



## Letter from Father William B. Smith

In following Fr. Ronald Lawler and Prof. James Hitchcock as president of the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars*, I want first to renew our statement of purpose:

"We Catholic scholars in various disciplines join in fellowship in order to serve Jesus Christ better by helping one another in our work and by putting our abilities more fully at the service of the Catholic faith." (FCS Newsletter (D. '77) (Je'80)

As I understand it, the Fellowship is a happy combination of competencies and convictions. Both are important, highly important, for Catholic life in the present time. In purely personal terms one of the greater benefits I derive from FCS meetings and associations is the refreshing and sustaining contact with the membership.

I am always instructed by their respective competence and improved by their Catholic conviction. And far beyond any easy association of compatible types complimenting their own echoes, there is a keen corporate sense of benefit and duty. The membership has profited greatly from Catholic tradition and is willing, able and duty bound to support and contribute to that same tradition.

The 1982 FCS convention will center on Catholic Social Thought, in particular the most recent encyclical of Pope John Paul, *Laborem Exercens* (9/15/81). This is both a timely and necessary opportunity.

Sadly, of late, the language and sometimes slogans of Catholic social teaching have been used as either banner or catalyst to advance everything from the demolition of religious life to the promotion of human ideologies quite alien to the Gospel. Such efforts betray misguided, if any, competence and very mixed, albeit intense, convictions.

Given the truly interdisciplinary nature of the Fellowship, we have, in the upcoming convention, an opportunity and duty to do well what we can do best – common work in our common faith.

It appears as well that the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law might well come within a year or two. Clearly, the publication of a Code is not just a legal event but an important and guiding factor in the sacramental, teaching and social life of the Church.

Already a major Catholic bi-weekly has begun to publish articles of mild distaste over what the new Code is likely to legislate. Unlike 1968, the underground now is very much above ground yet not truly above board. The promulgation of the new Code will require the cooperation and support of many different competencies and, as ever, genuine conviction.

My purpose here is not to outline challenges or controversies but to underline our repeated statement of purpose – helping one another in our work and putting abilities at the service of the Catholic faith. It's a great time to be alive, provided you're in a great Fellowship.



## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes — Dr. Joseph Scottino

### Time and place:

Saturday, September 26, 1981, 9:00 A.M.,  
Sheraton-O'Hare Hotel, Rosemont, Illinois.

### Members present:

Dr. James Hitchcock, Msgr. George A. Kelly, Rev. William Smith, Rev. Earl A. Weiss, Dr. Joseph Boyle, Rev. Kenneth Baker, Dr. Anne Carson Daly, Rev. Ronald Lawler, Rev. Joseph T. Mangan, Rev. Richard R. Roach, Rev. Michael Wrenn, and Dr. Joseph P. Scottino.

### STATEMENT ON USCC SEX EDUCATION GUIDELINES

A report on the initial response from USCC to the Fellowship's statement was read. The Board decided to permit the Fellowship statement to stand as printed.

### HIGHER EDUCATION AND CANON LAW REVISIONS

The Board approved a motion by Fr. Roach that was seconded by Fr. Weis authorizing the President of the Fellowship to respond to any further request from the USCC for data in support of the statement on higher education and the canon law revisions previously published by the Fellowship.

### SEMINARY STUDY

The Board approved a motion by Fr. Lawler that was seconded by Fr. Wrenn authorizing the President of the Fellowship to write a letter to the Most Rev. John A. Marshall, Bishop of Burlington, Vermont, offering the support of the Fellowship in conducting the study of Catholic seminaries in the United States, which Bishop Marshall will coordinate.

### FINANCIAL REPORT

The Board reviewed a Financial Statement of the Fellowship for the period 1980-81 thru October 1, 1981 submitted by Msgr. Kelly and found the finances of the Fellowship to be in good order. The operating expenses per annum comes to \$20,000. Thus far the Fellowship has a bank balance of \$1,900.

### EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION

The Board expressed its appreciation to Dr. James Hitchcock for his service during the past year as President of the Fellowship, and to Msgr. Kelly who has served as Executive Secretary of the Fellowship since its inception.

### INSTALLATION

The Board acknowledged Fr. Smith as the newly elected President of the Fellowship, Dr. Scottino as Executive Secretary and Treasurer, and Msgr. Kelly as Editor of the Fellowship Newsletter.

### 1982 FELLOWSHIP CONVENTION

The Board set the dates March 26-28, 1982 for the annual Fellowship Convention. The theme of the Convention will be "Social Justice: *Laborem Exercens*."

Dr. Daly will attempt to secure appropriate arrangements so that the Convention can be held in Washington, D.C. in acknowledgement of the theme of the Convention.

Fr. Smith and Msgr. Kelly will develop the program of the Convention, pursuing potential speakers recommended by the Board.

It was agreed that no oral reports would be presented at the Convention from the Committee Workshops. Written reports of the Workshops will be published in a subsequent issue of the Fellowship Newsletter.

Fr. Henry Sattler, C.S.S.R., Chairman of the Liturgy Committee, will be asked to make preparations for the principal Liturgy at the Convention at 4:30 P.M. on Saturday, March 27th, at an appropriate church or chapel near the site of the Convention. It was agreed that the Homily should be relevant to the theme of the Convention.

## Friends of the Fellowship

Fr. Orlando Prosperi — Dr. John Shea

### Items of Interest

- "Angels and Demons in the New 'Missale Romanum' ", Paul M. Quay, S.J., in *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 94, 401-410 (1980) considers briefly the textual changes appearing in the new Missal (touching angels and demons) then assesses their theological significance.
- *CALL FOR CONVENTION PAPERS* — Anyone interested in participating in a short colloquium on C.S. Lewis, Dorothy Day, Dorothy Sayers, and Eric Gill is invited to submit a short paper (no longer than 8 pages maximum) to Carson Daly (Dept. of English, University of Notre Dame) by January 15, 1982.
- "Former seminarian, associate member of Fellowship of Catholic Scholars with B.A. in Religious Studies and experience in catechetical desires position as religion teacher in a Catholic high school. Call: Timothy P. G. Trainor, (902) 892-7026."



## The Conference of the Laity Meets in Chicago

The *Chicago Conference of the Laity*, perhaps the first of its kind in the country, was held June 12-14 at Quigley South Seminary in Chicago. In preparation for two years, it involved a lengthy process of choosing delegates and determining an appropriate agenda. Approximately 550 delegates of the 750 chosen from 12 vicariates (two from every parish, usually appointed by the pastor) participated in the Conference. A 13th vicariate represented the extra-parochial lay organizations and the Archdiocesan Office of the Laity.

The *Conference of the Laity* was governed by a Steering Committee of 26, two members being elected by each vicariate. In the early stages of organization many parishes (not all) were asked which topics they most wanted discussed. The Steering Committee selected the 10 categories to be studied at the Conference without necessary reference to the parish recommendations. Ten Category (study) committees were established, composed of one convenor from each vicariate (about 13 members each). These committees had authority to assess the input of the delegates on a topic and to make recommendations for voting by the entire Conference. After the recommendations were printed and distributed in booklet form, the recommendations could only be voted on as printed. Minority reports or recommendations from the floor were not permitted. Amendments to Committee recommendations (for later conference voting) were possible only if 20 delegates came to a special meeting and there signed a proposed amendment in person. If, on the other hand, persons signing a counter amendment were more numerous, the original Committee recommendation prevailed.

The particular method of establishing the Conference with its rules made it possible for small organized groups to gain early control of the Key Issues Committees, and the important Steering Committee, which was the *de facto* manager of the Conference. The lack of strong early publicity gave these factions (who usually favored strong change measures for the Church) an opportunity to influence the selection of delegates to key committees and then to organize pressure on behalf of their views. Thus, a cadre of "change makers" achieved control of the Steering Committee and the Key Issues committees. Here the 10 issues were selected for Conference action. A small number of people decided the agenda. Little consideration was given to the parish polls. Frequently, the way in which a recommendation on any issue was presented to the Conference was drafted by a single member of each committee,

who often was a member of the controlling faction.

In spite of this pre-arranged influence (and a swing vote of at least 100 delegates) the "change-maker" groups achieved little of what they set out to accomplish. And for several reasons:

1. Most of the delegates, if unsophisticated as to Church controversies, were in close allegiance to the mind of the Church on important issues.
2. Many delegates, annoyed at the change-makers, carping criticism of the Church, vigorously protested to the *Archdiocesan Office of the Laity* and to other delegates about this trend.
3. Defenders of Catholic teaching, such as Chicago's Father James Kehoe, and the *Couple to Couple League*, effectively communicated their criticisms of the Steering Committee's recommendations and its advice about voting.
4. Father Raymond Sullivan, Vicar for the Laity and overseer of the conference, wrote a letter to the delegates citing his many objections to many of the recommendations.
5. Finally, a countermovement to the "change-makers" was organized by John McCartney and was given the name the "Thomas More Caucus". This caucus campaigned for particular amendments with reasonable success.

One recommendation, which the Caucus considered harmful, mandated an Archdiocesan Pastoral Council for the archbishop (with the intent that its advice would be followed). Shorn of its punitive overtones, the idea might have had merit if it really represented the thinking of Chicago's Catholic laity. However, as moved, the proposal had a distinctly undemocratic, antilay, and anticlerical flavor.

Another recommendation required the Church to give "adequate and compelling reasons for its stand on contraception." The Committee issuing this resolution was repeatedly asked what such compelling reasons might be, why the reasons constantly reiterated by the popes and the Synod of Bishops were not sufficient. In a brief floor debate allowed on this issue, however, the amendment became wrapped up in the general approval of natural family planning and was approved without the delegates being certain just what they were approving.

Other recommendations called for new archdiocesan and parish structures, programs, and employees, the implementation of which was beyond the financial or personnel resources of those bodies to support.



One recommendation (approved 433 to 7) reads: "The laity declare its opposition to abortion and its support for legislation to identify the beginning of life at conception and/or a Human Life Amendment." An extraordinary effort was required to work this recommendation into the pre-conference booklet and to achieve ultimate passage.

The Thomas More Caucus succeeded in blocking determined efforts to place the *Conference of the Laity* behind the ordination of women priests, deaconesses, and altar girls.

The value of Chicago's *Conference of the Laity* may lie in what it rejected: women's ordination; a committee of laity to help select the auxiliary bishops and the next archbishop; and the formation of an independent Corporation to act as a diocesan task force on public issues. Whatever merit the last two resolutions might have had was outweighed by their potential for harm, even for malice.

Since most of the delegates were practical Catholics with no special ideology to promote, save possibly their faith in the Church, why did some of the poorer recommendations prevail? The answer seems to be that a hard core of delegates coming from the parishes (appointed by pastors) and well-organized favored radical change in Church structures and Catholic doctrine.

Since conferences of the laity may well be convened in other dioceses, what are the useful lessons for those who consider Vatican II documents essential policy statements of the Church?

1. Lay supporters of the Vatican Council must become knowledgeable at an early part of what such a Conference has in mind and what it is likely to propose.
2. It is essential that *all* the laity are informed about developments, and that *all* have the opportunity to participate in naming delegates. Often, church agencies exercise undue influence, and parish priests – sometimes wittingly, sometimes unwittingly – facilitate the rise to power in such assemblies of anti-clerical or anti-papal representatives.
3. Insist that proposed issues be discussed and voted by parishioners on a diocesan-wide basis and that the parishioners' preferences be strictly represented in the diocesan conference.
4. Suggest that non-parochial organizations with proven membership rolls be allocated voting power in some relation to their actual strength.

5. Insist that all diocesan wide or national organizations of laity with diocesan offices be represented at the Conference. At the Chicago Conference there were no criteria for such organizational representation.
6. Most importantly, once the meetings start, attend them and work, work, and work.

John Farrell

---

## Book Review

Karol Wojtyla, *Faith According to St. John of the Cross*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981. Trans. by Jordan Aumann, O.P. Paper \$7.95; Cloth, \$11.95.

This is a translation of an early work by Pope John Paul II, his doctoral dissertation written under the direction of Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange at the Angelicum in 1948, when the author was twenty eight years old.

In this work he studies the concept of faith in the work of St. John of the Cross, who treats faith chiefly as a means of uniting the soul with God. The longest section of the work is a study of faith in St. John's *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, the work in which the saint gives his most extended treatment of the virtue of faith. After this he surveys the treatment of faith in *The Dark Night of the Soul*, *Spiritual Canticle* and the *Living Flame of Love*. The second and much greater part of the book is composed of a "Doctrinal Resume", and a concluding brief essay on "The Nature of Faith."

John of the Cross was concerned to show how radically important Catholic faith is for the life of prayer and union with God. Among some adventuresome minds during the spiritual turmoil of his time it was often suggested that "the body of specific revealed truths" proposed by the Catholic Church may be put aside in service of "the personal revelation of God in Christ (that) can never be exhausted." (p. 174.) St. John was of course convinced that knowledge of Christ is something in which we can grow daily, but that we may never put aside the objective teachings of Catholic faith which lead us securely toward the intimate personal knowledge of Christ. Pope John Paul II remains the disciple of St. John of the Cross.

Fr. Ronald Lawler OFM



## "The Role of the Bishop in the Contemporary Church":

During the ten day period June 12-23, 1982 U.S. bishops, all 350 of them, will assemble at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota for the longest annual meeting of the American hierarchy in its almost 200 year history. The bishops will meet, it says in this paper, "to consider various implications for episcopal ministry in America through the 1980's in the light of the Second Vatican Council." (p. a)

To aid their long-range preparation Bishops have been given two background papers. Part One, a booklet of 100 pages, paraphrases key documents of Vatican II around the bishop's role as teacher, sanctifier, and governor of the Church, around their relationship, too, with each other and with the modern world. Part I "was developed under the close supervision of the NCCB Committee on Doctrine". (p. b)

The final 50 pages of this booklet covers a number of specific questions pertinent to hierarchy, such as governance and service (8 pages), bishops and priests (6 pages), deacons (1), religious (3), laity (2), separated brethren (13), and the modern world (16). The main thrust of statements on the laity concerns their distinction from sacred ministers and their right to receive the Church's spiritual goods from pastors. The longer section on ecumenism (*Unitatis Reintegratio*) acknowledges the special importance of the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the profound differences among other religious bodies over the interpretations of revealed truth, for which reason *communication in sacris* is not to take place indiscriminately. Obices to ecumenism include the human failures of the Catholic community, but for any ecumenism worthy of the name of the Council calls for interior conversion on all sides. However, it is clearly affirmed that through Christ's Catholic Church alone the fullness of salvation can be obtained. The special emphasis of *Gaudium et Spes* is captured in the paper's stress on humanization and human dignity. The advisory that we can no longer be satisfied with an individualistic morality when society's common good is being neglected proved to be the Council's salutary return to the balance of traditional Catholic social thought. The background paper also reminds that the Church's role in the social order is religious, not political, and that it profits man little to gain the

present world at the expense of the world to come. Almost as if anticipating John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* by sixteen years, *G.S.* assigns unique importance to human work, to the social dimension of property, to the need for internal political and international stability, and to the holiness of marriage, whose essential notes are love and fruitfulness.

The first half of this bishops' briefing is devoted to the nature and mission of the Church itself, and the role of Pope and bishops in its life and apostolate. The emphasis of the booklet is the emphasis of the Council. Bishops are reminded that John Paul II's first message to the world (October 17, 1978) declared that *Lumen Gentium* (*Vatican II's Constitution on the Church*) was the *magna carta* of Vatican II and that the Church was situated at the center of God's plan for man's salvation.

Since most Catholic problems since Vatican II can be attributed to doubts raised or denials expressed about the divinity of the Church's origins, nature, or its right to bind the consciences of believers, the meditations on the Church suggested for the bishops' 1982 meeting are worth capsulating. Drawing on *Lumen Gentium* the NCCB Doctrine Committee speaks of the Church as the "Kingdom of God on Earth", "Kingdom of Christ", "Mystical Body" "His Body and His Fullness", "No Separation between the invisible and visible Church", an "hierarchical society and mystical body — not to be thought of as two realities", "the sole Church of Christ". Founded on the apostles with Peter as their leader, today's episcopacy continue the unbroken apostolic line of succession and hold its place "by divine institution". Bishops have the obligation (1) to foster and safeguard the unity of faith, (2) to uphold the Church's discipline, (3) to educate the faithful, especially the poor, and (4) to promote the Church's apostolic activity.

An *Explanatory Note* taken from the Second Synod of Bishops (1969) is added to the briefing in which two points in controversy today are sharply made:

1. "The faithful are bound to accept the teaching



## NCCB Background Paper — Part One

which the bishop does in the name of Christ in matters of faith and morals.”

2. “The task of giving authentic interpretation to the Word of God whether in its written form or in the form of tradition has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone.”

Bishops, therefore, have the right and duty to promote and protect the Church by regulations and by censure, if need be. Priests represent the bishop and share in his authority.

The above concepts are the foundations on which all other Church questions are based — collegiality and the various apostolates prescribed in other segments of *Lumen Gentium*. Just as the collegial body has no authority unless united with the pope, so lesser apostolates have no authority without a certain unity with a bishop.

Of some significance, too, is the booklet’s reminder to religious priests and nuns (a focal point of dissension in many places of the Church) that Vatican II’s decree *Christus Dominus* (On the Pastoral Office of Bishops) instructs religious to observe their rule, be obedient to superiors, be subject to diocesan rules regarding comportment and the exercise of apostolates. They are also to treat bishops with reverence. The booklet suggests: “Bishops insist on this.”

In view of the general excellence of Part I of the 1982 Bishops’ Briefing it may be less than cavalier to mention two areas of Vatican II documents might have been treated more fully. First, the failure to summarize *Dignitatis Humanae* (on Religious Liberty) is curious because this document, mistakenly, is being used to justify denial or disobedience by the Catholic faithful of Catholic creeds and laws. Secondly, the booklet’s statement about the purposes of marriage (“the Council had no intention of establishing priorities among the goals of marriage”) is at least a dubious reading of the text of *GS* and its footnotes. Even granting the deliberate avoidance by the Council of words like “primary” and “secondary” ends, the thrust of *Gaudium et Spes* (Nos. 50-51) does suggest a hierarchy of values consistent with standard Catholic teaching. This is especially evident in the sentence of No. 50 which reads: “Without intending to underestimate the other ends of marriage it must be said that true married

love and the whole structure of family life which results from it is directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the creator and the savior who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day.” The special praise the Council Fathers reserved in the same section for parents of “a large number of children” only reinforces the authentic trend which Catholic thinking on marriage has followed from the beginning. The Council Fathers were under strong pressure to reverse Catholic teaching on priorities in order to lay the groundwork for the ultimate reversal on contraception. But it is as true today, as it was in 1965 when *Gaudium et Spes* was approved, that the Church looks upon contraception, no less than contraceptive sterilization and abortion, as an intrinsically evil act. No doubt should remain for the faithful, or for bishops, that fruitfulness in marriage is, or ought to be, still a very high priority for Christian spouses, and the point toward which marriage itself, and the sacrament, is directed. The fact is, of course, that in a short space of years it has been allowed to obtain a low priority for the young. The issue no longer is contraception but whether there is any law of God at all, revealed or otherwise, which is not subject to man’s veto power. That is why the priorities clearly worked out in *GS*’s — treatment of marriage — an objective moral order, the authority of the Church, respect for human life, marital chastity, married love dishonored by “unlawful contraceptive practices” (*GS*’ terminology No. 47) etc. — need special emphasis today. In *Gaudium et Spes*, after we are informed that the *objective* criteria for harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life are “drawn from the nature of the human person and human action”, we are told that these “criteria respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving *and human procreation* in the context of true love.” We are also informed that this harmonization is possible “only if the virtue of marital chastity is seriously practiced.” Is contraceptive use a serious way of practicing marital chastity?

But these reservations apart, there is little question that the bishops can profit — and we too — from a return to the documents of Vatican II and their true meaning. The NCCB Doctrine Committee is to be complimented on providing this summary in Part I.



## "Selected Trends and Assumptions in American Society and the Church":

The U.S. Catholic bishops will open their 1982 Assembly in Collegeville, Minn. with a keynote address by Archbishop John Roach, NCCB president, to be followed by the spiritual reflections from Archbishop Martini of Milan. In the course of the ten-day meeting eight other bishops "in all probability will discuss themes drawn from the assembly background paper" — whose 26 essays "were written by members of the faculty at the Catholic University of America." According to Part II, Msgr. Frederick McManus, vice-provost of the University, "graciously served as liaison with NCCB staff on the project and was largely responsible for identifying the faculty members and securing their participation."

The man in charge of the entire 1982 Assembly will be Youngstown's Bishop James W. Malone, vice-chairman of the NCCB. Readers are told in advance that the background paper must be seen as "a logical whole", compiled by Archbishop John May of St. Louis and his drafting committee to help "bishops in developing a clearer and more integrated vision of their ministry in the years ahead". This committee makes clear, however, that the "Bishops neither affirm nor deny any statement in the essays. They simply receive them as matters for discussion."

The content of 26 essays covers seven areas of scholarly thought: American and global perspectives on socio-political matters, intellectual life and the Church, questions of authority, evolving ecclesial structures, social groups, personal relationships, and the larger Christian community. Specific subjects treated include war and peace, religious pluralism, Catholic youth, parish life, women's rights, sexual morality and ecumenism. The contributors to the bishops' briefing paper drawn from outside the CUA faculty include Bishop J. Francis Stafford of Baltimore, Fr. Edward Braxton, theologian to Archbishop James Hickey of Washington, D.C., Dr. Richard Neuhaus of the Council on Religion and International Affairs, Fr. Bernard Quinn of the Glenmary Research Center in Washington, D.C. and Dr. Thomas Shannon of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

So broad in scope is the content of Background Paper, Part II that it should be summarized in some detail — if the aims of the 1982 Bishops' Assembly are to be understood, at least as these are perceived by the Drafting Committee. Because the subject matter frequently overlaps, the advice received by

the bishops from CUA's faculty will be summarized under the following six headings.

### 1. *The State of the World*

Dr. Richard Neuhaus speaking of what he calls "post-secular America", says there is presently a vacuum in American cultural leadership waiting to be filled by a bold and creative religious community. Mainline Protestantism — liberal and ecumenical — once held this dominant position in our society, but the *National Council of Churches* (its headquarters for many years) lost social clout because most Christians today have nothing to do with it. Part of the reason for this decline is that, having associated the Kingdom of God with social progress in American Life, mainline Protestantism allowed the world to set the agenda for the Churches. The National Council having invested its fortunes in a political program (mostly that of the Democratic Party), so Neuhaus thinks, is likely to be an ineffectual minority for years to come. Fundamentalist Protestantism will not fill the empty leadership void (although it has a hold on believers, even as it alienated elites) because it is too apocalyptic and may not in the long run prove to be a popular movement.

This leaves the Catholic Church as a potential leadership community, which may already have disqualified itself because it lacks self-confidence — or has itself already succumbed to the mainline Protestant mistake, i.e. permitting the world to set the agenda for the Church.

Political scientist Charles Dechert is not sure that anything American can be a paradigm of cultural leadership because the country's so called "good life" is no longer desirable. America contributes to a more just and orderly society in many places. But the world and the country are highly pluralistic, leaving Catholicism with a limited role at best. Perhaps all that Christianity can do is to side with the forces of social change, understanding that the future world order will be more complex than the Church alone can influence.

Alexander Woroniak and his associates are more critical of the Church's potential role. They think that the present stance of the Church toward state vs. private economic enterprise is an obex to a leadership role for the Church. They wish a review of the present Church policy which makes the state a competitor with private initiative in the economic enterprise. Transfer payments by Gov-



## NCCB Background Paper: Part Two

ernment from class to class may not, they think, be a better method of eliminating poverty than the production of more wealth. A matter of concern for the whole world, especially the poor, is the recent decline in U.S. productivity.

The invited economists are strong in their conviction that the least sophisticated branch of theological inquiry is that which pertains to economic life. Theology may be strong on moral vision but they think it is inferior in its grasp of economic reality. Distributive justice cannot operate when there is no wealth to distribute, so the argument is made. The problem, as they see it, is not that democratic capitalism has failed but that it continues to lose the propaganda battle to ineffectual socialists. Theologians today, so the report goes, continue to use clichés (about profit, robber barons, etc.) without understanding the realities of economic life. However discredited and unproductive socialist and/or government bureaucracies may be, they manage somehow to continue in a world leadership role. The Church, the reports seem to suggest, cannot expect to assert leadership by supporting economic failures.

Dr. Warren MacIsaac and his associates, take note of the deplorable state of the contemporary culture and the "pop" arts, while reminding the bishops that they face rising generations to whom subjective states, individual self-fulfillment, romanticism, personal relationships and sensate satisfactions transcend any yearnings they may have for other human goods, even eternal salvation. These authors note, quite correctly, that Catholic liturgy developed to its best peak is probably the one Church experience which can offset the tawdry influences of secular culture. However, their suggestion that more committees, especially at the parish level, can contribute to superior liturgical performance seems jejune, to say the least.

### 2. *The State of the Church*

Whether the index be demography in general or Catholic religious behavior in particular, the state of the Church, as reported in this background paper, is not looked upon as healthy. Fr. Provost, speaking about evangelization, adverts to the 60 million "unchurched" Americans, and to a severe drop in Sunday Mass attendance, especially among young Catholics.

Dean Hoge sees the future Catholic Church as Hispanic, with less children available for religious education, less schools, less Church involvement,

more broken homes, more career women, more cohabitation among the young and more illegitimacy. The evangelization of today's young to be successful, he says, will call for churches to weaken their own identification with the church and relate better to the partisans of the "new morality". (p. 96) As for religious vocations, the future pattern is discernible, says Hoge's research: "In general communities which allow more individual decision making are attracting more members than other communities." (p. 97)

Dr. William Conyngham argues that the present divisions within the Church also mean a weakened ability to articulate and pursue a unified political position on a particular issue and, therefore, a net loss of political influence at a time in history when political controversy usually involves moral issues or matters of vital interest to religious bodies.

### 3. *State of Church Structures*

Fr. James Provost approves the rise of Catholic collegial structures since Vatican II and the consequent decentralization of administration of Church service already in process. He is satisfied, too, with the increasingly influential role in the Church of the NCCB and the USCC, without acknowledging that, if their new power is accurately measured, it represents a trend toward centralization in Church business which did not exist prior to Vatican II. Provost, a CUA professor of canon law, is satisfied perhaps because he is happy with the results of what Washington based Church agencies, including the scholarly associations dominated by CUA professors, have initiated so far. He speaks positively, for example, of the NCCB's scientific studies of the priesthood and its Call to Action, although neither of these events can be said to have advanced Catholicism's cause in any way.

If Fr. Provost is content with what goes on structure-wise at the national level, Paulist John Lynch, also a CUA canon lawyer is not happy with the Catholic parish. As he sees it, a consensus already exists, viz., the parish is so ill-suited to the contemporary scene that, if not abolished outright, it must be supplemented with more flexible arrangements (p. 203). Claiming the parochial structure to be "handed down unchanged from the Middle Ages", "insulated from the complexity of a contemporary life", incapable of dealing with "the demands of legitimate pluralism, almost unheard of a generation ago", Lynch wants a more structured



## NCCB Background Paper: Part Two (Continued)

collaboration among parishes, even at the sacrifice of some autonomy (p. 214).

Fr. Lynch's views receive short shrift from several other contributors to the background paper. Dr. Joan Ward Mullaney, evaluating the decentralization going on in the world of public and private welfare, thinks the best place to turn for a viable social care system is to the parish. (p. 223) Fr. Provost, at one point concerning himself only with evangelization, concludes that "the parish has been and will probably continue to be the most significant unit of Roman Catholic life in the United States" and "the major locus for Catholic evangelization efforts" (p. 363) But it is Glenmary Fr. Bernard Quinn who, describing the job still confronting the Church in rural America, correctly sees the parish — not as a unifying structure for covenanted groups (e.g. charismatics) but as the all-inclusive community (cohesed by its common faith) which draws together all kinds of Christians who develop their holiness at different rates of speed. Quinn correctly notes that small population groups usually lack long term cohesion and stability. (The demise of the Christian Family Movement after a spectacular 20 year achievement is a case in point.) If the all-inclusive parish did not exist, it would have to be invented.

At no time, however, does any single paper deal with the internal and diocesan reasons for the ineffectiveness of so many U.S. parishes — in relation to their potential, that is.

### 4. State of Church Authority

CUA social scientist Raymond Potvin calls "invisible" religion the integral element in American society. In practice, this makes religion a private matter, serving private needs, opposed at times to the official teaching of the Church. The Church no longer is the interpreter of the world to its faithful, merely one voice in a world of competing voices. Pluralism and choice are today's values, even for priests and religious. The Church's problem is to maintain its unity in the face of the modern tendency to separatism. As a solution Potvin proposes Braxton's *wisdom communities* as archtypes of the future church — those in which dialogue rules, bishops participating, from which helpful insights and solutions to the problems created by diversity will be generated.

Franciscan Aubert Clark develops these same points in greater depth. Beginning with the observation that there has been a major shift in our society away from anything which smacks of domination, Fr. Clark thinks the more successful

form of leadership will involve some form of participatory democracy. For moderns movement, (change) is the prized reality. The chief threat to growth, therefore, is seen as authority, which is looked upon no longer as having any right to be the arbiter of life's decisions. Communication and planning may make "authority" more acceptable — in the Clark view.

Dr. Antonas Suziedelis, while admitting that a psychological approach to authority may be of limited value to bishops (it would not have served Christ at certain points in his life), nonetheless leans heavily on psychology in telling bishops how to reach today's youth. He rules out immediately, even from discussion, the exercise of effective influence through law, methods of compliance, and sanctions. Authority based on status is discounted by him as is the institutional church and the collected wisdom of the ages (p. 184). Influence today comes because the authority figure is appealing (identification) or the message is credible (internalization). The first influence is affective, the other cognitive. (pp. 186-187) Suziedelis has only one recommendation, viz. that authority figures avoid categorical statements of positions as prescribed codes of conduct in favor of setting forth their positions or ideals, with full realization that individuals will vary in the degree to which they strive toward the ideal.

Fr. Braxton reinforces this approach with the assertion that "a key part of the ministry of episcopal leadership is necessarily the need to be the chief listener of the diocese." (p. 124) The shape of his church to come calls for ideological pluralism because bishops, he says, are themselves no longer of one mind concerning the Church, its authority, or teaching. Bishops now associate with peers of like mind and avoid those with whom they sharply differ. The Collegeville meeting, he says, should engage those differences because the success or failure of effective episcopal interaction over those differences will shape the Church to come more than any study of the views of the laity or theologians. (p. 129)

Braxton, calling upon Thomas Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, makes revolutionary change the paradigm for his future church. He distinguishes revelation from theology, faith from dogma, church from its constituent communities (mainly hierarchy, university, everyman). These three communities often reach different conclusions, sometimes complimentary, sometimes contradictory. Fr. Braxton recognizes the tendency to defend one's own community



## NCCB Background Paper: Part Two (Continued)

view and to dismiss the other two as irrelevant or wrong. He puts all this down to acceptable dialectic tension.

At the end of his essay he leaves his bishop-readers with ten questions. The answers presumptively will vary with the bishops and to the extent they agree or disagree with Braxton's analysis of what the Church is called upon to do — as the Body of Christ.

### 5. *State of Role Playing in the Church*

Fr. Robert Kinast reiterates the common Catholic understanding of the role of the laity in the Church — collaboration with the clergy in the priestly works of the Church and the Christianization of the social institutions of the secular world. If Vatican II did not say anything more or less than the Popes of the last two centuries have said — it reinforced a trend toward new relationships between clergy and laity. Fr. Kinast quite properly cites the *Chicago Declaration of Concern* as a reminder that the lay role strictly speaking is to be exercised in the world, not exclusively in quasi-priestly service to the Church.

Sister Mary Collins O.S.B. confronts the bishops with tough statements about women in the Church and women in liturgy. This Benedictine nun is not satisfied with any reflection on Vatican II documents which does not take into account the women's liberation movement in the U.S., a post-conciliar development and beyond the ken of Vatican II. As she sees it racism, militarism and the sexism of the world are due to "patriarchal, hierarchial social structures". (p. 242) She wants the Church to upset this order of things. But she is afraid that the new canon law will only institutionalize the same patriarchy which has caused all these social evils. Drawing support from what she calls the lobbying influence of the Catholic biblical, theological, and canonical societies in the U.S., Sr. Mary Collins declares the traditional distinctions between men's and women's roles to be "culturally obsolete and theologically ill-founded." (p. 244) To insist on them further will only weaken the credibility of the magisterium as a teacher for life. If her views are not taken seriously, she sees a serious conflict in women's expectations in the offing and potential, too, "for increased alienation". She wants young Catholics, including seminarians and the Roman congregations, to be socialized in the new views and not in a theological tradition that is no longer theologically defensible.

Sr. Mary Collins carries these views on sexism

over into her treatment of worship in a pluralistic church. Bishops, she says, still function out of a pre-Vatican II juridical approach to liturgical questions, working at cross purposes with those (including some bishops) whose concern is not law, but sacramentality. She wants an end to legalism, minimalism, and clericalism (p. 294). If it is a sound principle that the one who presides over the life of the local church presides at worship, then is there not a role for the baptized who serve the community as a way of life, she asks?

### 6. *State of Moral Theology*

There was one brief sortie into moral theology by Sr. Mary Collins when she mused: "Should Catholics whose public commitments involve the exploitation of others for profit be separated from the Eucharistic assembly for a time — excommunicated for the sake of mature conversion to the gospel?" (p. 290) Beyond this, only two questions are given serious theological analysis in the Bishops' background paper: War and peace and pastoral problems related to the Church's sexual norms. Thomas Shannon was called upon by Msgr. Fred McManus to deal with the one, Dominican Benedict Ashley the other.

Dr. Shannon thinks the Church should re-examine its just war theory, decide whether or not there is a conflict of interest for chaplains in the military, whether the country's budgetary allocation of federal resources or its deterrence theory might be reviewed by bishops with some view of disagreeing with both. Seemingly Shannon thinks there is a rare likelihood of a just war within today's military context.

The Church's problem with its own sexual norms is examined against the backdrop of Bishop J. Francis Stafford's review of the 1980 White House Conference on Families and the 1980 Synod of Bishops dealing with the same subject. But it is Fr. Ashley's 42 pages — the longest in the briefing document — which dominate the moral theology considerations of sexuality presented to the bishops.

Fr. Ashley wishes to build bridges to humanists who believe that sexual activity is proper (1) if it is self-fulfilling and (2) if it does not hurt others. Some humanists are more conservative than others (e.g. about pornography) but they agree, nonetheless, that the Christian sexual code violates human rights. Appositely, the underlying principle of the Church's sexual code is the inseparability of its unitive and procreative character, a doctrine firmly rooted in scripture and, though not solemnly



## NCCB Background Paper: Part Two (Continued)

defined, is (according to Ashley) definable doctrine. Today, Catholic proportionalist theologians make exceptions to this absolute norm but they also leave large room for arbitrary decisions. Ashley himself, arguing that God forbids only what is harmful to us and to others, concludes about sexual acts: "If they are not harmful, they cannot be immoral." (p. 305) He wants more research to develop empirical arguments to persuade humanists (e.g. such as occurred over the birth control pill), although he admits that the only observable harm deriving from masturbation is the result of imputed guilt, not from the act itself.

In evaluating the present climate for Catholics who face difficult sexual decisions, Ashley makes another observation: "Clinical psychologists often claim, and I am not prepared to dispute their claim, that in the recent past the Catholic home has often communicated an unhealthy, over-anxious, and guilt ridden attitude toward sex." (p. 314) His answer is a better emotional climate, the removal of the macho male stereotype from Catholic education and the creation of a Christian counter-culture.

When Fr. Ashley deals with today's deviance from Church's norms on the use of contraceptives in marriage, his casuistry creates more problems for Catholic truth and the Catholic mission than it purports to solve.

1. His first principle is that *Humanae Vitae* must not be minimized nor must exceptions to moral principles be made merely to solve difficult cases. However, he has a reservation: "The (present) situation cannot be corrected simply by new and stronger affirmations of official Church teaching by the Pope or bishops, or individual pastors, and certainly not by theologians who disagree among themselves." (p. 320) Such an assertion of the Church's authority will not solve people's dilemmas, he thinks.
2. His second principle is that the confessional is not the place to wean people away from contraceptives. The pulpit is a better place for such conversion efforts, but he still has a problem: "A type of preaching or instruction which dwell's on the Church's condemnation of contraception or passes judgment on dissenters at the present time seems counter-productive." (p. 324)
3. His third principle calls for suggesting the alternative of natural family planning. Only if penitents "refuse to give any indication of a

will to act conscientiously in the matter" might absolution be denied and then only in "a compassionate and nonjudgmental manner." (p. 323) He further judges that "the denial of absolution as a sanction to teach and enforce objective morality is of minimal effectiveness and commonly alienates people from the Church." (p. 335)

4. His fourth principle offers a resolution to a perplexed conscience. If penitents confess their difficulties with NFP, priests are face to face with a perplexed conscience. They should then inform penitents to pray and then "we should do what seems to us the greater good and the lesser evil." (p. 322). A confession is valid, Ashley adds "when the person confesses doing what they honestly believe to be wrong, not what others, even the pastors of the Church say is objectively wrong." (p. 334)

During a period of Church history when casuistry does not seem to be operating very much, and not many confessions, Fr. Ashley's casuistry may appear to some as a legitimate effort to provide bottom line guidelines. But casuistry must stay close to basic principles, otherwise all sins, not just contraception, and not merely sexual sins, will find their justification and a good many sinners too. Fr. Ashley thinks he has the pastoral answer for today's sexual difficulties among Christians: "A patient educational effort will counterbalance our readiness of acceptance of subjective morality in confession, and will gradually lead those who confess to see the objective wisdom of the Gospel as interpreted authentically by the pastors of the Church." (p. 335, 336) It is difficult to see how this will come about as long as Fr. Ashley does not want (1) the rival teaching office of dissenters to be confronted by pastors (2) the subjective but erroneous conscience of the contraceptionist need not be confronted in the confessional, and (3) as long as the pastor/confessor is granted no right to apply the normal sanctions to wrong-doing provided in the gospel of Christ. Whether a given culture approves or disapproves the Church's methods for dealing with sinfulness is not the controlling factor, especially if that culture counts sin as nothing to begin with.

### General Commentary

This summary of the two briefing papers compiled by Archbishop May and Msgr. Frederick McManus, like the essays themselves, can be



## NCCB Background Paper: Part Two (Continued)

evaluated by individual readers in accordance with their judgment of what Vatican II intended and their personal experience with American Catholic life.

This reviewer has a few observations of his own which he would like to share with the readership of the *Fellowship Newsletter*.

1. Washington, D.C. is hardly the only or the best research center from which to draw scholarly counsel for an historic bishops' meeting or for a balanced view of what Vatican II intended or of the American Catholic scene itself.
2. There seems to be little relationship between Part I and Part II of these background papers. The second briefing paper ideally might have developed ways and means of institutionalizing the Church policies outlined in Part I, (e.g. renewed religious orders, upgraded parish life, growth in holiness, etc.). When Vatican II documents are referred to at all in Part II it is usually to go beyond them (e.g. on women's ordination) or to specify a meaning against what the Council actually said (e.g. the rights and responsibility of hierarchy).
3. The social science data used in these papers generally suggest particular conclusions which can be controverted by other social scientists using different frameworks, different data, or who interpret existing data differently. Social science findings (because they are ephemeral) are usually a generation behind customary shifts in public needs and public opinion. The Church cannot afford to sacralize "models" (of learning, of gaining followership, etc.) which secular leadership are beginning to find defective or outdated. Many of the recommendations for the bishops contained in Part II have already been tried by secular institutions and government with infelicitous results. It is not necessary that the Church repeat these mistakes, especially since it has its own traditions and its own models of what works and what does not.
4. One question may be asked of the 1982 Bishops' Assembly organizers without prejudice: If Vatican II teaching is the norm, what are the serious shortcomings of the Church in the U.S. for which the bishops must begin to seek institutional answers without delay? Or, to phrase the question another way: Do the

papers in Part II really reflect the real needs of the Catholic Church as defined by Vatican II or are they merely the wishes and wants of a particular academic elite with a special ideology?

Fr. Braxton comes closest to suggesting what should be the objective of the 1982 Bishops' Assembly: the re-unification of the Church around the policies set down in Vatican II. His assertion that bishops themselves are divided (others would add that some are also at odds with the Holy See) touches the core of the problem. If the bishops cannot relate what the word of God is or should mean for 20th century men — and make that Word and meaning prevail at least among faithful Catholics and in Catholic institutions — the last state of the Church may worsen.

George A. Kelly

---

## Book Review

William May, Ed., *Principles of Catholic Moral Life* (Franciscan Herald Press, 1981)

The sixteen chapters in this book are scholarly re-presentations of the bed rock foundations of authentic Catholic moral and ascetical teaching. Moreover the work is expressly meant to be an intelligent criticism of some of the aberrations of the consequentialist methodology which has appeared for the past decade as authentic Catholic teaching. That erroneous methodology was born of the organized dissent from the teachings reiterated in the watershed encyclical of Pope Paul VI (*Humanae Vitae*), a methodology which demanded not only different conclusions from the Catholic teaching, but also a whole new set of principles to try to make them somehow seem plausible. This presented the interesting phenomenon that the best answers to the errors being propagated by the new theologians could be found in their own earlier writings, which had now become an embarrassment for them.

The various authors of "Principles of Catholic Moral Life" draw heavily from the scriptures and from the documents of Vatican II. It is unfortunately a fact that on some occasions some of the new theologians have not hesitated to manipulate the Council documents, by biased translation or judicious omissions, so as to distort their original meaning. More than one instance of this sort of thing is pointed out in this book.

Thomas O'Donnell, S.J.



## Selected Commentary on Part II of Bishop's Briefing Paper: by Fr. Ronald Lawler and Professor Joseph Boyle

### *FATHER ASHLEY'S 'PASTORAL' APPROACH TO CONTRACEPTION*

Father Ashley's paper is in some respects excellent. He presents clearly and persuasively the Church's teaching on the morality of contraception, taken abstractly. But in his "pastoral application" he tends to ignore elements of Catholic moral guidance as important as the teaching on the morality of contraception itself.

Fr. Ashley emphasizes that *Humanae Vitae* must be accepted. Priests have no right, he says, to advise, encourage or condone the practice of contraception. Nor may they conceal or minimize this papal teaching. He declares that Pope Paul does not specify the pastoral approach to be taken in dealing with contraception, and then adopts a strange "pastoral" solution himself.

Ashley admits that the term "pastoral" is much abused nowadays, and he emphasizes that there should be no exceptions here, nor any theology of compromise. The objective immorality of contraception is not to be called into question. However, there must be, he says, respect for the "subjective conscience" of the penitent, even while the objective norms are urged and explained. The Church must be concerned about getting persons' subjective morality in line with objective morality. But there are, as all would admit, a variety of ways of doing this. Ashley suggests that it would be pastorally required to give absolution in a specific case — one in which the penitent may not be really disposed; and he suggests that it be given in the light of an analysis of the proposed case that is certainly faulty.

The penitent in the case mentions contraception in the confession, but is determined to continue practicing contraception. He is unwilling to try NFP, either because he is convinced it will not work or, because he thinks that it is acceptable for a Catholic to perform immoral kinds of actions such as contraceptive acts when one sees no other way of fulfilling a positive duty (seeing to the good of his marriage and family, in this case.) When the penitent reveals that he has the intention of practicing contraception in the future with such a justification, Fr. Ashley suggest that, if the person sincerely thinks this would be right (and the confessor, he says, should presume sincerity), he is then in a true dilemma. One half of the dilemma is caused by the penitent's judgment that the Church

condemns contraception, the other half by the penitent's belief that there are good — and even morally binding — reasons for practicing contraception. It will not do, in this situation, to simply reassert the Church's teaching that contraception is wrong, since this is what put the person in a dilemma in the first place. The proper solution is to say that we now have a perplexed conscience. The confessor should tell him that in such cases, "after informing our conscience as well as we can and praying for light, we should do what seems to us the greater good and the lesser evil." Ashley suggests that if the penitent judges then that he should keep practicing contraception, he should be absolved.

Many questions are created by this "solution", for it provides too facile an escape from serious duties. Let us examine some difficulties.

(1) *In what sense have we here a serious 'dilemma'?* The dilemma arises because the patient knows that contraception is wrong, and because he thinks also that it would be wrong *not* to contracept if the failure to do so would harm his marriage and family. But surely there is a Catholic teaching about the nature of moral absolutes, and about the appropriateness of doing an immoral kind of deed "so that good may come of it." Does not the confessor have a duty to *instruct* the penitent about Catholic ways of forming conscience, as well as about specific precepts? Catholic moral teaching has clearly and constantly taught that one is neither required nor permitted to do intrinsically evil deeds, even if one has no other way to fulfill sacred duties. Thus, Thomas More, that most reluctant of martyrs, was willing to do whatever was morally upright to live and to be the support of his family; but he knew that it is not permissible to do evil kinds of things (in his case, assenting to a religious falsehood that had been accepted by most theologians and bishops of his land) to achieve any end whatever. Were Ashley right in his revisionism here, his would be an all purpose solution to "liberate" people from all the most difficult moral responsibilities. Any base kinds of deeds whatever could be done, and the perpetrator absolved and sent off to Communion while retaining the resolve to continue doing such deeds, as long as he (by an objectively impossible calculus) decided that continuing his base practices — say, gouging the poor in business, serving the



## Fr. Lawler and Professor Boyle (Continued)

Mafia interests, selling political influence – were in his “judgment” a lesser evil than seeing his life and family gravely harmed. Presume sincerity and the burdens the Fathers mentioned of warning souls in bad faith are delightfully lightened.

(2) *In what sense is good faith to be normally presumed?* Obviously, we are to respect all persons, treat them as precious and loved by God. But those who are called upon to help should examine themselves before God, should not forget the fact that most examiners of the human situation proclaim, that we, all of us, easily fall into regrettable measures of bad faith from time to time. Especially in cases when it would be difficult for us to be faithful to painful duties, we are inclined to find “dilemmas” or rationalizations to keep us from recognizing what is, in fact, the duty of a Catholic Christian. The confessor should not treat the penitent with suspicion, but with realistic love. If one is hiding from oneself important duties, or “cannot see” duties that Catholics actually have in such pseudo-conflicts, the kind confessor instructs and warmly urges him to do his duty.

(3) *Is this a subjective solution?* Ashley presents these cases as if he were dealing with the subjective side of morality. Now subjective morality often is concerned with excusing factors, with factors that mitigate the *imputability* of a bad act. These factors include those which compromised the freedom of the act (full consent) or the knowledge of the person in acting (sufficient reflection). But clearly, there seems to be no issue of moral freedom; and if the relevant knowledge is lacking (about the duty *never* to do a deed that is intrinsically wrong), it can readily be given in a confessional context. The idea that refusing absolution in a case like Ashley’s would be an instance of enforcing objective standards when one is known to be subjectively innocent is clearly false. Rather, either refusal or conferring of absolution would be premature: first, the person should be instructed. If, fully instructed, he determines that he will yet do gravely sinful deeds, refusal of absolution would not be a crushing of subjective sincerity but a truthful recognition that one who is determined to do what he knows to be mortally sinful has not repented, and cannot now fruitfully receive absolution. The possibility of absolution in *some* cases, far more carefully determined, will be noted below.

(4) *When could one resolved to continue practicing contraception be absolved?* The confessor normally has a duty to instruct penitents about their grave duties. If penitents understand these

duties (e.g., if they know they may never deliberately practice contraception or never deliberately swear falsely), they should be given by the confessor the chance to make the kind of decision that life on earth is largely about: to decide whether or not he or she will or will not obey the will of God, and so make himself or herself apt for eternal life, or not. It is not the business of confessors to assume that penitents will ordinarily reject difficult duties, and so shield them from knowing the extent of their obligations. If a confessor does not make the teaching of faith clear because he believes that the penitent would reject Catholic requirements, he would hardly be assuming good faith in the person. True, there *can* conceivably be cases when one would judge that this or that penitent has been so bruised, e.g., by the scandalous dissent of priests, that he or she really seems unable to believe the confessor when he presents what is in fact Catholic teaching. There are obviously notable risks in all estimations in cases like these. The pastoral decision to absolve one determined to do objectively mortally sinful acts must involve an honest decision that this person here and now (after the confessor has given whatever instruction it is his duty to give) is truly in good faith. Not every kind of “sincerity” is relevant. A sincere dissenter could simply be one who shares those worldly modes of thinking that the Christian should set aside, but holds those views intensely, and counts ridiculous whatever opposes them. To absolve such a person would ordinarily be cruel: it would mask from the person his great alienation from faith. In the case of others there is a far more Christian sincerity, a radical readiness to set aside one’s own view and follow the word of God as faith teaches it, but some serious and special difficulty is keeping the person from full realization of his duties now. It is in such cases that the confessor may find occasions in which one who cannot now be led to realize and follow Catholic teaching might be absolved.

Clearly this area of pastoral practice is one of greatest importance. Policies in this matter must take seriously all received and insistent Catholic teaching about pastoral matters; it must be faithful to what the Church believes about moral absolutes; it must not minister to bad faith by manifestly wrong theories about good faith; it must not take the vigorous defense of real human values out of serious moral precepts by presenting excuses for immoral conduct that would undermine moral seriousness in every area. Sensitive awareness to the difficulty of keeping certain precepts must keep us gentle, but in ways fully in accord with all the Church’s teachings.



## Fr. Lawler and Professor Boyle (Continued)

### THOMAS A. SHANNON ON "WAR AND PEACE"

Dr. Shannon's comments on the contemporary issues of war and peace are divided into three parts: first he outlines what he thinks are the critical issues in the contemporary discussion; second, he presents some central elements in the Church's teaching on war and peace; and, third, he makes some recommendations for policy decisions on the part of the Bishops and the American Church. These recommendations are not credible and would be followed by the Bishops only at the peril of their undercutting their own authority as moral teachers by speaking not out of the clear truth of Catholic teaching but rather on the basis (1) of disputable political judgments in which Bishops have no special competence, (2) partisan evaluations of the current situation — evaluations which have no clear support in Catholic teaching — and (3) an unbalanced presentation of the Catholic teaching on war and peace.

#### (1) *Disputable Political Judgments*

Throughout his presentation Shannon expresses disagreement with the Reagan administration's military policies vis-a-vis the Soviet Union: the current administration is taking a hard line with the Soviets, is involved in an arms build up, and so on. But he never shows that this is necessarily wrong, or that thoughtful and peace loving Catholics are wrong to support the administration.

There certainly can be an irrational arms race. But the question of whether the policies of a given administration amount to a commitment to an irrational arms race is a difficult one and cannot be answered in the facile way Shannon supposes. If the Soviet Union is far ahead of us in various kinds of weapons, and if we cannot defend the rights of the innocent without seeking to have realistic defenses against their actual power, is every attempt to get such power participation an unjust arms race? Is it so obvious that a desire to become strong, strong enough to require Russia to negotiate with us in good faith, precisely to the kind of disarmament Church documents have spoken of, is a sign that an administration really is not interested in disarmament, but wants a mad arms race, presumably for its own sake? Anyone alive to modern politics cannot help knowing the questions are far more complicated and that religious and peace loving people have different views of these questions.

In saying this, we are not denying that Catholics ought to apply their moral principles in the practical and political order, even if there are

no decisive Catholic teachings that this or that is the right application. But because of the obscurities involved in this domain, it is important to make appropriate distinctions. Those who are for various reasons convinced that some policy is seriously wrong (say the present administrations determination to spend much more on arms) may have a grave duty to say so publicly, and argue their case as forcibly as they can. Those who are convinced that such a policy is morally required to bringing an irrational opponent toward disarmament have a duty to say that. But it is suitable that scholars and bishops who engage in these necessary tasks distinguish these forms of bringing Christian guidance to practical affairs from the other essential kind of guidance: bearing witness to truths that certainly must be heeded by people of either side.

These more general positions (never kill combatants directly; do not destroy whole population centers; distinguish between causing death in the midst of a defensive act and intending to kill . . .) must form the core of what Bishops as teachers of the Church should publically proclaim. This certain core of liberating principles must not be obscured by confusion with less certain political judgment. If the bishops are led to confuse the two types of teaching, witnessing to certain and undeniable Catholic principles, and taking stands on issues in which diverse people may have legitimate differences, Catholic truth will not be heard.

#### (2) *Partisan Evaluations*

Shannon's list of the critical issues in the contemporary discussion reveals his bias. He lists the areas as: the increase in military spending, the threat to non-combatants, the possible unreliability of computers involved, the possibility of nuclear accidents, and the state of Salt II negotiations. Nowhere does he so much as hint at the danger which the Soviet military build-up seems to present; nowhere does he even suggest that there is a serious moral obligation to protect the legitimate security of one's country. Instead we are presented with the illogical opposition between military expenditures and human needs, as if providing for the common defense were not a legitimate part of the common good of any political society.

The mainstream of Catholic thought on war and peace in our day refuses the kind of simplification which characterizes Shannon's evaluation of the current scene. This tradition of thinking — well represented by John Courtney Murray's "Remarks on the Moral Problems of War," (*Th. St.*, 20 (1959) 40-61) — has recognized



## Fr. Lawler and Professor Boyle (Continued)

that the issue essentially involves two problems: (1) that modern war is horrible, indeed, and we must avoid it if we reasonably can, and (2) that the threats of world enslavement and genocide that are real in the world today are also horrible evils; we must prevent them if we morally can. Shannon makes everything simpler by overlooking the second horror. Even a committed pacifist must honestly admit the evil his position allows, if he is to have any credibility in serious moral argument. Catholic bishops cannot credibly or responsibly teach out of such a simplified understanding of the situation. Moral teaching must be practical and realistic; it cannot be such if it overlooks what all serious people know.

### (3) *Unbalanced Presentation of Church Teaching*

The biased character of Shannon's evaluation of the current situation is related to his unbalanced and seriously distorted presentation of the Church's teaching on war and peace.

For example, he calls attention to the statement of the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace of June 3, 1976, and draws from it some powerful statements that virtually every Catholic moralist would agree with. War is a terrible thing, and expending money on weapons of war tragically lowers the capacity to do other good things. He pays little attention, however, to other sections of that statement, e.g., to the more nuanced discussion of how disarmament is to be effected. The document points out that the disarmament must be conceived of a kind that the security resulting from it will be at least equal to that which the present situation provides. Magisterial teaching remembers the terrible results of not defending justice in the world. Throughout, Shannon neglects what the Church has repeatedly said about the obligation of states to enforce justice, and that wars of self defense can be "in certain circumstances obligatory" (AAS 41 (1949) 13); then, and later, Pope Pius XII, knowing very well the horrors of modern warfare, but knowing something else too, asserted that a nation "unjustly attacked and menaced in its vital rights" could resort to violence in defense of these rights, though only in the kind of circumstances that make this justifiable (AAS 44 (1952) 422).

His discussion of the just war theory is similarly unbalanced. He does not define the just war doctrine and makes no attempt to highlight those features of it which are part of constant Catholic teaching on the sanctity of life and on civic duty. For example, as Murray pointed out, the classic just war theory stated conditions for

justifying aggressive wars — that is, wars which the state could morally initiate a war for good reasons, like rectifying past wrongs. Recent teaching restricts justifiable warfare to self-defense but does not call into question the basic obligation of citizens to defend justice nor the basic obligation not to intentionally take human life. Moreover, nothing in Vatican II or in Church teaching since then even suggests that defensive wars are forbidden.

Shannon's whole treatment of conscientious objection is similarly one sided and misleading. He quotes, but does not seem to see the force of the statement of Vatican II that renouncing the use of violence in the vindication of one's own rights can be laudable, "provided this can be done without injury to the rights and duties of others or of the community itself." If this part were reflected on there could be intelligent discussion between those who believe that the United States should have a credible defense against the Russians, while it has a grave obligation to pursue peace in every way possible with those who approach the question from other points of view.

The selective use of Church documents in Shannon's discussion reveals what has become common in recent years. Dissenting moralists — with whom Shannon elsewhere identifies himself — do this regularly. For them it makes sense to emphasize those teachings with which one agrees and to ignore the others. Teachers of the Church, however, are ill-served by such partisan handling of the received teaching of the Church. The ordinary teaching of the Church over long periods of time is authoritative. Unless this teaching is kept in the foreground of Catholic discussions, the liberating truth of revealed principle is likely to be obscured by political and social preferences that are not certain, nor persuasive nor perhaps even true.

This is exactly what has happened in Shannon's presentation. The points he makes are either truisms which everyone — including those who are non-believers — accept, or disputable judgments and preferences for a modified pacifism. There is no awareness of the Christian perspective so much in evidence in St. Augustine's discussion of war: that sin is worse than either defeat or death. However terrible are the physical evils of war, even the destruction of all life; however evil the enslavement of nations, there is something worse than either of these. We ought not to save the world either from slavery or from total destruction by doing deeds that are murderous, or intrinsically evil, nor by neglecting duties we must not forsake. Whatever



## Fr. Lawler and Professor Boyle (Continued)

we do, the world as we know it will some day come to an end. We must seek in moral ways, guided by faith and intelligence, to pursue the goods we are called to care for, and to escape the evils we must dread.

### FR. BRAXTON ON THE FUTURE CHURCH

His epistemology is strikingly in contrast to that of most Catholic philosophers. While he suggests awareness that his interpretation is not adequate for the Christian conviction of the truth of doctrines insistently proposed by the Church, he proposes a theory that makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to affirm that the Church teaches positions that are really true, and that it knows to be true, because of the revealing word of God. — There could be some examples of

the things that he seems to present as merely dependent upon the conceptual framework one happens to prefer. The Church has clearly believed that it was telling the truth when it said certain things about the Eucharist, the priesthood, the way in which love of God was related to fundamental moral principles. But the theory that he proposes tends to justify claims that what all the fathers and doctors thought to be true depended so much on conceptual frameworks that those who now contradict those positions, are every bit as Catholic as those who uphold positions that the Holy See continues to insist upon. The substance of faith is distinguished from its spoken form, but in such a way that contradictory positions could equally be true. No teaching office, no believer seeking the light, would really have grounds for knowing that to be which faith has always proclaimed as essential for his salvation.

---

## Publications of Interest

- Cardinal Joseph Siri *Gethsemane: Reflections on the Contemporary Theological Movement* (Chicago, Franciscan Herald Press, 1981 \$10.50) This book is a study of the contemporary philosophical trends, especially historicism, existentialism and relativism as they are used to interpret Christianity.

- F.J. Sheed, *The Holy Spirit in Action* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, Servant Books \$395) By tracing the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Old and New Testaments the life of the Apostles and into the Early Church, Frank Sheed offers modern Christians a new appreciation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their everyday lives.

- The Daughters of St. Paul (St. Paul Editions) have a number of new books available for interested readership.

*An Augustine Treasury* (Edited by Jules M. Brady, S.J.) selects appropriate segments of Augustine's writing on a variety of theological and devotional subjects.

Father James Schall's *Christianity and Politics* — a veritable *Vade Mecum* for Christian political theorists.

John Paul II's *The Whole Truth*, a compilation of his lectures to Catholic University leaders and their students. Some of these lectures are unavailable elsewhere in the U.S.

*Media Impact and You*, based on Church documents, dwells on the challenge of modern media to catechists.

- The Ignatian Press (P.O. Box 18990 San Francisco, Cal. 94118) has a new publication:

Christopher Derrick's *C.S. Lewis and the Church of Rome: A Study in Proto-Ecumenism* explores the feelings and beliefs of this great scholar about the Catholic Church and the theological differences between Catholics and Protestants. Derrick was a pupil and long-time friend of Lewis. He asks why Lewis never became a Catholic and what the case might have been had he done so.

- The Center for Thomistic Studies, University of St. Thomas, 3812 Montrose Blvd., Houston, Texas 77006, is in the process of building up its research library. Contact Fr. V. Brezik.

There is need for important secondary literature on St. Thomas — including some of the classical commentaries — as well as interest in general philosophy.



## Book Reviews

Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1981) Pp. xxvi, 349. \$19.95

We all probably have acquaintances whom even after years we do not understand, and before whom we hesitate, not being able clearly to choose between labels such as eccentric, mad, egotistical, and saintly. Those who met Joan of Arc must have been in such a dilemma, which was compounded by the brevity of her rise and fall, and the simplicity of her background, which made it difficult for her to explain herself in categories the learned could understand. After all these centuries, the matter is no clearer to us; at least this is the conclusion I carry away from the present book. This undoubtedly was not the author's intention, for in an often fascinating account she brings to bear all the least insights of the social sciences, particularly of structuralism and the study of religious symbolism, to explain Joan. At the end Joan remains opaque, and structuralism begs for explanation and grounding. The reader has been subjected to a bombardment of pop anthropology, sociology, and psychology, possibility after possibility continuously tempting the curiosity and frustrating the intellect. Insights have rarely been pursued with any thoroughness, and it has not been explained how all that has been suggested can simultaneously be true. No ordering principles have been given and it is all rather like the effervescence and inconclusiveness of the conversation at a Bloomsbury cocktail party.

In part this seems a result of the approach of the book, which, in place of conventional narrative biography, devotes its first part to eight chapters on themes in Joan's life. There follow five chapters on Joan's "afterlife." By this term is meant the history of the image of Joan down to the present, not a history of what Joan has been doing in heaven. The book wanders the borderline between scholarship and popularization, and embodies both extensive research and archival work, and a heavy dependence on secondary literature. Warner is attracted to Joan the heroine, the woman of great sincerity and bravery, and this much, at least, of her character seems clear.

The first chapter begins with an examination of a question of burning interest (as it were) to Joan's contemporaries, namely her physical virginity. Here and throughout, Warner's provocative probing rises from her desire to study Joan as an anomaly, as a woman who breaks, or fails to fit into, the stereotypes by which women, then and

now, have been classified. As an example of this approach, simultaneously suggestive, ideological, ambiguous, and intuitive, one might adduce the following on why Joan used the name "la Pucelle" (virgin, as a "a time of passage, not a permanent condition" – p. 22):

"With an instinct for seizing a central image of power, which Joan possessed to an extraordinarily developed degree, she picked a word for virginity that captured with doubled strength the magic of her state in her culture. It expressed not only the incorruption of her body, but also the dangerous border into maturity or full womanhood that she had not crossed and would not cross. In this sense she was a tease. During the whole course of her brief life Joan of Arc placed herself thus, on borders, and then attempted to dissolve them and to heal the division they delineated (p. 23)."

Each of these sentences gives one something to think about, but there is a certain looseness of development of idea, and lack of clarity of thought, which makes especially the last sentence quoted of uncertain meaning. Warner here and elsewhere has less one or a dozen theses to argue in some persistent and painstaking manner, than two hundred ideas to throw off. The bits and pieces she throws at the reader are endlessly fascinating, but, to remain with the present quotation, one would look in vain for some clear working out in the book of the idea that Joan "placed herself . . . on borders, and then attempted to dissolve them and to heal the division they delineated." Further, gratuitous comments which merely tell us a little about Warner occur throughout the book. Thus, discontent with mere reality, man needs the miraculous (p. 28): "The veil of the temple must be rent; darkness must fall in the afternoon."

In describing the chaotic political conditions of the day, chapter two begins by arguing (p. 32) that "Juxtaposed to the vivisected and dismembered body of the kingdom, her virginity provided an urgent symbol of integrity." Joan's virginity represents the desired unity of a divided realm, a kind of medieval Battle Hymen of the Republic. Some of the generalizations which follow are preposterous (p. 48): "bishops in the Middle Ages rarely felt attached to their dioceses." Some things related as matters of fact show considerable ignorance. Thus on p. 268 n. 64, we are told "Thomas Aquinas had ruled that the priesthood was barred to the crippled." This prohibition is much older than Thomas, and as a theologian his opinions did not have the force of law *per sese*.



Amongst the many caricatures of Christian theology, we find the idea that the (pp. 50-51) "Catholic theologian's view of Revelation" was that "newly proclaimed dogmas [whatever that means in a medieval context] . . . are rediscoveries of ancient but hitherto obscured truths . . . nothing is allowed to appear to have moved into a new stage . . . time present is seen as a return to time past . . .". One suspects Warner never has read Basil on the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Ambrosiaster on use of non-Scriptural terminology in theology, Anselm of Havelberg on novelty in the Church, or almost anybody since Tertullian (but of course Augustine) on the nature of time and providence. The truths she wants to get at, she can not state with precision.

In chapter three, on king and crown, Warner's reductionism, implicit earlier, becomes explicit. In regard to the sign used by Joan at Chinon in 1429 to convince Charles VII to rely on her, we are told (p. 55) "The encounter . . . belongs not in the empirical world of phenomena, but in that of the unknowable noumena. Not supernatural, but natural. . .". Aside from such superciliousness, Warner gives much good observation on Charles' coronation. The fourth chapter considers Joan as prophet, particularly as failed prophet after Orleans and Rheims. Here Warner's feminist interests and reductionism come together (p. 85): "Women used prophecy because so few other means of expression were available to them." It is a little difficult to say what the next chapter is about, but its discussion of Joan as witch and Joan and the demonic is especially full of psychology and sociology, as well as uncomprehending description of philosophical and theological positions. On the basis of the word of a priest-acquaintance, we are told in regard to Joan's defiance of the Church and consequent self-declaration as a heretic (p. 103), "It has been only very recently, in the constitution of Vatican II and the new theology of the laity, that a stand like Joan's has been legitimate." Needless to say, none of the documents of Vatican II are cited.

The following chapter fastens on Joan as heretic. Here the discussion of both Joan's and her inquisitors' difficulty in understanding her voices is at times very good, although Warner misunderstands such things as the role of the Church, which she says had to give formal permission for a laywoman to trust in private revelations. Indeed, some of her statements are quite silly (p. 130): "During Joan's lifetime, the dualism buried deep in the Christian soul made all fleshly experience sinful." Chapter seven discusses Joan as Ideal Androgyne. Warner is unwilling to accept Joan's

own explanation that she wore male clothing because her voices told her to do so, and saw this a part of her (military) mission. Rather, (p. 146), "Through her transvestism, she abrogated the destiny of womankind. She could thereby transcend her sex . . .". One can at least understand what Warner has in mind (but "where are your text?"), but when she goes on to interpret Galatians 3:28 as meaning that (p. 148) "Saint Paul had proclaimed that faith . . . wrought a new asexual state, an ideal androgyny . . .," she goes off the screen. Never overly bothered by consistency, she also, on p. 149, changes her funning criticism of Christianity, that it cannot come to terms with the material and prefers the abstract, to hold that in the matter of a female priesthood "the problem is literalism [to the incarnation as including the maleness of Christ], an inability to penetrate to the essential truth through the rind of realism." The following chapter is on Joan as Knight.

Chapter nine deals with the vindication of Joan after her death, and, although riddled with inaccuracies, cannot resist describing the Church as (p. 191) "the institution that held the key to knowing who was close to God and who was not . . .". This and the remaining chapters trace the shifting history of Joan's cult down to the present. Part of the often inconsequential nature of these chapters results from the padding evident throughout the book. As has been noted, every anthropological, psychological, or sociological theory that might be relevant is paraded before the reader, whether in fact it explains much or not. The critical reader will find it necessary to recompose the book, constantly to separate insight and acute observation from the tangential and superficial. Among the former, I find the discussion of gender in language thoughtful and interesting. Much less satisfactory is the discussion of the use made of Joan in the French Revolution, the Dreyfus case, and by Action Francaise. The book ends with Joan's canonization, done by the Church with (p. 264) "characteristic craft." It is not clear that the last is meant as a compliment. The greatest weakness of the closing chapters is that, because the Joan of history has never come into focus in the opening chapters, we do not have a clear historical base from which to compare all the later transmutations of her image. To make the point ironically, Warner, as so many people over the centuries, is so interested in using Joan to make her own points, that the Joan of history remains a mystery.

Glen W. Olsen



## Book Review

Robert E. Lauder, Ph.D., *THE PRIEST AS PERSON: A PHILOSOPHY OF PRIESTLY EXISTENCE* (Whitinsville, Massachusetts, Affirmation Books, 1981) 143 pp. \$5.00.

This book is about the perennial, basic elements which constitute the being of the priest. Beginning with the theme that a healthy, well-developed foundational philosophy or priestly life is critical in the call to follow Christ, Father Lauder goes on to consider the practice of the priesthood in the modern world. He looks at its dangers, the problems of pluralism and fragmentation, the value of conscientization and the goals of transcendence.

St. John's University  
Jamaica, N.Y. 11439

All seven chapters are rich and effectively examine priestly existence in relation to: secularism, personhood, truth, freedom, community, presence and love. Unobtrusively, but thoroughly footnoted, this work uses insights from contemporary philosophers, theologians, psychologists and their best pastoral writings to further illuminate the meaning of priesthood. Throughout, Lauder deftly draws upon the Scriptures, the documents of Vatican II, and John Paul II's writings and addresses to stimulate a deeper understanding and a more devout acceptance of the priestly way of life.

These reflections speak powerfully about

Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage <b>PAID</b> Jamaica, N.Y. Permit No. 451
---

## Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

priestly ministry as an integral part of the Christian experience and the parish community. Because the priest is always the shepherd of a flock, the presider at worship and the head of a community; it is his destiny "... to so unveil the world of faith that he will help contemporary persons freely to choose that world." (p. 126) Consequently, in the 1980's, the Church is calling forth from her priests: a greater sense of ecclesial mission and higher levels of service. It is a healthy sign that many priests today have faced the need for conversion within their own lives and are receiving a confirmation of their priestly vocation within the community of believers.

This volume grew out of the numerous and warmly-received lectures, the author has given to gatherings of priests, deacons, seminarians and

students. It is a tidy product of fraternal dialogue about the meaning of priestly life. Perhaps, this accounts for its concreteness and practicality. Father Lauder, a professor of philosophy at Cathedral College Seminary, Douglaston, N.Y., is well-equipped to deliberate on priestly existence: he has an excellent grasp on the tool of philosophical inquiry and a fluid style that communicates ideas easily and unpretentiously.

For anyone looking for clear and compelling spiritual reading, this book is a good one. It leaves the reader, whether priest, religious or layperson, to center self ever more completely on one's own philosophy of life and on the *raison d'être* of one's own Christian commitment in a Church of ordained and developing ministries.

Eileen M. McCabe, Ph.D.