine ourselves *to be* the persons we become. As sexual persons, summoned to share the gift of self with self and others, we can make good moral choices and become, in and through our personal acts, the beings we are meant to be only by reverencing and respecting, in our choices and acts, the basic goods of human persons.

The analyses Joyce provides are exceptionally helpful in showing why sexuality, genitality, and coitality are wonderful gifts of God and how they can be abused and our being as persons crippled by choices and actions destructive of the basic goods of human persons.

The work is challenging and demanding, but mind-opening and intellectually exciting. It is a powerful work, rich in its suggestions and analyses. I think, however, that perhaps Joyce is simply using the term *sexuality* to communicate what St. Thomas mean by the power of *will*. He argues that just as we are *God like*, so we are *animallike*. I am perhaps too much of an Aristotelian, but I believe that we *are* animals and are *sexual beings because* we are animals, although, because we are radically different in kind from other animals our sexuality is radically different in kind from the sexuality of other animals. This said, I believe that his work needs to be read by everyone interested in developing a good philosophy of man and woman, by everyone who believes that the sexual morality proclaimed by the Church is one that is liberating and that a chaste person is in possession of his or her sexuality and is not possessed by genital urges.

William E. May

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*Birth Control – Why Are They Lying To Women?*  
by Dr. Jose Espinosa, 110 pages, Vantage Press,  
New York, 1980.

A new ideology has surfaced within the medical profession during the 1970's. This ideology is "advocate science" and it allies the medical profession with the advocate journalists, the advocate social scientists and the advocate educators in seeking to establish assent to the values of a contraceptive mentality. This book seeks to shine a light on the dark corners of

advocacy to illuminate what has been concealed from the public at large to the detriment of informed consent. The author is a well-known and respected leader of the Pro-life movement and a practicing surgeon in Cleveland, Ohio. The book is written at the level of easy comprehension for any educated layperson. The first half of the book is devoted to basic factual knowledge about reproduction and birth control. It reemphasizes the incontrovertible complications of the use of the IUD and the pill in a detailed and comprehensive manner. These complications have been released to the public in piecemeal exposés over the past decade but here they are woven together into a fabric of risk not usually portrayed in the lay press or even scientific journals. It would be helpful to clergymen engaged in pastoral counseling to read Dr. Espinosa's careful documentation of the abortifacient action of the intrauterine device and oral contraceptives. It is pointed out that efficient inhibition of ovulation requires a daily dose of ethinyl estradiol of approximately 400 mcg. No birth control pill has such high doses of estrogen because the estrogen fraction is responsible for many of the undesired side effects of the pill. The reduction of the antiovolatory dose of estrogen by 80-90% (to achieve the usual commercial dose) will result in an inconsistent suppression of ovulation. The pill remains an effective anti-birth medication, however, through the additional effects of the progestin fraction-principal of which is its effect on the uterine lining to prevent nidation of the blastocyst. This latter is an abortifacient effect.

The second half of this book is aimed at a refutation of the various anti-people strategies which seem to dominate American politics both at home and in its often paternalistic activities abroad. The final chapter is an attempt at recruitment and formation in the Pro-life cause with practical advice for participating in this new civil-rights movement.

This is an altogether admirable and useful book written by a wise and seasoned Pro-life physician.

Eugene F. Diamond, M.D.

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Victor B. Brezik, *About Living. Random Reflections and Moral Musings*. Lumen Christy Press (McDuffie Street), Houston, TX 77019, 1980. P, \$4.95.

Father Victor Brezik has been teaching Christian philosophy to collegians for many years. In this small book, he speaks to a larger audience about many of the major themes of a living Christian philosophy.

Father Brezik studied under Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson, and he writes in their spirit. This small book touches ten main themes; each theme is treated in four brief essays. They are written in a very clear and graceful style, but they are meant to be read slowly, and reflected upon with care.

Many types of philosophical questions are treated here: the Christian notion of the person, the importance of contemplation, the meaning of pleasure, the relation of the intellectual life to holiness, the relation between science and religion, and many moral questions.

This book was written over a long period of time, by one with a great love for Christian philosophy, and with a great desire to make some approaches to philosophical thinking more easy for a wider audience. It is a beautiful little book, and deserves to become a popular one.

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Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Heart of the World* Ignatius Press, 1100 Sloat Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94132; 1980 P, \$5.95, +\$1.00 shipping.

Hans Urs von Balthasar is one of the greatest theologians of the century. In this attractive little book he writes with simplicity and grace of the mystery of Christ, of the great Heart that gives life to the world, and makes sense of it for us. The book appeared in German already in 1954; we are fortunate that it is finally appearing in English.

*This little book is a profound meditation on the core of Christian faith. Like the Imitation of Christ, it is a study in spiritual theology of such depth and simplicity that it addresses both the learned and the ordinary Catholic.*

In it the central themes of the life of grace are caught with freshness poetic energy. It focuses on the richness of divine love in the Incarnation and the Pascal mysteries, in the face of a deeply felt sense of the problem of evil. It searches the hungers of the human spirit, and our human evasions of the truth about ourselves and about things, with penetrating realism.

At times, as in the *Imitation*, the Lord himself is presented as addressing the disciples. In these parts, and throughout the book, the skills of a theologian and a precise stylist work together to make all ring true.

The book is very attractively printed, and bound as a quality paperback. It is an early offering of the Ignatius Press, which promises to be presenting many significant books in the near future (not least, Pope John Paul II's doctoral thesis on faith in St. John of the Cross). For those who wish to do their Christmas shopping early, it might be wise to order many copies of this little volume.

Ronald Lawler, O.F.M. Cap.

Nona Aguilar, *No Pill, No-Risk Birth Control*. (New York: Rawson, Wade Publishing Co., 1980). \$6.95.

For some time a reaction against artificial contraception has been building up in avant-garde secular circles. The reasons are many but predictable – anti-technological sentiment, the cult of anything designated “natural,” the feminist insistence that women should not always be the ones taking precautions, and persistent medical doubts about the long-term effects of the pill. Were it not for the fact that artificial contraceptive devices have become such a badge of liberation, this reaction would probably by now have gathered full steam. (Ironically, the avant-garde will probably turn against contraceptives just about the time they have finally persuaded the masses to use them without scruple.)

Nora Aguilar has written a book which can be read profitably by anyone with an even slightly open mind on the subject. It is simply written, straightforward, full of information, and with a good blend of technical data and down-to-earth philosophical discussion. It is probably as good an introduction as there is to the whole subject of natural family planning, and it presupposes no religious belief.

Particularly refreshing is the author's discussion of sexual abstinence, including statements by married women. Even in Catholic circles many people have bought the argument that periodic abstinence is destructive of conjugal love. Nora Aguilar points out how the demands of continence, for whatever reason, permit spouses to demonstrate to each other a love and a fidelity that do not depend on the regular satisfaction of personal desires. One would assume that feminists, for example, would understand the point.

The author acknowledges the help of several Fellowship members, including Father Paul Marx, John Kippley, Herbert Ratner, and George Maloof.

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Stanley L. Jaki, *The Origin of Science and the Science of Its Origin*. (South Bend, Ind.: Regnery/Gateway Inc., 1978). \$4.95.

The name Stanley Jaki is probably largely unknown outside limited scholarly circles, yet he may be one of the most important Catholic scholars alive today. A Hungarian-born Benedictine priest now affiliated with Seton Hall University, he is one of only about a half dozen Americans ever to give the Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh. This book encompasses lectures given at Oxford in 1977.

The history of science is a field which may seem to be of very limited relevance to non-specialists. But science has so powerfully molded our civilization, for better or for worse, that to study its origins is practically to study the sources of modernity.

Father Jaki's book presupposes a good deal of knowledge, and he carries on a sometimes implicit dialogue with historians like Alexandre Koyre and Joseph Needham. But it is also well and clearly written, and can be followed by everyone with even a passing interest in the subject.

Perhaps Father Jaki's main purpose is to establish how much modern science owes to the despised Middle Ages. This is true not only in the sense that specific medieval scientific theories

influenced people like Galileo, but more importantly in certain theories or assumptions about the harmony, purpose, and regularity of the universe, which were essential prerequisites for the scientific world view.

There has been a standard view of the history of science which skips from the Greeks to the seventeenth century. Father Jaki points out, however, that Greek science proved largely sterile, like Chinese science, and that there was rather a continuous and fruitful intellectual tradition coming down from the Middle Ages.

The researches of Father Jaki, in this book and others, are likely to be of immense importance in our understanding of the historical contribution of Christianity to Western civilization.

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Eugene Kevane, *The Lord of History: Christocentrism and the Philosophy of History*. (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1980). \$4.00.

This is an excellent introduction to the Christian philosophy of history — clearly written, comprehensive within the limits of its less than 200 pages, and cognisant of the important modern issues.

In these times Msgr. Kevane is bold in even suggesting that Christians might have a philosophy of history which is distinctive and different from everyone else's. But, as he points out, beginning with the earliest Fathers of the Church, there has always been such a philosophy, and it has had a

profound effect on the way Christians relate to the world and to their own place in it.

Msgr. Kevane's ultimate purpose is catechetical, and his book serves as a reminder of how immense the task of catechetical reconstruction is going to be. It will involve not merely inserting mention of particular doctrines into existing books, or excising dubious passages from those same books, but rather a thinking through of the very concept of Christian *paideia*, which he points out has now been largely lost.

The book was written to commemorate the centennial of Pope Leo XIII's issuance of *Aeterni Patris*.

James Hitchcock