

# FELLOWSHIP OF CATHOLIC SCHOLARS

# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 4

SEPTEMBER 1983

## Letter from Father William B. Smith

In my first letter, as President, to the membership of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, I began by renewing our statement of purpose: In this last letter, I want to renew the same purpose:

"We Catholic scholars in various disciplines join in fellowship in order to serve Jesus Christ better by helping one another in our work by putting our abilities more fully at the service of the Catholic Faith."

The FCS remains, I think, a happy combination of competencies and convictions. competencies are a bit more obvious because they are explicit and often printed. The convictions are no less explicit but not so often printed.

Here, I want to be explicit in my thanks to the convictions of so many who have helped the Fellowship so much these past two years, especially the officers and the board.

I thank the number of Bishops who have contributed generously to the support of the Fellowship; in particular, His Eminence, Timothy Cardinal Manning who was particularly generous to us.

Challenging and fulfilling tasks remain before us: some on-going, some quite immediate. Recently, the Vatican released "Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life" (May 31, 1983). Already, some supposedly middle-of-the-road columnists have begun to bleed these norms to death. The style should, by now, be familiar. One proclaims no objection to the "substance" of these norms, while complaining about their 'style' of promulgation, or, their alleged 'insensitivity' to the lived reality of some religious life in the USA.

This Substance — Si! but Style — No! Motif is, by now, the accepted literary form of those who accept neither the substance nor the style of authoritative teaching or authentic direction from the Vatican. It has the advantage of not sounding like dissent, but, of course, it never reaches the level of assent either. Its most gifted practioners make it sound like the American Way — Let's hear it for both (all) sides! Be moderate! Split the Difference! Even if that means splitting a principle, a norm or a rule.

The new Code of Canon Law will come into effect this November. This, too, faces the risk of maximum interpretation before even minimum implementation. One small complaint against the documents of Vatican II was that they are and remain largely unread documents, some of whose interpretation far outpaced their actual implementation. The promulgation of a new Code is not just a legal event; it is an important and guiding factor in the sacramental, teaching and social life of the Church. If bombs are said to be too important to be left only in the hands of generals; then canons are too important to be left only in the hands of canonists.

Pope John Paul has often expressed the wish that the correct implementation of the new Code be considered a continuation of the correct implementation of the recent Council. Catholic men and women of both competence and conviction can help fulfill this desire and direction of the Holy Father.

Since I know and have personally experienced the competencies and convictions of so many in the Fellowship, I know I speak for all when I say the Fellowship will certainly and actively support the Pope in this effort.

Let me finish as I opened two years ago — it's a great time to be alive, provided you're in a great Fellowship.

## Items of Interest

- A *Committee of 100* celebrated the 15th Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* with an endorsement of the following statement:

"I believe that the teaching reaffirmed by Pope Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae* is true.

I believe that this teaching is a gift which reaffirms God's truth about sexual love and Christian marriage.

I believe that a right and true conscience about conception regulation will be formed in accord with the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*.

I believe, with Pope John Paul II, in "the absolute necessity for the virtue of chastity and for permanent education in it" for the practice of self control that is an integral part of natural family planning.

I call upon Christian educators, teachers of natural family planning and those involved in marriage preparation to share in the glorious task of teaching chastity and the truth about human love.

Among the signatories were Francis Canavan S.J., Thomas Dubay SM, Joseph J. Farragher SJ, Msgr. John P. Foley, editor of Philadelphia's *Catholic Standard and Times*, John Harvey OSFS, Mrs. Mary Joyce, Msgr. George A. Kelly, Ronald Lawler OFM Cap., Dr. George Maloof, Paul Marx OSB, Fr. William Most, Thomas O'Donnell SJ, Professor Glenn Olsen, Anthony Zimmerman, John and Sheila Kippley and scores more.

- A campaign has begun in France against Cardinal Lustiger (Paris) and Cardinal Ratzinger because of the latter's critique of modern catechetics given at Notre Dame earlier this year. As one commentator reports, "His conference brought hell's fire on him in certain periodicals". They are also attacking Cardinal Henri De Lubac as a renegade from progressivism and the new theology, and also for copping out on the fight against Rome.

- Fellowship member William E. May has been named recipient of the Linacre Quarterly Award of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds. The award, given for his article, "Meeting Ethical Dilemmas in Health Care: Some Basic Criteria" (*Linacre Quarterly*, August, 1982), will be given at the national meeting of the Guilds in Mexico City in September.

- The *National Right to Life News* (May 26, 1983) contained the following excerpt of remarks of Alfred Moran, executive vice-president, Planned Parenthood of New York, delivered to a workshop on media campaigns at the National Abortion Federation's annual meeting:

"I think that it is foolish of us not to face up to the fact that we are heading into a period in our society that has nothing to do with the right to lifers, nothing to do with the anti-abortionists.

"It has to do with an advancing technology that is being reported in the public media with the capacity to improve and increase fetal viability, with the capacity to do fetal surgery, with the capacity to do a whole range of medical, technical programming in which we begin to see the fetus as a patient, which tends to personalize it. Samples of stories are to found in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Life Magazine*, *Time Magazine*.

"And I believe that unless we are prepared to recognize that technology and medical sciences and perceptions of fetal viability are radically changing in our society, and if we don't begin to cope with that, we are going to find ourselves isolated someplace.

"How we cope with it, and what the resolutions are, I don't have at this point; but it seems to me, that there are clearly increasing concerns out there that we need to address ourselves to if we ultimately want to come down with the reality that in spite of all those concerns, in spite of all those changes in viability, in spite of those capacities to intercede in fetal developments, that the ultimate choice about carrying a pregnancy to term can only be made by the woman who is pregnant, we will have lost it.

"Those kinds of concerns are more powerful than (the) Hatch (Amendment) and are more powerful than (the) Helms (Bill), because they are human personifications that we are not really coping with. And that is why we see that kind of crowd."

- *Catholics for a Free Choice* wrote Senator Orrin Hatch a letter on June 17, 1983 which contained the following paragraphs:

"In January 1983, for example, a group of Catholic theologians formulated the enclosed Catholic Statement on Abortion and Pluralism. The Statement calls for the Church's recognition of Catholic pluralism on the abortion issue. It states that "Catholics should not seek the kind of legislation that curtails the legitimate exercise of the freedom of religion and conscience . . ." The Statement is being circulated nationally for signatures. . . .

## Items of Interest

- "In April 1982, the National Coalition of American Nuns (NCAN) publicly declared their opposition to the then proposed Hatch amendment (S.J. Res. 110). NCAN stated, "While we continue to oppose abortion, in principal and practice, we are likewise convinced that the responsibility for decisions in this regard resides primarily with those who are directly and personally involved."
- "In May 1978, Sr. Mary Theresa Glynn, a Sister of Mercy serving as an administrator in a Catholic university, testified against a constitutional convention on a human life amendment before the Florida State Legislature. Among Sr. Glenn's major points, she stated, "The Catholic position is not so cohesive, not so monolithic as is often presented."
- "In the same year, the National Assembly of Women Religious declared that they would not support legislation to ban abortions. They stated that a constitutional amendment was "neither winnable nor enforceable."
- "In 1977, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, a group of superiors of major orders of women religious in the United States, concluded in a report entitled *Choose Life* that they could not support legislation to ban abortions because no legislation could provide an adequate solution to the problems associated with abortions."
- Princeton University's *Sexuality Education Counselling and Health Division* has come under fire from the Concerned Alumni of Princeton for being a "version of Planned Parenthood." In order to become a student SECH advisor one must submit to training which includes, among other things, exposure to training films, one of which teaches the lesson that "homosexuality is neither right nor wrong but something to get used to." The Alumni magazine *Prospect* (Reunions Issue 1983 pp. 14-17) accuses SECH of "sexual relativism complete with one commandment 'thou shalt not judge' ". By means of films, written exercises and group discussions students who aspire to the SECH advisors are exposed to retraining in moral judgments about marital fidelity, homosexuality, masturbation, etc. SECH influences the general student population through freshman week skits and orientation meetings, where many are exposed to contraceptive devices for the first time. *Prospect* ends its summary with the suggestion that "Princeton be forthright about the exact nature of its moral influence in the consequential area of sex on Princeton's campus."

## Cardinal Wright Award to Germain Grisez

The fifth award of *The Fellowship of Catholic Scholars* for outstanding service to the Church, named after the late Prefect of the Congregation of the Clergy, will be given to Germain Grisez, the Harry J. Flynn Professor of Christian Ethics at Mt. St. Mary's College, Md.

The Wright Award, the result of the initiative of Chicago's lay Catholics led by John and Eileen Farrell, was an effort to identify Catholics in the academic world who were Post Vatican II leaders in defense of the Church's magisterium. John Cardinal Wright, one-time bishop of Pittsburgh, himself was a courageous and eloquent defender of the Catholic faith against dissenting academics in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Professor Grisez has been a leading spokesman for Catholic moral principles going back to the years of the birth control controversy of the 1960's. Born September 30, 1929, Grisez studied at John Carroll University, Dominican College in River Forest, Illinois receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1959. He later became a full professor at Georgetown University, where he taught from 1957-1972, at the University of Regina Canada from 1972-1979, prior to his arrival at Mt. St. Mary's.

The Fellowship honoree is President of the *American Catholic Philosophical Association*.

Professor Grisez is the author of many prestigious works in philosophy and moral theology, more than 70 major books and articles in all. Chief among these research accomplishments are his *Contraception and the Natural Law* (1964), *Abortion: The Myths, the Realities and the Arguments* (1970), *Beyond the New Morality* (1974), *Beyond the New Theism* (1975).

One of his most famous articles, written with Jesuit moralist John Ford, appeared in *Theological Studies* June 1978 and was entitled "Contraception and the Infallibility of the Ordinary Magisterium." He was theological consultant to Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle 1968-1969, when the Archdiocese of Washington was racked with dissent, led by professors of the Catholic University of America.

The *Cardinal Wright Award* will be presented to Dr. Grisez during the September 17th meeting of the Fellowship's Board in Chicago. Previous recipients of the Award include Msgr. George A. Kelly (1979), William May (1980), James Hitchcock (1981), Fr. John Connery, S.J. (1982).

## Professor Anne Carson Daily on The Roots of Pseudo Faith

*(An excerpt from her address to the 1983 Fellowship Convention)*

The pseudo-faith in science has blossomed in the twentieth-century into a full-fledged heresy. The lesser evils have been the worship of nature by the flower children of the sixties and the hippy moral legacy that "if it feels good, do it!" Related to this, is the modern idea that nature is non-judgmental and that everything that can occur in nature is somehow natural and should be emulated by men. Another curious aspect of the modern fascination with nature occurs in the inconsistency of many conservationists and ecologists who march to save the whales or the forests, while utterly ignoring the deliberate killing of human fetuses.

An even worse legacy of the gospel of science is the increased faith that we put in technology, and our growing tendency to consider man a perfectable machine whose destiny is to evolve into an ever more effective piece of machinery. Related to this, is our increasing tendency to reject the physically defective, to discard inconvenient babies, to abuse unwanted children, to institutionalize the infirm, to abort the defective or the undesired; to segregate the poor; and to kill the aged or cantankerous.

In addition to our desire to have nothing but perfect specimens, we, like the Utilitarians and the Calvinists, who wanted tangible proof of their election, have adopted workaholicism as our natural religion. More and more, what is not economically profitable or useful, is considered to be worthless. The situation of the modern family offers a case in point. The husband is valued insofar as he is a good provider; the mother is valued insofar as she is a good provider; and the children are valued insofar as they are *not* economic liabilities. We define ourselves not as a family of ten, or as a Catholic family, or a Greek family, but as a two-career family, a two car family, or a two-garage family. We talk of a woman's not being able to work as a grave handicap and refer to the birth of children as economic disasters. In an absolute travesty of family life, we even have people renting out wombs to carry other people's babies; mothers who will not carry their own children because it does not pay or because the children might cost too much, and parents who sue doctors for their own children's "wrongful birth". Like a nation of John Stuart Mills, before his breakdown, we seem to believe that work and the useful will set us free.

Like our Victorian forbearers, we have fallen under the spell of facts, experts, and progress. As long as something is factual, expert, or modern, we

fatalistically believe that it must be right, indeed, that it is morally necessary. Another modern idea, which is related to the past reverence for vitalism and the hero is the contemporary attraction to energy of all sorts, particularly embodied in the youthful. Insofar as youth exude energy, they are the focus of a idolatrous culture which values immaturity as well — subtly encouraging the whole populace to stave off aging by remaining immature, if not young.

The gospels of culture and of art have had as disastrous effects in our century as they had in the last. Culture has to a great extent replaced morality or religion as the arbiter of actions. Much of the modern, educated world would be more shocked by an ignorance of Shakespeare's play than by theft, more appalled by the use of red wine with chicken than by the seduction of a colleague's wife. What is worse, the possession of culture is seen as a defense against accusations of immorality: ergo, someone who is cultured cannot be guilty of evil, for to be educated is, to many, synonymous with being good.

Still more invidious than the pseudo-religion of culture is the religious adherence of many to the principles of art for art's sake. This is an obnoxious enough doctrine even in the art world where it produces things like Marcel Duchamp's urinal on display as a work of art, but in the personal sphere, it wreaks utter havoc. Art for art's sake is no longer the preserve of artists only. As a result of some kind of democratization, the whole population conceives of themselves as artists and hence arrogates all of the privileges of art to themselves. Creativity and originality are highly valued even when they harm someone else or hurt his property. No one's artistic urges, whether they pertain to dress, behavior, or activities are supposed to be thwarted. The person who finds fault with anything which the artist does is himself considered to be uncultured, unartistic, repressed, and authoritarian.

The influence of the media, which are often part of the pernicious cultural ambience, is obvious to everyone. It is not surprising that fewer than four percent of the so-called "prestige-media" regularly practice any kind of institutional religion, for they constitute their own priestly caste and perform a sacerdotal function in their own minds. For a large portion of the unsuspecting public, the media frame ideas of what is good or bad taste, form, etiquette, and morals.

## Perspectives in Bioethics —

*(The Pope John Paul II Bioethics Center based at Holy Apostles College in Cromwell, Connecticut recently published a booklet with this title. We excerpt here two partial segments because they touch upon an area of moral thinking now making headlines in the secular press. The editors are Fr. Francis Lescoe and David Q. Liptak.)*

### Critical Reflections on Bioethics

by Fr. Ronald Lawler OFM Cap.

It would be absurd and demoralizing to suggest that entry into the world of contemporary bioethics is entry into a world simply dominated by relativism, consequentialism, rejection of the humane and insistent principles that have protected human dignity through the centuries. Nor should Catholic people, who often have reasons for a special anxiety about theologians who probe such issues, feel excessive concern. There have, indeed, been a number of moral thinkers in the Church, treating a variety of bioethical questions, who have conspicuously rejected the magisterial teaching of the Church. Some of them have been so honored by dissenting associates and by the media that a vague impression arises that these are the great and creative moralists of the day. But this is far from the truth. The great Catholic ethicists of the day are hardly those lionized by the *National Catholic Reporter*. If one were to seek the two English-speaking Catholic moralists today who are most respected throughout the world, by secular as well as religious thinkers, they would almost certainly be Elizabeth Anscombe, who holds the chair of Philosophy at Cambridge University, and John Finnis, of Oxford. Interestingly, each of these (like the majority of Catholic moralists working today) is a moralist whose thought is fully in accord with authentic Catholic teaching, personalistic, defending the human rights with clear teachings on moral absolutes, and successful in making peace between the received moral teaching of the western tradition and the legitimate needs of a contemporary expression of morality. As the *Pope John Paul II Center for Bioethics* engages in moral research, it has no lack of great Catholic moral thinkers upon whom it can draw with confidence: creative and principled moralists like Germain Grisez, Vernon Bourke, Ralph McInerney, William May, Joseph Boyle. And there is a wide range of

non-Catholic moralists, including the most creative among today's bioethical experts, whose fundamental principles are deeply in accord with the personalistic ethics of Catholicism. One need mention only a few names: Paul Ramsey, Arthur Dyck, Basil Mitchell, Stanley Hauerwas, Fred Carney. Should any wish to lament that the whole world has run off toward consequentialism and relativism, he would have to ignore the most intelligent and influential moralists of our time. The days are not bad ones for authentic Christian and personalistic ethics of a principled kind.

But there is one contemporary moralist who can most of all give heart to the creative ethicist today. Certainly it is a singular blessing that in this time of tension and opportunity in moral thinking that a distinguished Catholic moralist should have been elected pope. John Paul II had many scholarly interests; but his fundamental work over these last thirty years has been that of the ethicist. He has studied the living questions of our time long and with great care, and has been in dialogue with the great minds of the times, teaching and lecturing not only in Poland, but throughout the world community. His election brought a remedy to a problem many had felt. The pope and bishops had been teaching one vision in moral thought; certain celebrated moralists were teaching another. The division between witnessing to faith and the insights of scholarship had to be bridged. Some feared that Church officials simply did not understand why the moralists were crying out for a change in standard teachings. But this pope clearly understands. And we have seldom had pastoral leaders with so much pastoral compassion. In him we have a new sign of hope and unity.

Like other great Catholic moralists of the time, John Paul has studied carefully the differences between the two kinds of thinking dominant in the world today. Consequentialist thinking is concerned with results: it is not so important what people do, i.e., what the actions that make up their lives are. What is significant will be the effects of their actions, what they bring about in the obscurities of this contingent world. The principled moralist, on the other hand, holds with the whole Catholic tradition that the actions one performs, the life one lives, is far more important than the consequences that may follow as physical consequences of these actions. The logic of consequentialism is one that rejects absolutes: for a

## Perspectives in Bioethics — (Continued)

proportionate reason, one would be justified in doing the sorts of acts that authentic teaching always called intrinsically wrong. But principled thinking holds that men have inalienable rights, rights that may be violated for no proportionate reason whatever; that there are absolute duties, not in order to oppress men, but to guard authentic values and the dignity of each person.

John Paul's position on this question is very clear. "The human act is simultaneously transitive and non-transitive. It is transitive inasmuch as it goes to the other side of the subject, seeking an expression or an effect in the external world, and thus objectivises itself in some product. It is non-transitive in the measure in which 'remaining in the subject' in which it determines the quality and the value, and establishes his own 'fieri', essentially human. Therefore man, in acting not only fulfills some action, but in some way realizes himself, becomes himself."

That is to say, human actions cause effects in the world. But they also cause effects in the depths of the human person. The more profound and important effect is that which a human action has on the person himself. Our actions are our lives. When we choose to do the actions we do, we choose to make ourselves the kinds of persons who do such things. We create ourselves, and show the direction in which our heart is willing and desires to go.

When, even in tragic cases, one does a deed that is in itself simply a doing of evil (for example, starving to death a baby who is considered defective, or killing an aged and suffering person) in the hope that something good may come of it, then one is taking a view of the world very different from that which shaped the judgment of the saints. It is a view that producing good effects, having fine things *happen* in the world, is better and more important than *doing* actions which are free deeds honoring God by their goodness; and that having painful things happen is worse than having free persons deliberately doing deeds which are unequivocally attacks on real goods in real persons. At heart consequentialism is the view that the prime way of loving persons is that of making this world a pleasant and happy place; while the saints felt that the world is a place in which souls are made, in which persons are shaped by their own free actions. The most important thing that anyone can do is to do excellent and good deeds,

not out of selflove or in a desire to esteem oneself for one's "virtue" but rather because one recognizes that the person as an image of God serves his brothers and sisters by pursuing only good in his life pursuing it well, and never doing evil that good may come of it, never treating what is good in any person or personal act as if it were evil.

Medical ethics has gone astray most severely when it sought to justify doing bad kinds of deeds for excellent reasons. The most shocking pages in medical history flow from such decisions. Nazi doctors did not engage in human experimentation of cruel kinds simply to be cruel; they hoped to accomplish important goals useful for humanity by such vicious behavior. Now it is true that we have a duty to make this world a good place, to care about the consequences of our conduct. But we must care first of all about what we do, about the actions that are our life; and seek always to achieve good only by good means.

In treating one bioethical question in his Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope John adverts to the very different conclusions than a principled and a consequentialistic mode of thinking may come to in this matter. And he noted with a certain intensity that the difference between the two views "is much wider and deeper than is usually thought, one which involves in the final analysis two irreconcilable concepts of the human person." To adopt the principled view of morality that one must never, for any reason, attack any basic good in any person is to adopt the view that every person is of transcendent dignity; it is to treat all men as images of God. To adopt the view that one may attack basic goods in a person when there is a proportionate reason is to judge that in the end human beings may be treated as means serving the purposes of others.

One schooled in the paths of Christian wisdom will not do deeds that are direct attacks on any authentic good in any person in the vain hope of making the world better by such deeds. Whether the material world and the circumstances of human living will be better or worse in the future, we cannot know with certainty. We are uncertain of the effects of even our best intended actions. What we are sure of is that if we do acts that are faithful to the dignity of every person, and honor every human value in every person, then we will be honoring God in our life, and he who is the absolute ruler of providence will be able to make

## Perspectives in Bioethics — (Continued)

of all our labors something that serves the growth of the kingdom. St. Thomas More tried in every honorable way to save his life that he might participate more richly in goods that he loved on earth. But he was right in judging that it would be wrong to participate in every kind of good by means of doing an act which was itself wrong. The reason for this is not that rules are to be more honored than persons, but that persons and human actions, what people *do* and what they *are* is more important than what happens to them. The transient effects of our actions on the world and on persons can, as every medical professional and every intelligent person well knows, be frighteningly important. But in this world of persons, nothing is more important for the good of each and of all than the excellence of the actions that are the core of our lives.

What modes of thinking and teaching and living will dominate in the world of bioethics in the years immediately before us? The answer is not predetermined: it lies in our own hands. The medical and life professions are surely tempted to yield to the blandishments of a "new" ethic — an ethic essentially like that of the pre-Socratics, who, having despaired of the possibility of coming to know what is absolutely good, encouraged their disciples instead to do what they earnestly wanted to do as though they did not know the dark depths of the human spirit when it despairs of knowing what is authentically good, and deserving of full loyalty. But the medical and life professions are tempted too by that newer and richer ethic of the Golden Age of Greece, and of the Enlightenment, and especially of the fire of the Judaeo-Christian visions — that ethics of personal rights, and principles that endure, and values that are good beyond measure — that ethic that requires self-discipline, yet gives freedom and dignity to the human spirit.

In recent years I have taught bioethics in a great many contexts: in secular and religious universities, to medical students, to seminarians. Obviously young people of our time feel the pressures of the age toward moral solutions which are convenient, but do not respect every person and every basic human value. But it has seemed to me that when the young people of our time begin to understand what is at stake, and what it is that they themselves want in their own lives, that they have almost universally chosen gladly to adopt that

form of moral thinking that defends the dignity of the person more securely. The future is full of hope if we give our young people a real opportunity to lay hold of the moral heritage they have a right to know well. But it will remain necessary to help them see how the bracing principles of Christian morality are not exercises in legalism, but protections of the freedom and dignity of the human person.

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### The Basic Reason Why it is Morally Wrong to Generate Human Life in the Laboratory

by Professor William May

Perhaps a good way to begin is to review briefly pertinent Church teaching on the subject. In 1949 Pope Pius XII, in rejecting artificial insemination by a husband, had this to say:

We must never forget this: It is only the procreation of a new life *according to the will and plan of the Creator* which brings with it — to an astonishing degree of perfection — the realization of the desired ends. This is, at the same time, in harmony with the dignity of the marriage partners, with their bodily and spiritual natures, and with the normal and happy development of the child. (*Catholic Mind* 48 (1950))

Evidently Pius XII was of the mind that God wills that human life be begotten *only* in the marital act and that the choice to generate it outside of the marital act is a choice that goes against God's will. In 1951 he returned to the subject, now asserting this:

To reduce the cohabitation of married persons and the conjugal act to a mere organic function for the transmission of the germs of life would be to convert the domestic hearth, sanctuary of the family, into nothing more than a biological laboratory . . . The conjugal act in its natural structure is a personal action, a simultaneous natural self-giving which, in the words of Holy Scripture, effects the union "in one flesh." This is more than the mere union of two germs, which can be brought about artificially — i.e., without the natural action of the spouses. The conjugal act as it is planned and willed by nature implies a personal cooperation, the right to which parties have mutually conferred on each other in contracting marriage. (*Catholic Mind* 50 (1952)).

## Perspectives in Bioethics — (Continued)

Here Pius XII indicates that the reason why human life ought to be given *only* in and through the act of intimate conjugal love and *ought not* to be generated in the laboratory is that only in this way — one planned and willed by nature and by God — is it truly a personal act of the married couple, one to which they and they alone have a right. The assumption is that human life ought only to be generated in a personal act of the married couple.

Although later pontiffs have not directly addressed the issue of the laboratory generation of human life, their teaching on marriage and its relationship to the giving of human life clearly shows that they are of the same mind as Pius XII. Thus Pope Paul VI insisted that the Church has always taught as inviolable

the inseparable connection, willed by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning. Indeed, by its intimate structure the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, capacitates them for the generation of new lives, according to laws inscribed in the very being of man and of woman. By safeguarding both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its ordination towards man's most high calling to parenthood. (HV No. 12).

It is instructive, I believe, to note that Pope Paul here insists that the conjugal act — the act in which husband and wife share their own persons and their powers of genital sexuality with its love-giving and life-giving dimensions — capacitates the spouses to generate new human life. In speaking of the inviolable bond between the unitive and procreative meanings of the marital act, Paul VI was, of course, primarily intending to show why the choice to contracept is immoral; still his teaching on the inviolable bond between these two meanings of the conjugal act is obviously relevant to the question concerning the morality of the choice to sever this bond so that one can generate life in an act that is not also one in which the spouses share their persons in an intimacy of love.

Finally, Pope John Paul II, in his stirring homily to the great crowd assembled for Mass on the Capitol Mall of Washington D.C. on October 7, 1979, insisted that human life is precious not only because it is a gift from a loving God but also because “it is the expression and the fruit of love.”

Continuing, he said, “This is why life should spring up within the setting of marriage.” (*Origins*, October 18, 1979) Clearly he indicates here that the generation of human life ought only to be brought about within the covenant of marriage.

The Roman Catholic authors who justify *in vitro fertilization* for married couples under very stringent conditions are, of course, aware of these papal teachings. Still they believe that the insistence in these teachings that there is an inviolable bond between the unitive and the procreative meanings of the conjugal act cannot be sustained. McCormick suggests that the papal objection to the sundering of this bond, even when the choice to do is made to help a married couple otherwise childless to have a child of their own, rest upon the belief that the choice to sunder the bond is dehumanizing and hence immoral. This belief, he suggests, is a kind of intuition. The problem with this, he then notes, is that “intuitions notoriously differ” and that other reasonable persons entertain different intuitions about the matter. He likewise suggests, as I have already noted, that the papal teaching seems to erect the *physical inseparability* of the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act into a moral norm.

I believe that these papal teachings are true and that they are an endeavor, on the part of the Church expressing its mind through their teachings, to remind some critically important truths about the meaning of human existence. I believe that these teachings can be shown to be true, and I propose to show them to be true by offering the following argument. I will first put it in the form of a syllogism and then seek to establish the truth of the major and minor premises. The argument can be formulated as follows:

Any act of generating human life that is nonmarital is irresponsible and violates the reverence due to human life in its generation.

But *in vitro fertilization* and other forms of the laboratory generation of human life, including artificial insemination whether by vendor or husband, are nonmarital.

Therefore these modes of generating human life are irresponsible and violate the reverence due to human life in its generation.

In my opinion the minor premise does not require extensive discussion. Artificial insemination by a vendor is evidently nonmarital, and the same



## Perspectives in Bioethics — (Continued)

is obviously true of *in vitro fertilization* involving the use of ova and/or sperm from persons who are not married to each other. Moreover even artificial insemination by a husband and *in vitro fertilization* in which an ovum taken from the wife is fertilized by sperm provided by her husband are also nonmarital in nature, even though married persons or spouses have collaborated in the procedure. Such procedures are nonmarital because they are *in principle* procedures that may be effected by persons who are not spouses; in addition and more significantly, the spousal character of the man and woman participating in the procedures is not intrinsic to the procedures even though they may happen to be husband and wife. What makes husband and wife capable of participating in such activities is not their spousal union but the simple fact that they are beings who produce gametic cells, ova in the case of the woman and sperm in the case of the man.

The major premise is the one that in my judgment needs argument for its truth to become manifest. To show why it is true I think it is necessary first to reflect on the meaning of marriage, marital love, and the marital act and then to show why the choice to engender human life nonmaritally is so destructive of goods crucial to human existence.

Marriage does not derive from faith in Jesus and membership in His body, the Church. Nonetheless the human reality of marriage, which is in truth a loving gift of God to the human race, is a reality inherently capable of being integrated into God's covenant of love and grace. In and through Christ it has indeed been so integrated for those who experience this reality "in the Lord," that is, as living members of His spouse the Church. Moreover, even the marriages of men and women who have not yet heard the gospel message "are included in a certain inchoative way in the marital love which unites Christ with his church."

The beautiful reality of marriage comes into being through an act "of irrevocable personal consent . . . where the spouses mutually bestow and accept each other" This act, which *alone* can bring marriage into being, is comparable to that irrevocable act whereby God has freely chosen us as the beings with whom and for whom He wills to share His life and love and to that irrevocable act whereby His only-begotten Son, become one with us in His humanity, has freely chosen to become

indissolubly one with His bride, the Church. In and through this act a man and a woman give to themselves a new identity: he becomes *her* husband and she becomes *his* wife and together they become *spouses*. This act of mutual bestowal establishes the man and the woman as uniquely irreplaceable and non-substitutable spouses. In and through this act that brings marriage into being the man and the woman surrender to one another their person, including their sexuality with its procreative and unitive aspects. Moreover, in making themselves to be husband and wife a man and a woman promise conjugal or marital love to one another: in virtue of this act and of the marriage that it brings into being they have henceforward the right, the freedom, and the obligation to love each other with conjugal love. In addition, "marriage and marital love are ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that marriage finds its crowning glory."

Marital or spousal love is a unique form of human love, and what makes it to be unique is the fact that it is an exclusive kind of love. Yet its exclusive character needs to be rightly understood. Husband and wife, though conjugal love, are not locked in an *egoisme a deux*, one cutting them off from other persons or excluding love of other persons. Quite to the contrary, they are enabled, precisely by virtue of their marriage and their exclusive spousal love, one "merging the human with the divine," to realize "the goodness and loveableness of all people, in fact of all living things." Nor is conjugal love exclusive in the sense that husband and wife are the "property" of each other. Such possessive language is totally foreign to and destructive of marriage and marital love. Rather conjugal love is exclusive in that it is rooted in the irrevocable choice, by the spouses, of each other as *the* one with whom and for whom each will henceforth share a common life in marriage, a life too in which they are dynamically inclined to share their person intimately with one another in the marital act and in that act to give life and love to new human persons.

The exclusive character of marital love, the character that specifies it and distinguishes it from every other form of human friendship love can perhaps be best understood by reflecting on the significance of the act of which spouses, and spouses alone, are capable, namely the marital or conjugal act. Although the spouses may freely

## Perspectives in Bioethics — (Continued)

choose never to engage in this act, and although this act is not necessarily the *greatest* expression of conjugal love, it is certainly true that marriage is ordered to this act in a dynamic way and that it is the act in which exclusive marital love is “uniquely expressed and perfected.”

The marital act is the act of marital coition. This act exhibits, symbolizes, manifests the exclusive nature of marital love, and it does so because it is both a communion in being (conjugal love as unitive) and is the sort or kind of act in and through which the spouses are “open to the transmission of life,” in which, as Pope John Paul II has put it, they submit their being to the blessing of fertility (conjugal love as procreative).

The marital act is unitive, i.e., a communion in being or an intimate, exclusive sharing of personal life because through it and in it husband and wife come to know one another in a unique way, revealing themselves to one another. In and through it they become one flesh, that is humanly and personally one, renewing the covenant they have made with each other in the act that made them to be spouses. Moreover, in this act husband and wife exhibit their sexual complementarity as male and female; for this act is possible only because the male, who has a penis, is personally able to enter into the person of the female, and she is uniquely capable of receiving personally into her body, her person, the male; and her act of receiving in a giving sort of way is just as central to the meaning of this act as is the male’s act of giving his person to her in a receiving sort of way. The husband cannot, in this act, give himself to his wife (i.e., exercise the unitive power of his sexuality), unless she gives herself to him by receiving him, nor can the wife receive him in this self-giving way by the exercise of the unitive power of her sexuality unless he gives himself to her by letting himself be received by her.

The marital act is procreative insofar as it is the kind or sort of act — and the kind or sort of act *alone* — that makes it possible for husband and wife to exercise *maritally* their beautiful personal and sexual powers of procreation, of giving life to a new human person. It is, in short, the sort or kind of act that is “open to the transmission of life” in a marital, procreative way.

And finally, this act is *marital* because it is an act that *only* spouses can do. Unmarried persons may be able to engage in sexual coition, but since

they have not made themselves to be non-substitutable and irreplaceable spouses through the act that brings marriage into being, such acts are in no way the manifestation of an exclusive sort of love. Unmarried persons may also be able to generate life through sexual coition, but such acts of generating human life are by no means acts of procreative love. Moreover, this act is *marital* not only because married persons *alone* can do it, but also because it is the only sort or kind that married persons can do that other persons cannot do. In addition, if married persons engage in genital sex and in so doing choose either to repudiate its exclusively unitive nature by having disregard for or even contempt for the feeling of each other or to repudiate its openness to the transmission of life, they are not choosing to engage in the marital act but are rather making the act they choose to engage in something other than the marital act.

In the light of these reflections on marriage, marital love, and the marital act, I believe that we can see why the deliberate choice to generate human life nonmaritally is irresponsible. It is irresponsible, first of all, because it is in essence a choice that attacks the great good of marriage itself. Marriage, exclusive marital love, and the procreation of new human life through the marital act are goods that go together. To attack one of these goods is to attack and do violence to the others. Our age sufficiently bears witness to the destruction done to the great human reality of marriage by denying the exclusive yet non-possessive character of marital love, for we now have many who seriously propose mate-swapping and “creative” adultery, and by denying the goodness of spousal procreativity, for many not only endorse contraceptive practices but claim that many married persons do not have a right to procreate. To choose to sever the bond joining marriage, the marital act, and the generation of human life is further to threaten the good of marriage itself and is thus irresponsible. Yet this is precisely what is done when one adopts by choice the proposal to generate human life in acts that are by their very nature nonmarital.

There is, in addition, a further matter that must be taken into account in thinking about the choice to separate the generation of human life from the procreative marital act. This is the truth that a human life, the life of a being that is the bearer of inviolable and inalienable rights, is not to

## Perspectives in Bioethics — (Continued)

be considered as a product inferior in nature and subordinate in value to its producers. Rather a human life is concretely an irreplaceable being of moral worth, a person. For a Christian, moreover, a human life is in truth a living word of God, a created word vicariously imaging God Himself. The Christian remembers, too, that God's Uncreated Word became, for love of us, a created word. And the Uncreated Word who became and is still a created word, a fellow member of our species, is a Word that is, as we affirm in the Creed, "begotten, not made." Thus we, the created words of God, brothers and sisters of the eternally begotten Word of the Father, are to be begotten, not made. Human life, therefore, is meant to be begotten in and through the marital act, which is as it were a word spoken by husband and wife in which they affirm that they are open both to sharing life and love with each other and to sharing life and love with a new human life, a being who, like them, is irreplaceable and precious. It is therefore irresponsible to choose to produce this life through the nonmarital act of fertilizing ova with sperm. Such an act may "make" a baby, and the baby made by such an act is indeed a precious and irreplaceable human life worthy of the same respect and reverence due to all other human lives; yet such an act is not one of begetting human life in a procreative way.

To sum up, the choice to generate human life in the laboratory, in so far as it is a choice to reproduce human life nonmaritally, is irresponsible because it is a choice that threatens the good of marriage itself and by so doing endangers human life in its generation; it is likewise a choice that violates the reverence due to human life in its generation insofar as it transforms the act of generating human life from one of procreative marital love to one of artistic production, thereby treating human life not as a good of incomparable and priceless value but rather as a product subordinate to its producers.

Some may perhaps think that the position taken here is heartless and unconcerned with the anguish experienced by married couples who ardently desire a child of their own and must suffer disappointment because of a pathological condition. I do not believe that it is. Their desire for a child of their own is a truly noble and generous one. But the moral question centers not on this desire but on the human deeds freely chosen in order to satisfy it. An authentically human ethics is one that is as concerned with means as it is with ends, for we can choose to do some dreadful deeds with the best of intentions and with the noblest of ends in view.

Moreover, for married couples with the dilemma of those who cannot have a child because of blocked fallopian tubes there are alternative possibilities. Surgical reconstruction of the fallopian tubes is currently possible in approximately thirty percent of cases — a far higher success rate than efforts to "produce" children through *in vitro fertilization*, and such reconstruction is truly therapeutic of a human pathology, whereas *in vitro fertilization* leaves the pathology untouched and simply helps fulfill desires. Moreover, it has been suggested that it may be possible to remove the ovum from the ovaries, implant it in the fallopian tube below the point where the tube is blocked, and then have husband and wife unite in the act of marital love. This procedure, should it prove workable, is in my judgement morally permissible, and offers great hope for those married couples for whom the laboratory generation of human life is now proposed.

In concluding, I wish simply to suggest that the crucial issue posed by the laboratory generation of human life is the bond uniting marriage, the marital act, and the begetting of human life. I hold that human life, the life that the Word eternally begotten by the Father united to His divinity, is a life meant to be begotten, not made. It is begotten in and through the marital act; it is made in the laboratory.

## Publications of Interest

● In Vol. 3, No. 1 (December, 1979), p. 5 of the *Newsletter* there was a brief mention of *Official Catholic Teachings: Love and Sexuality* (ed. Odile Liebard, Consortium Books, Wilmington, N.C.). In this notice of the series and of this volume the values of the volume was indicated. But a serious typographical error in this volume occurs in the given text of Pope Pius XI's *Casti Connubii*. The error is so serious that users of the volume, which has the merit of incorporating valuable magisterial teachings on the subject from Pope Leo XIII to Paul VI should be made aware of it. However, mention must be made also of a poor introductory essay and the inclusion, among official Catholic teachings, of the "Majority Report" of the Papal Commission on Birth Regulation.

"The error is found on p. 44, in a portion of the *Casti Connubii* where Pius XI insists that direct abortion is always immoral, that the life of both mother and unborn child is equally sacred and no one has the power to destroy it. As printed in the Liebard Anthology, a key sentence then reads: "It is of no use to appeal to the right of taking away life for here it is a question of the innocent, whereas that right has regard only to the guilty; nor is there here question of defense by bloodshed against an unjust aggressor (for who would call an innocent child an unjust aggressor?); again, there is no question here of what is called the 'law of extreme necessity,' which could even extend to the direct killing of the innocent."

Obviously, a reader of this passage might erroneously conclude that Pius XI held that innocent persons could be directly killed in extreme necessity. Obviously too, if Pius XI held this view it could be made to seem that he would agree with contemporary proportionalists, that evil can be directly done for a sufficiently proportionate reason. But Pius XI did not, of course, hold this view. The passage should read: '*which could never extend to the direct killing of the innocent.*' The important mistake involves the substitution of the word "even" for "never".

One hopes that future reprintings of this anthology will correct this egregious error; one can also hope that future reprintings will drop the offensive Introduction in which Liebard contends (pp. xxi-xxii) that Pope Paul VI was alien to the spirit of Vatican II and 'was not more fully attuned to the human condition and its needs.'

● The May 1983 issue of *The Chesterton*

*Review* (Published at St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7N 9Z9) is devoted exclusively to Christopher Dawson, his ideas, his reasons for becoming Catholic and his religious influence.

Notre Dame's Fr. Marvin O'Connell writing on his relationship to the Oxford Movement summarizes Dawson's views of various religious response to rising secularism in the Churches:

"Dawson, writing in 1933, could find little hope that Protestantism, liberal or Barthian or fundamentalist, possessed the vitality to resist "the growing pressure of secularised culture." As for Anglo-Catholicism, its vestments and incense and Gregorian chant could not disguise its surrender to the anti-dogmatic principle. The moral leadership of Keble and Pusey had not been enough to ward off the relentless surge of liberalism: "the men who gave the Movement its intellectual character were just those who left it for Rome." By 1933, indeed, the archtraditionist and dogmatist, John Keble, had been caricatured by the Anglo-Catholics into a precursor of a religion at once liberal, individualistic and humanitarian.

"Implicit in Dawson's concluding argument was the contention that only Rome maintained the institutional, historical and dogmatic basis to stand up against the forces of secular culture. Only Rome — so it seemed in 1933 — had evaded the full consequences of liberalism evolved into modernism: 'The fundamental note of the Oxford Movement was its *anti-modernism*' [Dawson's emphasis]. But now it is 1983, fifty years after that argument was drawn up, and one wonders if Dawson would advance it today with the same confidence. Dawson wrote:

To the true Modernist, man is the measure of all things, and the spirit of the age is the spirit of God. To say that a belief or a moral law is "unmodern" is to condemn it, for in the eyes of the Modernist there are no eternal truths and no divine law other than the law of change.

"This is a splendidly accurate definition — clarity of definition was one of Dawson's strongest rhetorical suits — but the assumption that the modernists who hold this view had been driven permanently from the Roman camp has proved to be premature."

● From the Ignatius Press, San Francisco

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Threefold Garland*. 146 pp., \$6.95

Kenneth Baker, S.J., *Fundamentals of Catholicism*, 240 p., \$8.95.

James V. Schall, S.J., *Distinctiveness of Catholicism*. 298 pp., \$9.95.

## Publications of Interest

Christopher Derrick, *Sex and Sacredness*. 220 pp., \$7.95

Henri de Lubac, *The Motherhood of the Church*, 363 pp.

*The Threefold Garland* is a meditative study of the mysteries of the Rosary which incorporates the whole range of Mariology by a theologian whose style is worthy of the depth of his thought.

Kenneth Baker's book is the first of three that will appear under the general title *Fundamentals of Catholicism*. The first volume is a study of the creed and the commandments. It is an eminently readable and solidly Catholic presentation of the faith.

Fr. Schall defends Christianity's central claim to be *true*, and true in precisely those distinctive claims it makes, which we are constantly in danger of watering down.

Christopher Derrick expounds the Christian vision of Christianity vigorously in *Sex and Sacredness*. Muddles about the meaning of sex, and the foundational principles of sexual morality, can be clarified only by reflection on the sacredness of sex. He argues that everywhere sex tends to be treated with contempt; it is precisely in Catholicism that it finds real reverence and respect.

Cardinal de Lubac's book contains two studies, the first on "The Motherhood of the Church," and the second on "Particular Churches in the Individual Church." There is a brief appendix on the priesthood according to scripture and tradition.

The study of "Particular Churches" has a special timeliness today. The nature of the episcopal college, and the more puzzling problems of conferences of bishops (and the questions that can arise concerning the unity of the Church) are well treated. The See of Rome is seen as an indispensable center of unity in the special circumstances of our time.

- The Spring 1983 issue of *Communio* is devoted entirely to the subject of religious education. Some of the valuable articles were written by Karl Lehmann, Hans Urs Von Balthasar and William Kirk Kilpatrick. Most relevant is Cardinal Ratzinger's address of January 16th to French catechists (translated differently in places by Thomas Lanagan as compared with Fr. Wrenn's).

- *The Dissenting Church* is the name of a new pamphlet by James Hitchcock, published by the

National Committee of Catholic Laymen in New York. The thesis of the publication is that in American Catholicism dissent is now propagated through official Church organs and is not a marginal phenomenon.

Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J., *Portraits in American Sanctity*, (Chicago, Franciscan Herald Press, 1982, 385 pp. \$18.00)

Fr. Tylenda has updated a 1939 book by Cardinal Cicognani on potential American saints. He features 29 candidates for canonization whose life accounts were written by "vice-postulators" or other specialists. Familiar names like Tekakwitha, Serra and Kijo appear along with less prominent candidates like Mother Cornelia Connelly, Foundress of the Holy Child nuns or Mother Katherine Drexel. Each chapter has an appropriate picture of the "saint" being discussed.

- Peter M. J. Stravinskis, *Constitutional Rights and Religious Prejudice* (A Catholic League Publication, 1100 West Wells Street, Milwaukee, Wisc. 53233, 221 pp. \$9.95)

This book deals with the question of government assistance to non-public school parents. Not only on constitutional questions explored, but public policy ones as well. The last chapter summarizes the author's findings and makes proposals for citizens and jurists. Fr. Stravinskis is the East Coast Director of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

- *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* (1982) translates (from the French document) the discussions of the 1979 Joint Catholic - Orthodox Commission on the Eucharist. The title: "The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity."

(Copies are available from the *Newsletter* office.)

- Jesuit, Fr. Joseph F. Costanza's three articles on *Humanae Vitae*, *Academic Dissent* and *Papal Magisterium* have been re-issued on the 15th anniversary of Paul VI's encyclical. They are available from Sr. M. Ruth, P.O. Box 12546, Tucson, Arizona 85732, \$3.00 plus postage. Special discount for bulk orders.

Also available are his books: *The Historical Credibility of Hans Kung* (\$12.95) and *Political and Legal Studies* (\$35.00 for two volumes).

## Periodical Review

Sister Madonna Kolbenschlag, H. M. "Sister Mansour Is Not Alone", *Commonweal*, June 17, 1983, pp. 359-64.

Sister Mansour is said to be clearly opposed to abortion; those who oppose her are said to misunderstand Church teaching. But the justification for this claim is odd. One may indeed claim that it is not Church teaching that personal life begins at conception, in the sense in which one may say that it is not Church teaching that any individual human being is a person. But that is not the relevant issue. The Church clearly teaches that every individual human being is to be treated as a person; and when there is good reason to hold that X is a human being, that individual is to be treated as a person. Sister Kolbenschlag seems to admit that there are at least good reasons for holding that unborn babies are human beings. Since that is so, it would be out of the question to adopt policies supporting the slaying of anyone of them.

Unfortunately, Sister Mansour wants the state to help poor people to slay their unborn babies by funding abortions for them. This is not in accord with Catholic teaching, or with concern for justice. To say abortion is legal changes nothing. Would we have wanted a Sister in public office in 1855 helping poor whites buy slaves? We would hardly approve this even if she explained that she was simply for fairness, not for slavery. It seems sad that Sister Mansour's concern for "fairness", in giving all equal chances to kill their unborn babies, was not matched with equal concern for justice to the babies.

But Sister Kolbenschlag insists, there are disagreements in the church on questions like state funding of abortions. Just as the recent pastoral on war and peace acknowledges the right of people to hold diverse opinions in debated areas, she *ought* also to allow diversity of opinion on abortion.

The answer to this seems clear: wherever there is *legitimate* diversity of opinion, the Church should and does allow people to hold positions they intelligently favor. But in areas in which the Church position is so solidly grounded that many theologians feel that the Church positions are infallibly taught, no such diversity is permitted. And in positions in which the Church has absolutely and insistently held that only one position is compatible with Christian living, opposed positions are not permitted. The pastoral on war and peace itself made this distinction. Thus, following Vatican II, the Pastoral utterly excluded

nuclear bombing of cities; but it recognized that it could not absolutely condemn every defensive use of nuclear weapons. Some theologians reject even the absolute positions in the pastoral, just as some theologians reject the received teachings in life ethics and sexual morality. But such objections constitute no "probable opinions" or guidelines suitable for practice.

Careful study of the protests in favor of Sister Mansour seems essential. There must be fairness to women religious, and to all people in the Church. But we also notice strange interpretations of fairness. Radical dissent is presented as a right interest in each person, each must be permitted to understand essential teachings of faith and morals in the way one "sincerely" chooses to do so. But surely fairness does not make it necessary to abandon the Catholic religion.

*Fr. Ronald Lawler, OFM., Cap.*

### ● Fr. Francis Canavan S.J. on abortion:

"What does it mean to say that one is personally opposed to abortion but feel that in fairness abortion must be equally available to rich and poor? Only the person who says that knows what it means, and perhaps even he or she doesn't know for lack of having thought about it. The one thing of which we may be sure is this: the person who makes this statement does not see anything really wrong in abortion.

"He does not consider abortion an evil thing to inflict on the unborn child who is killed or an evil for the persons who take part in killing him. Otherwise, he would be saying that it is unjust to deprive the poor of the equal opportunity to commit the real and genuine evils in which the well-to-do can afford to indulge. But that would be to lapse into incoherence and, while incoherence is a mode of speech that has certain obvious attractions for persons engaged in the difficult art of politics, we should be slow to attribute it to anyone as his internal state of mind. We must therefore take the man or woman who is "personally opposed to abortion, but . . ." as a meaning "opposed, but not really." Rightly understood, "personally opposed" is a code word and a signal to the elect among the electorate. Unless the sender of the signal is himself simply confused, it means, "I'm with you; I don't see anything really wrong in abortion, either." (From the "Catholic Eye" July, 1983)

## Book Reviews

Rene Laurentin, *Les Evangiles de L'Enfance du Christ*, (The Gospels of the Infancy of Christ), *Verite' de Noel au-dela des Mythes* (The Truth of Christmas beyond the Myths), Declee, 1982, 627 pages, 240 fr.

The present work, recently crowned by the French Academy with a special award for excellence, occasioned a personal communication from Jean Guitton to the author in which, this member of the French Academy, admitted that he had been waiting for such a work for more than fifty years. As often happens with a book of this size, the sub-title indicates the underlying purpose of its author. In this case, Fr. Laurentin endeavors to show that the events which surround Christmas do indeed correspond to an historical reality and that these events are disfigured when attempts are made to dismiss them as myths or legends. The author who had published in 1956, *Structure et Theologie de Luc 1-2*, and in 1966, *Jesus au Temple, Luc 2*, 41-52, has spent the last thirty years working on the first two Chapters of Luke. This time he wanted to complete his prior work and to extend his research to the narrative of the infancy in Matthew. He especially wanted to take account of a new technique for the examination of texts which is known as *semiotics*.

The present volume is thus a *very scientific study*, intended to move the "clients" of present day exegesis to further reflection and to convince them that there is indeed another way of looking at the Gospels of the Infancy of Christ. Laurentin has also expended a great deal of effort to avoid the jargon of specialists, in such a way that his book is readily accessible to specialists and non-specialists alike.

With respect to the relationship between *reason and the events* Laurentin brings out clearly the damaging effects of rationalism which for some two hundred years has been hell-bent on carving up these texts. If first place is given to reason over history; if only what appears possible to us is admitted as alone being real; if facts which cast doubt on our theories are refused acceptance, then, yes, we are obliged logically to deny or undermine many issues found in the infancy narratives about Jesus. But such an attitude is basically irrational. Reason would have to know that it must bow to the evidence, when this is duly set forth, and not bend the evidence to its own preconceived notions.

The author recalls, from time to time, that if one or another "exegete" invents, for these

Gospels, interpolations, myths or legends, he does so because, basically, he refuses to submit to the realities which displease him.

Without insisting on the Hebrew origin of the accounts in Luke and Matthew, Fr. Laurentin frequently shows how this hypothesis explains several allusions underlying the text. Take, for example, the allusion with reference to John (the Hebrew root, *hanan* "to show mercy"), to Zechariah (the root *zakar* "to be mindful"), to Elizabeth (the root *shaba* "to swear" in the Benedictus – "to show mercy" (allusion to John), to our fathers, "to be mindful" (allusion to Zechariah) of his holy covenant and of the oath which he swore (allusion to Elizabeth), to Abraham (Luke 1, 72-73). This research into etymology continues throughout the entire work and it suggests, and some might say, confirms the semitic origin of these chapters of the Gospels, which by that fact alone would contribute to eliminating from them every influence of Greek mythology.

The author delves deeply into the connections between the accounts of the Infancy and the Old Testament and even specialists will have a great deal to learn from his research in this area. As we read along, we can better understand how these Gospel passages are essential testimonies going back to Mary, Joseph, and their immediate circle of friends. They are, however, testimonies meditated upon in the light of the Old Testament. Whether the witnesses of these events, or those to whom they were first confided, carried these remembrances about with them for a long period of time, they, nevertheless, compared them with more or less similar events or accounts known from the Bible, which they read as an announcement or initial sign of events which were to become an integral part of their spiritual lives.

When they expressed their remembrances, they did so spontaneously by means of the formulas, images, and descriptions of earlier biblical texts. This mode of expression is not an alteration of their remembrance, but rather the mark of their own personal meditation (which St. Luke mentions twice with reference to Our Lady, in 2, 19 and 2, 51 and once with reference to the neighbors of Zechariah and Elizabeth in 1, 66).

We no longer are sufficiently in touch with the internal sense of the Bible to appreciate these many connections, cross-references, and subtle allusions. Consequently, the author renders great service to us by unfolding these hidden influences

## Book Reviews

and showing us in which direction, and in line with what similar biblical expressions the "ponderings" of the earliest guardians of these accounts were being directed.

For this very purpose, the author often speaks of "midrash" and sometimes of "pesher". "Midrash" takes its origin in a text from the Old Testament and expounds upon it, amplifies it, completes it, adapts it by virtue of later events. "Pesher", on the contrary, takes its origin from the concrete reality in which the "pesharist" lives and he sheds light on it, explains it, sacralizes it with the help of biblical texts. "Midrash" moves down from the text to the reality; while "Pesher" moves up from the reality to the text. "Midrash" runs the risk of undermining the historical value of events by considerations which are subsequent and by connections which are unwarranted. "Pesher", on the contrary, guarantees the historical value of the event which it links to the sacred texts of the Old Testament. It is in a much better position to guarantee the historical value since it is forced by concrete reality to link a particular event to antecedents that were most unexpected. It is because an event is undeniable that one is led more or less to seek for older biblical texts for the purpose of discovering therein a previously non-existent connection. An example of this can be seen in the Virginity of Mary and the prophecy regarding *Almah* in Isaiah 7, 14. Matthew (or rather the redactor of the source which he incorporates) is aware that Mary's virginity is affirmed by witnesses that go back to the time of the Holy Family itself. A fact as important could not but be announced or prepared for in the Old Testament. However, there was no example of a Virgin-Mother. Hence, what was to be done? Take a wondrous birth, that promised to the *Almah* in Isaiah and see in it the rough sketch of a still more wondrous birth realized in Mary. Previously, well-intentioned people went to great extents to attempt to establish belief in the fact that *Almah* signified "Virgin" and that the prophecy of Isaiah foretold the birth of Jesus. Now we know that since *Almah* does not formally mean "Virgin" and since Isaiah was foretelling a birth that seemed to be very near at hand (as he states in 7, 16; 8, 1-4), Matthew must have found himself before an absolutely incontestable fact to have considered himself to be obliged to "sacralize" it by returning to a text which, in itself, means something else. The more the method may appear illogical to a

Cartesian mentality, the more it proves the embarrassment of the primitive witness, and, consequently, the more it establishes the value of the testimony which it finds itself forced to uphold. Indeed, in the Infancy Gospels, there isn't any midrash, but there are many examples of "pesher".

Regarding what is considered the most debatable aspects of the Infancy Gospels, the Star of the Magi, Fr. Laurentin shows quite well (pp. 431; 464-465; 515) that the Gospel does not contain one word which makes an allusion to the oracle of Balaam in Numbers 24, 17, not even to the name of this star which is called "aster" in Matthew 2, 2 and 9 and "astron" in the Septuagint version of Numbers, even though it would have been so easy to harmonize the expressions. Let us suppose for a moment that a redactor would have wanted to devise a "midrash" relying on the text. "A star will rise from Jacob". What would he end up with? A presentation of the Infant Jesus under the aspect of a star, made to rise up into the heavens, to signify, in advance, a type of Transfiguration and Ascension. Instead of this, we have an account in which the star only plays an altogether secondary role, in which it simply serves to attract attention and guide the journey of the characters who are not even described — Jesus, all the while, remaining silent and still. Really, the text of Numbers has furnished neither the inspiration nor even the coloration of our Epiphany. The sole scientific explanation is to admit that things took place as they were recounted, even if we are not able to be more specific about the nature or the size or the character of this "star".

The author devotes much consideration to the notion of symbol, and correctly so, since an action, event, or fact can be strongly symbolic without being a legendary fact which would have only existed in the imagination of its inventors. A symbolic fact is a fact which actually existed in reality, but one which is not trite or without significance. It is a fact charged with meaning, capable of recalling or suggesting various related truths. Chapter VIII of the third part of this work has as its specific title *Symbolisme et Historicité: une correlation* (pp. 507-528).

Reading it sheds light on a number of false problems, since it shows that respect for the texts surpasses a simplistic reliance on the events and that this respect likewise includes investigation of the deeper meaning of the events. Fr. Laurentin writes:



## Book Reviews

"The Infancy Gospels depend upon history. They have attempted to establish a precise *link* between the biblical history of Salvation and that which Christ inaugurated . . . The Infancy Gospels are not a simple prolongation of the Bible, but a going far beyond it. They manifest the newness of Christ, from his youth about which nothing is known: a newness, still hidden, and to be discovered through earthly and heavenly signs (p. 52)".

In the case of the genealogies, which we so readily ignore as being "without interest", Fr. Laurentin presents an extended study (pp. 393-425) from which he gleans a "fascinating septenary rhythm".

"For these genealogies had a function which was of interest not only for curiosity, but for the Faith. Faced with the idealism of the Docetists and the Gnostics, they provide a guarantee: the human reality of Christ . . . According to the culture and documentary resources of their time, Matthew and Luke established that Jesus — Son of God, is indeed a man, of human stock. This was difficult to express since his origin was marked by God, in a singular fashion: by the Virginal Conception which they attest to by means of Judeo-Christian data, familial or local . . . Both evangelists have taken up this disconcerting evidence from different perspectives: Matthew in the context of ancestral origin, Luke in the context of the Baptism; Matthew by reference to "Genesis", Luke by reference to the "beginning" of the history of Salvation in Jesus Christ, on the threshold of his baptismal manifestation. However, both refer not to political criteria, but to filiation and the divine qualifications of Jesus" (p. 419).

The longest and newest part of this large volume (pp. 136-297 & pp. 308-356) is devoted to semiotics. No one need be discouraged since the author has certainly expended great efforts in order to avoid the jargon of the "semioticians" and to express himself in French which is easily understandable. No one needs any longer to be astonished by the employment of this new technique which, if properly utilized, helps better in penetrating the meaning of a text and even the unconscious intentions of its author.

Beyond the simple literary analysis, semiotics serves as a *technique for sounding* which penetrates the text, a little bit like X-rays in order to uncover the skeletal outline.

"Semiotics (also called semiology), from the Greek word "semeion", has, as its purpose, the study of how signs produce (or induce) a meaning,

It starts from the fact that the meaning depends upon the structural organization of signs — whence comes the name of structuralism . . . The semiotic study of a text passes through the following stages or procedures:

1. The first approach consists in discerning the differences and revealing contrasts in meaning, on various levels: grammatical repetitions, times, places, and differing modalities . . .
2. The process of cutting judges according to changes in time, of place, of actions, the sequences, sub-sequences, and segments of the account.
3. The first properly semiotic stage is the identification of the narrative program which directs the coherent transformations of the account.
4. The program is realized on the level of a structural model.
5. One last step attempts to unravel the deeper levels of signification of meaning, by means of the "semiotic square" (pp. 136-140).

The reader of this work certainly find a great deal of pleasure in discovering how this technique is applied to the account of Luke, then to Matthew. The reader will, undoubtedly, be surprised many times to see how various aspects of the account come to light, even to the point of things that were up until then not perceived, especially with reference to times and places. The reader will be able to follow, with some astonishment, the course and the convergence of various narrative programs which form a perfectly coherent fabric, in which a basic unity obtains.

Naturally, these chapters on semiotics demand from the reader a great deal of effort, but the author has certainly done a great deal in order to safeguard intelligibility. What is uppermost is the result — a greater awareness of the underlying content and of the theological richness of these accounts which are so simple in appearance.

What follows are Laurentin's conclusions on the historical value of the Infancy Gospels. "The reference of the Infancy Gospels to real fact is compelling . . .

1. Luke formally declares that his purpose is to recount verifiable events, gathered by eyewitnesses.
2. Both Infancy Gospels manifest a concern for a serious inquiry, which the genealogy has allowed to be verified in the most detailed fashion.
3. Their agreement through their difference is the gauge of their independence.
4. They did not work like weavers of tales, using

## Book Reviews

- fiction. They took quite seriously the birth and the infancy of Christ.
5. They have brought together a great diversity of materials which were especially varied in Luke: accounts of the birth, trips and meetings, genealogies and canticles, revelations or callings of the first witnesses regarding the infancy of Christ.
  6. The data gathered together, notably the obscurity of the infancy of Christ, his Nazarean origin, the unexpectedness of the birth which has him standing outside the biological line of David, were for the evangelists and for their readers a real difficulty; that they assumed them, nevertheless, is a guarantee of their honesty.
  7. The examination of episodes manifests their agreement with archeological and cultural data.
  8. The modesty and verisimilitude of the episodes is remarkable. In short, in order to escape from the quality of this work, it would be necessary to downplay or caricature these texts of rare coherence" (pp. 502-503).

The same would have to be done by a reader who would also seek to escape this work of Fr. Laurentin. It evidences not only a tremendous amount of labor, but also manifests an extremely solid common sense as well as real courage, for courage is presently necessary now in order to go against the current, to go beyond rationalism and to place oneself gently within the hearing and at the service of the texts.

The present reviewer is happy to announce that there will be an English translation of this masterful work of Fr. Laurentin which will hopefully appear in June of 1984. At a time when the valiant Lady of the harbor of New York, the Statue of Liberty, is being refurbished as we approach the centenary of its presentation by France to the people of the United States, we have yet another gift from France, eldest daughter of the Church and teacher of the nations.

Reverend Michael J. Wrenn, Director  
Archdiocesan Catechetical Institute, N.Y.

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*FAITH AND FRATERNALISM: THE HISTORY OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS 1882-1982.*  
By Christopher J. Kauffman. Harper and Row Publishers: New York, 1982. 512 pp. (no price listed)

"This institutional history of the Knights of Columbus", according to author and St. Louis Ph.D. Christopher J. Kauffman, "is the history of an organization of ordinary people united in a variety of rather extraordinary causes. Whether they were raising money for the Catholic University of America, manning social and recreational centers for servicemen in World War I, or struggling against the Ku Klux Klan or against religious persecution in Mexico, (the Knights') fraternal sense of Catholic peoplehood was strongly manifested in their drive to personify 'diligence, devotion, and defense'". (pp. xii) *Faith and Fraternalism* provides the definitive history, from a national perspective, of the Knights of Columbus from its New Haven, Connecticut founding in 1882 to the present.

Established by immigrant Irish American Catholics who were prepared to stand and fight against a New England based anti-Catholicism, this fraternal insurance organization only 25 years later would develop into an unofficial nationwide Catholic anti-defamation society, similar to the Jewish B'nai B'rith, located in every state in the United States and also in Canada, Mexico, and the Philippines. As of 1981, the Knights, with a membership of 1,350,000, stood as the largest body of Catholic laymen in the world. The Order's understanding of itself was consistent with the "Americanizer" or liberal Catholic position as espoused by such turn-of-the century figures as James Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop John Ireland. As such, the Order has been opposed not only by various manifestations of American nativism, but also from the historic "anti-Americanizer" or pro-immigrant-centered Catholicism as paradigmatically represented by such individuals as Archbishop Michael A. Corrigan and Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid. Serving as a bridge from the old to the new world, combining Catholic idealism with American practicality, incorporating needed insurance programs with popular fraternalism, simultaneously devoted to Catholic ecclesiastical authority and to the ideals of American patriotism, religious freedom, and cultural pluralism, the Order attracted upwardly mobile and aggressive Catholic laymen who were able to pursue their own material and status interests in the outer American society and, at the same time, offer economic and spiritual assistance to the Church. Kauffman persuasively points out that it is the Order's fundamental acceptance of at least the more positive aspects of

## Book Reviews

American society that accounts for the continuous expansion of the Knights in the fact of the extinction of most ethnic-centered Catholic associations.

In several very important respects the Knights anticipated the teachings of Vatican II. The Order is both deeply devoted to the Pope and hierarchy yet independent of strict ecclesiastical control. The fact that the Order — a kind of American Social Action — is both a lay organization and active in civic affairs is consistent with the mission of the laity to Christianize the temporal sphere as called for in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. The positions of the Knights on social and religious issues mirrors that of official Catholicism: progressive on matters of social and economic justice and conservative on internal Church matters of faith, dogma, and authority. And finally, the Knights have been essentially Catholic (and American populist, too) in their refusal to endorse the elitism, secularism, and narrow self-interest of either capitalism or socialism.

Kauffman's monumental and exhaustive research, commissioned by the Order yet critical and scholarly, was made possible through total access to the Knights' archives. The work constitutes an important contribution to American Catholic history as it documents just how the Knights of Columbus are a product of the dialectical relationship between American and Catholic cultures and, in turn, have both shaped and reflected the socio-religious matrix of American society. The national level focus of Kauffman's work, unfortunately, does not (and could not possibly) provide a picture of the pastoral life of the average Knight in the local Council setting.

Joseph A. Varacalli  
Nassau Community College, N.Y.

● Jesuit Paul Quay's recent publications give evidence of interesting varieties of scholarly competencies.

"Angels and Demons in the New *Missale Romanum*"  
*Ephemerides Liturgicae* 94, 401-410 (1980).

"Fourier's Inequality as a Principle of Thermodynamics, with Applications to Magnetothermoelectric Effects", in: *Physics as Natural Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Laszlo Tisza on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Abner Shimony & Herman Feshbach, Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press, 1982, pp. 7-24; with Susan J. Benofy.

(continued on page 20)

Hans Urs von Balthasar. *The Glory of the Lord. A Theological Aesthetics*. Vol. 1: *Seeing the Form*. (German title: *Herrlichkeit: Eine theologische Aesthetik. I. Schau der Gestalt*.) San Francisco: Ignatius Press and Chicago: Crossroad Publications, 1983. 691 pp., \$35.

This is the masterwork of one of the greatest theologians of our century. *The Glory of the Lord* is made up of seven large volumes, but the first of which has a certain completeness in itself.

The publication of this masterwork in English was arranged as a cooperative venture between T. and T. Clark in England and the Ignatius Press in San Francisco. A team of Anglican and Roman Catholic scholars are cooperating in the translation and editing, which may be completed by the end of 1985. This first volume was translated by Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, edited by John Riches of the University of Glasgow and by Father Joseph Fessio, S.J., of the University of San Francisco.

To speak of a "theological aesthetics" is not to "yield to some whim and force theology into a little travelled side-road"; but modern theology has suffered from insufficient reflection on the relationship of the beautiful to the true and the good. Classical theology was far more aware of the unifying role of the beautiful in theology. (Forward.)

Volume one, *Seeing the Form*, deals chiefly with the mystery of faith, and of the ways in which perception of the truth and the goodness of the mystery caught in faith are perceived in the beauty inseparable from truth and goodness.

The two major sections of this volume treat of "The Subjective Evidence" and "The Objective Evidence." The first speaks of the living subject's reception of the light of faith, and the splendor of the experience of faith. The author's style is distinctive; the scriptural and patristic richness of the work is breathtaking. Foundational themes about the joyful experience of coming to faith are treated in brilliant and creative ways.

The second major part speaks of Christ as the Center of the form of revelation, and of how Scripture and the Church mediate this form to us, and of how the Father, and History, and the Cosmos attest to this form.

This is a work of major importance: it will require much study and meditation to absorb it sufficiently. The volume is carefully edited and beautifully printed. It is an expensive book, but well worth the cost.

## Book Reviews

Frances Frech, *Population Primer*, with Cartoons by Dick Hafter, Anastasia Books, Box 490, Stafford, VA 22554, \$4.95, bulk prices upon request, 87 pp.

The overpopulation scare has invaded the class-room on all levels. What was once a conversation piece in drawing rooms and in college lecture halls, has now become commonplace in secondary and primary school discussions. Frances Frech has provided an antidote to this rapidly spreading poison in her *Population Primer*. Dick Hafter makes her message vivid with his satirical cartoons.

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Finally, she exposes the statistical errors of *Population Patterns and Profiles*, the repeated playing of *The Third Child Theme*, and the fallacies of *Survival and Other Games*.

Highly recommended for its cogency and simplicity for every level of reader. The book would be especially valuable for parents, teachers and spiritual leaders of the young.

Henry V. Sattler C.Ss. R.,

### Friends of the Fellowship

Fr. Raymond T. McCarthy  
Rev. Joseph W. Roach

Mrs. Frech has presented papers at three United Nations world conferences, but does not overwhelm her readers with statistics and subtle argumentation. She simply exposes the fallacies of argumentation used by those who have promoted the anti-new-life myth the Population Bomb. In brief chapters, Frances Frech exposes the error in *Population Games*, the fear of *Making Room* for new persons, the panic that *People* alone make *Pollution*, that *Food Supplies* are failing. She shows the logical errors of *Jumping to Conclusions*, the presence of great *Energy and Resources*, that there is no need to press panic *Button, Button*.

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(continued from page 19)

"Response to a non-theological psychiatrist", *Loyola Magazine* 12, No. 1, 28-29 (Fall/Winter, 1983).

Review of: "Our Fragile Brains: A Christian Perspective on Brain Research", by D. Gareth Jones; *Review for Religious* 42, 152 (1983).

Letter to Editor, in "Brain Death: Responses to a recent article," *America* 148, 235-236, (March 26, 1983).

"The Thermodynamics of Systems in a Steady State", *Journal of Chemical Physics* 78, 3177-90 (1983); with Susan J. Benofy.