

# Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter

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Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter

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## Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger Interview

(In *Jesus*, November 1984 issue, Milan, pp. 67-81)

translated by Patrick Riley

The interview was given August 15-18, 1984 in Bressanone, Italy (in what the Italians call Alto Adige, the Austrians Sud Tyrol, or German-speaking part of Italy ceded by Austria after WW I).

Cardinal Ratzinger (hereafter designated R) revised the text, and certain points were held back at his request, e.g. on theology of liberation and apparitions at Medjugorje, for example. The interviewer was Vittorio Messori (hereafter designated M).

The review says: "The complete texts of the colloquium will be published in one volume, which the *Edizioni Poeline* will distribute to bookshops at the beginning of next year. The volume will be called *Report on the Faith*." pp. 67-68.

### On Unity of Faith

"In a world where scepticism has infected even believers, the Church's conviction that truth exists and that this truth is definable and can be expressed precisely has come to be considered a scandal. Today this scandal is shared also by those Christians who have lost sight of the Church's structure. The Church is not merely a human organization, and therefore she must defend a deposit that is not hers. If this deposit were not common, if it were not accepted by all, she would no longer be the Catholic Church. Of course, unity in faith does not mean uniformity of technical instruments or of kinds of reflection; but in the end everything must be referred to a truth that is redemptive and is unique." (p. 68 Cols. 2-3).

### On Decision-Making

M asked whether it didn't cost him something to move from the status of a theologian to watching over theological work he replied:

"I never would have agreed to dedicate myself to this ecclesiastical work if my assignment were above all

that of monitoring. As a matter of fact our Congregation, in accordance with its restructuring by the *motu proprio Integrae servandae* of 7 December 1965—the last day of Vatican II—has indeed kept the task of decision-making and intervention, but always side-by-side with a positive role of stimulation, of proposing, of clarification, of pointing out."

Here M comments: "Perhaps what some cannot bear is precisely the fact that the supposed 'policeman of the faith' has in reality not only the stature of a great theologian (he has occupied some of the most prestigious chairs and has published books of a very wide distribution) but even the stature of an open-minded and modern theologian, alert to the signs of the times. A *peritus* of the German episcopacy at Vatican II, and then among the founders of *Concilium*, the international review in which the so-called 'progressist wing' of Catholic theology gathered."

M's Question: "A sin of youth, your Eminence, this commitment to *Concilium*?"

R: "Not in the least. I have not changed, they have. From the very first meetings, in 1964, I pointed out two

### WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS ISSUE?

#### On Belief—p. 1

"We may say that most ancient heresies were characterized by variant belief; most modern ones, by unbelief, or at least by uncertainty about what to believe."

Harold O. J. Brown

#### On Bioethics—p. 12

"...A study found that only 20 percent (of abortion patients) were using any form of birth control. The easy availability of abortion makes it more likely that women will use a contraceptive incorrectly or not at all, risking pregnancies they don't intend to complete."

The Village Voice, Feb. 4-10, 1981

#### On Virtue and Vice—p. 15

"Our vices are the seamy side of our virtues."

Fr. John P. Monaghan

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requirements to my colleagues: the first was that our group must not be sectarian, arrogant, as if we alone were the true Church, a new magisterium with a corner on the truth about the Christianity of the future. The second requirement was that we had to face the letter and spirit of the documents of Vatican II, then still underway, without sprinting ahead alone. But these requirements, in the event, were not borne in mind."

### On Vatican II

*M then cites a sentence written—presumably in Concilium—on the review's 20th anniversary: "Vatican II still belongs to the ecclesiastical, clerical movement; with such documents it is not possible to move ahead much, so one must move beyond them."*

R: "This is an important admission. It shows that, taken in their wholeness, the documents of Vatican II are fully in the Church's tradition, and are not at all the unhinging from tradition that some think or would like to have us believe, either to deplore it or to misuse it. Further, both 'right' and 'left', at least in their extreme forms, fall into contradiction in the light of Vatican II. Whoever is nostalgic for the Council of Trent or for Vatican I, or who instead wants to consider the teaching of those two councils obsolete now, forgets that they are held up by the same authority—that college of bishops in communion with the Pope—that holds up Vatican II. We cannot choose in the Tradition of the Church what is most congenial to us." (pp. 69 Cols. 2-3)

R: "Was the beginning of the 60's the right moment to call a Council? History—especially the history of Church that God guides along mysterious paths—is not made of 'ifs'. In that period the second generation of the postwar period, the generation that had not seen the disaster of the conflict, which instead was seeing the economic boom of the West, was about to appear on the scene. In the air was a great optimism, a great trust in progress, in the conquest of technology, in the relaxation of international tension. Within the Church, too, there was a certain expectation of a new common reflection on the Faith. On this, everybody was agreed, even my predecessor, Cardinal Ottaviani. Naturally there was question of reaching agreement on what should be done...(p.70 Col. 1)

"Certainly the results seemed cruelly opposed to the expectations of all, beginning with John XXIII and then of Paul VI. What was expected was a new Catholic unity; what was encountered was a dissent that—to use the words of Pope Montini—seemed to pass from self-criticism to self-destruction...(p.70 Col. 2)

"But is this bitter tally truly attributable, at least in part, to forces involuntarily set in motion by Vatican II? I believe that the Council cannot in reality be held responsible for evolutions or involutions that, quite the contrary, contradict both the spirit and the letter of its documents. Even during the conciliar sessions, and then afterwards, there circulated ever more widely what we Germans called KONZILS-UNGEIST, that 'anti-spirit of the Council' which considered that everything "new" (or presumed to be new—how many very old heresies have reappeared in these years as novelties!) is always and in every way better than what there is already. An 'anti-spirit' that thinks the Church's history has to be begun all over again from the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. (p. 70 Col. 3)

"My impression is that the reverses the Church has met in the past twenty years are due, rather than to the 'true' Council, to the unleashing—from within—of latent forces, aggressive, polemical, centrifugal, even irresponsible; and—from without—to the impact of a cultural shift: the establishment in the West of the uppermiddle class, of the new'bourgeois' with its liberal-radical ideology of an individualistic, rationalistic, hedonistic stamp."

### On the Missions

*M: Concerning the crisis that has raged among the missionaries:*

R: "It is the Church's traditional, ancient doctrine that every man is called to salvation and can in fact be saved (provided he sincerely obeys the dictates of his own conscience) even if he is not a visible member of the Catholic Church. However, this teaching, which I repeat was already accepted without dispute, was unduly emphasized starting with the years of the Council, resting itself on theories such as that of 'anonymous Christianity.' People began to say that grace is always present when a person, believing in no religion or following any religion, accepts himself as a man; what the Christian would possess beyond that was only the awareness of a grace that was in everybody anyway. The emphasis was then carried over onto the values of non-Christian religions, which some theologians presented not as extraordinary ways to salvation but as ordinary ways to it. Obviously these hypotheses caused the missionary drive to flag in many. 'Why disturb non-Christians, and lead them to baptism and to faith in Christ,' some began to ask themselves, 'given that their religion is the way to salvation in their culture, in their part of the world?'

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"What was forgotten, among other things, was the bond that the New Testament established between salvation and truth. Jesus explicitly asserted that the knowledge of the truth liberates, hence saves. Or as Paul says: 'God our savior wants all men to be saved and come to know the truth.' That truth, he adds immediately, consists in the knowledge that 'God is one, and one also is the mediator between God and men, the man Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all.' (1 Timothy 2, 4-7)." ... (p. 71 Col. 1)

"Then many, in those years, passed an unjust judgment on the link between missionary activity and colonialism. The excesses of colonialism were mitigated by those very missionaries (and the most objective Africans themselves acknowledge this), who created oases of humanity in zones devastated by want and oppression. Admittedly, many missionaries brought a Christianity in 'Western' categories (what else could they do but begin with a catechism, the only one they knew?), but they became true fathers to the people entrusted to them. If a certain friendship is still possible between Europe and Africa, that is due to them. One really ought not then exalt the pre-Christian condition. One ought not exalt that time of idols which was also the time of fear, in a world where God is distant and the land is abandoned to demons. As had already come about in the Mediterranean basin during apostolic times, so in Africa the proclamations of the Christ who can overcome the forces of evil was an experience of liberation from terror. Paganism as serene and innocent is one of the many myths of our age."...

"Whatever certain shallow theologians may say about it, the devil, for the Christian Faith, is a presence mysterious but real, personal and not symbolic. Also he is a powerful reality ('the prince of this world,' as he is called in the New Testament, which time and time again recalls his existence), a maleficent superhuman liberty opposed to that of God, as is shown by a realistic reading of history, with its abyss of atrocities ever renewed and inexplicable in terms of man alone. Man by himself lacks the strength to withstand Satan, who however is not another god, and when we are united to Jesus we have the strength to overcome him. It is Christ, the 'God who is near,' who has the strength and the will to free us. For this reason the Gospel is really 'good news'. And for this reason we must continue to announce it to those regimes of terror which non-Christian religions often are. I'll say more: the atheistic culture of the modern West still lives thanks to that freedom from the fear of demons which was brought by Christianity. But if this redeeming light of Christ were to be extinguished, the world, de-

spite all its wisdom and its technology, would fall back into terror and despair. Already there are signs of such a return of dark forces, while satanic cults are growing in a secularized world." (p. 71 Cols. 2-3)

### On the Holy Spirit

Cardinal Ratzinger spoke of a "rediscovery of the Holy Ghost who, it is said today, has not been sufficiently kept in mind by Western theology." He observed:

"This rediscovery, however, is exploited by some who seek to bypass the hierarchical Church in favor of a 'pneumatological' ecclesial structure."

He said it was "necessary to guard against excessive emphasis here too, and to consider the Spirit ('who does not speak of himself,' as the Gospel says) in equilibrium with the other two Persons of the Trinity."

Of the charismatic movement he said: "It is the rediscovery of the joy of prayer against a rationalist, secularist spirituality and a rationalist, secularist theology. In my diocese, Munich, some vocations to the priesthood have come from this movement. It is certainly a gift of God to our epoch. Naturally, as happens in all human realities, there can be another side to the coin here too. But this necessary caution does not alter the basic verdict, which is favorable." (p. 73)

### On the Crisis in Faith

*M remarks: "...according to the cardinal's diagnosis, there is first of all and at the bottom of all a crisis of faith in God, in the first Person of the Trinity, in God the Father, the Creator."*

R: "Fearing, wrongly of course, that the Father might obscure the Son, a certain theology today tends to reduce itself into Christology. Such Christology often emphasizes above all the human nature of Jesus, obscuring (or inadequately expressing) the divine nature that also lives in the same Person. It is the return of the ancient Arian heresy.

"The crisis of the Father also, as first Person of the Trinity, is explicable in a society that, after Freud, mistrusts every father and all paternalism and that, with the

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extreme of feminism, even wants to re-baptize the name of God in the feminine.”...

“He is rejected also because a God to whom the knee is bent is not accepted. Nothing but partnership will be heard of, a relationship of friendship as if between equals, between man and man, with the man Jesus. Then there is a tendency to set aside the problem of God the creator also, in order to avoid problems raised by the relationship between faith in creation and natural science, beginning with the prospectives opened by evolutionism. Thus there are new catechetical texts that begin not from Adam and Eve, from the beginning of the book of Genesis, but from the vocation of Abraham. That is, the exclusive focus is on history, avoiding a confrontation with being.

“But if reduced thus to Christ alone—indeed to the man Jesus alone—God is no longer God. And in fact, it seems that a certain theology no longer believes in a God that can enter into the depths of matter; hence the doubts on the ‘material’ aspects of Revelation, such as Mary’s virginity, the concrete and real Resurrection of Jesus, the resurrection of the body promised to everybody at the end of history. Certainly it is not by chance that the Creed begins with the confession: ‘I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.’ This primordial faith in the God that creates constitutes as it were the nail on which all the other truths of Revelation hang. If it gives way, everything falls.” (p. 73 Col. 2—p. 74 Col. 1)

“Among many theologians has spread a mentality one might say is closer to the model of certain North American sects or ‘free churches’ than to the classical Protestant model. It is the concept of a Church as a mere human organization whose members would be free to structure it and organize it as they like, according to the requirements of the moment. Many of them have lost faith in the divine foundation of the Church, given to man but determined in its fundamental structures by God himself, hence beyond manipulation to accommodate the fashions or needs of the moment. In the Catholic vision, behind the human facade stands the mystery of a superhuman reality over which neither sociologist nor human reformer has any authority of intervention. If this concept of the Church as mystery and sacrament is lost, with it is lost the ineluctability of her hierarchical structure. No longer is the need for obedience as a virtue understood, because there is no longer belief in an authority willed by God, having its roots in God and not only, as happens in political structures, in the consent of the majority. Without this vision, supernatural and not just sociological, Christology itself is empty, for the

Church becomes human structure, and the Gospel becomes a human project, the Jesus-project.”...

“A similar ecclesiology, flattened horizontally, lends itself to a distorted view of the ecumenical problem. So many Catholics think that when Rome turns down eucharistic intercommunion with the Protestant churches, that is the ultimate fruit of intolerance. They do not realize that for the Catholic, the Church — a structure willed to be thus by Christ himself — bases herself on the apostolic succession; hence there can be no Eucharist (which requires the hierarchic priesthood) if that succession is broken off.” (p. 74 Col. 1)

“Many theologians seem to have forgotten that the theologizing subject is not the individual theologian, but the Catholic community as a whole, the Catholic Church. From this oversight stems a theological pluralism that often is really subjectivism, an individualism that at times has little to do with the common tradition. In that way the Faith breaks up into a series of schools and currents. The service rendered to truth by dogma is lost sight of, and dogma is instead viewed as an intolerable captivity, an assault on freedom. Yet it is the authority God willed that proposes, as a gift to believers, the most adequate expression of the mysteries of the Faith, in the dogmatic formula.”...

“Because theology no longer seems to hand on a common model of faith, catechesis too is exposed to fragmentation, to constantly-changing experimentation. Some catechisms and many catechists no longer teach the Catholic Faith in its totality, where everything holds together and every truth presupposes and explains the other. Rather they seek to render some elements of the Christian patrimony ‘interesting’ from a human standpoint, according to the trends of the moment. No longer is there global formation in the Faith, but reflections and hints of partial anthropological experiences. In reality, from the first ages of Christianity there appears a permanent and irrenounceable ‘nucleus’ of the Faith. Luther too utilized it, as vigorously as the Roman catechism that was decided upon at Trent. This irrenounceable nucleus is comprised of the Credo, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, the Pater noster. These four classical ‘pieces’ are the summary of the Church’s teaching, the basis of the life of the Christian, who finds in them what he must believe (the Symbol), must hope (the Pater noster), and must do (the Decalogue), and the vital space in which all this must be carried out (the Sacraments). Now this structure has been abandoned in too much of current catechesis, resulting in the leakage we observe among recent generations, who are often unable to see their religion as a whole.”...(p. 74 Col. 2)

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### On Liberation Theology

[Note: He now seems to anticipate his treatment of liberation theology, which he criticizes expressly from p. 78 Col. 2 to p. 80 col. 1. Bear in mind however that the journalist, Vittorio Messori, has arranged the material, as he expressly says in the first two sentences of p. 73. Also the later treatment deals with Latin American-type liberation theology only.]

"In South America, liberation is sought. It is understood in a socio-economic sense above all, with the risk of slipping into a merely political interpretation of the Faith.

"But liberation is sought also in the affluent world, in Europe and in North America; there it is understood as liberation from the Christian ethic, especially from the traditional vision of sexuality, with the often aberrant results of a moral permissiveness which is only one aspect of the 'liberalism' dominant in those parts of the world.

"Liberation is sought also in Africa and in Asia, where it is understood above all as liberation from the European colonial heritage. But often it is not easy to establish what is truly 'indigenous,' 'autochthonous,' given the complexity of those cultures; nor is it clear what, in the Christianity that we know, is an import from Western culture or is instead a perennial element, valid for every clime. Besides, we must not forget that we all, in Europe too, have received the Gospel from 'abroad,' from a Semitic culture, through the mediation of Hellenism."...

"To sum up, in Latin America the deeply biblical concept of 'liberation' is exposed to the risk of Marxist overtones; in the 'First World,' to the risk of contamination by the liberal, radical, libertarian culture; in the rest of the Third World to the risk of a debatable drive for the indigenous, of which much that presents itself as African reveals itself under scrutiny to be a European import having much less to do with Black traditions than does classical Christian tradition." (p. 76 col. 1)

### On Contemporary Biblical Criticism

R: "The link between Bible and Church has been broken. Historico-critical interpretation of Scripture has made of it an entity independent of the Church: The Bible is read not starting from the Church and in company with the Church, but starting from the latest method claiming to be 'scientific'. Only thus, it is asserted, can the Bible be read correctly. This independence has gone the length of becoming, in some, a counter-position, since the traditional faith of the Church, her dogmas, no longer seem justified by critical exegesis, but seem only obstacles to an authentic understanding of Christianity."...

"This separation, however, tends to empty out both the Church and Scripture from within. More: a Church without biblical foundations becomes a casual historical product, no longer, surely, the Church of Jesus Christ but that human organization, that mere organizational framework we were talking about. Further, a Bible without the Church is no longer the efficacious Word of God; rather it is a collection of multiple historical sources from which one seeks to draw out, in the light of modern times, what one deems useful. Thus the final word on the Word of God no longer belongs to the lawful pastors, to the magisterium, but to the expert, to the professor, to this ever changeable hypothesis. We must begin to see the limits of an exegesis that presents itself with the magic label 'scientific,' but which really is itself a reading conditioned by philosophical prejudices, by ideological pre-understandings, and which does nothing but substitute one philosophy for another."

[To the question whether a Catholic who wants to be up-to-date can read the Bible without worrying about exegetical questions:]

"Certainly. Every Catholic must be courageous enough to believe that his faith (in communion with that of the Church, united to the lawful pastors) transcends every new 'magisterium' of the experts, of the intellectuals. The hypotheses of these latter can help understand the genesis of the books of Scripture, but to think the text is understood only by studying how it was created and developed is a prejudice derived from evolutionism. The role of faith, today as yesterday, is not comprised of discoveries about biblical sources and historical strata, but from the Bible as it is read and as it has always been read in the Church, from the Fathers until today." (p. 76 cols. 2-3)

### On Different Cultures

[*M. asked what continent or geo-political area demands the most urgent attention of the Doctrinal Congregation, Ratzinger responded:*]

R: "The general factors of the crisis find different concrete realizations in different cultures, but it is hard to say which situation is the most dangerous. If we look at Europe we get the impression that even on the theological level it is a disenchanted world, old by now, stricken with academic pride, blasé and chilly. This has reached a point where, if often it does not react aggressively toward Rome, that is because in its pride it deems such reactions useless."...

"Looking at North America we see a world where wealth is the measure of everything, and where the values and style of life proposed by Catholicism seem more of a scandal than ever. The morality of the Church is lived as if it were a foreign body, remote, in contrast

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not only with the concrete habits of life but even with the basic model of thought. It becomes difficult if not impossible to present the authentic Catholic ethic as reasonable, since it is too far distant from what is considered normal and obvious. So, many moralists of the United States (and it is especially in ethics that work is done across the Atlantic, while in theology and exegesis they are tributaries of Europe) think they are constrained to choose between dissent from society and dissent from the magisterium. Many choose this latter dissent, adapting themselves to compromises with a secular ethic that often ends up by throwing men and women out of joint in their deepest nature, leading them to new slaveries under guise of liberation."

"If we look at Africa and Asia, we find that *inculturation*, often problematic, which we touched on. Some time ago there was created an "Ecumenical Union of African Theologians" that brings together exponents of all the confessions. But the peril is that, in the name of a negritude blurred in its outlines (and of an ecumenism that considers one confession equal to another in essentials), Catholic unity may be forgotten. That Union is working for the convocation of an African 'Council' whose contents however do not seem to have been clarified yet." (p. 77 col. 2-3)

### On Eastern Europe vs. The West

R: "On the doctrinal plane, there is almost no problem with Catholic theology in those parts. There, certainly, attempting to dialogue does not expose one to the danger of being converted to the interlocutor's position: every day, Christians measure the bankruptcy of human messianism. The people pay with their skin for a system that has attempted a liberation, yes, but from God. By now only where Marxism has not reached power can anyone be found who still believes in its fallacious 'scientific truths'. Why, in some countries of Eastern Europe there seems to be emerging the idea of studying the dimension of liberation in theology against the background of experiences elsewhere, in non-Marxist regimes. But that does not mean they regard the ideologies and mores prevalent in the West with sympathy. The Cardinal-Primate of Poland, Stefan Wyszyński, was a man who feared God alone: Yet he was no less wary of Western hedonism and permissiveness than of Marxist repression. Alfred Bengsch, Cardinal of Berlin, in turn told me that he saw a deeper danger for the faith in Western consumerism and in a theology contaminated by it than in Marxist ideology."

[An example give by Ratzinger of perils in the West]

"There's something diabolical in the way the market in pornography and drugs is exploited, in the perverse

cold-bloodedness with which man is corrupted through his weaknesses, through his susceptibility to temptation. A culture that persuades people the only end of life is pleasure, or private interests, is hellish."

[Asked which of the many atheisms of our time seemed to him the most insidious, Ratzinger replied:]

"It seems to me that Marxism, because of its philosophical elaboration and its moral intentions, is a deeper temptation than the superficial atheisms. In Marxist ideology the Judeo-Christian heritage also makes its appearance, but converted into a prophetism without God that manipulates for its own political ends, man's religious forces, his hope in the reign of freedom and of life, hope promised by the Bible." (p. 77 col. 3-p.78 col. 1)

Cardinal Ratzinger, according to the interviewer, called it impossible to hold a dialogue with Latin American theologians who embrace "that illusory myth, blocking reforms and aggravating misery and injustice, which is the class struggle as an instrument for creating a classless society."

R. said: "If, Bible and Tradition in hand, one seeks to match wits with certain deviant interpretations of Christianity, that immediately is branded as the ploy of a lackey serving a dominant class, which is trying to hold onto power, while leaning on the Church. Every intervention of the ecclesial Magisterium, even the most measured and respectful, is read with mistrust when it is not rejected beforehand. If rejected *a priori*, it is as the expression of someone who has not made the 'choice of class,' and is in league with the 'bosses' against the poor and the suffering, whom he would leave bereft of Christ the political liberator."... (p. 78 col. 2)

### On Reform and Revolution

R: "There is a repeated refrain: 'Man must be liberated from the chains of political and economic repression. Reforms won't free him and are even a distraction. What is needed is revolution. The only way to raise a revolution is to proclaim the class struggle.' Those who repeat all this do not seem to put before themselves any concrete, practical problem of how to organize a society after the revolution. They only repeat that revolution is what's needed."...

"How painful to contemplate the unchristian illusion that a new man and a new world can be created not by calling each one to conversion but merely by modifying social structures. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is, yes, a message of liberty and a liberating force. But this is first and foremost liberation from the radical slavery of sin. Its aim and goal is the liberty of the children of God, a gift

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### On The Blessed Virgin

R: "Before the Council, I did not at all understand certain ancient formulae such as Mary is the enemy of every heresy. Others, such as the celebrated De Maria numquam satis, seemed to me excessive. But as the situation changed, during and after the Council, and as I delved into the matter, I had to change my opinion on some points. I am convinced more than ever, now: 1st) To grant Mary the place that dogma and Catholic tradition assign her means to be firmly rooted in authentic Christology. The two most ancient dogmas, of perpetual virginity and divine motherhood (but also the two successive dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption), shelter faith in Jesus the God-man and safeguard the provocatives of the Father almighty, who is able to intervene on matter also. That's not even to mention that they call us back to the last things, to that resurrection of the body in the material sense also, so much contested today; 2nd) The Church's Mariology supposes the right relationship, the necessary integration between Scripture and Tradition. That's aside from the fact that it binds together the Old and New Testaments; among the errors common today is to tilt either toward the Old or toward the New Testament; 3rd) Correct devotions to Mary also guarantees to faith the dimension of 'heart', as Pascal would say. For the Church, man is neither reason alone nor sentiment alone, but the union of the two dimensions. Mary's presence helps us live this totality. Then — and this is obvious — the much discussed issue of woman enters here: virginity and fecundity (those two gifts of God to woman) are rejected by a certain feminism, even Christian, thus uprooting the feminine dimension from its deepest nature. Our lady, with her destiny of virgin and spouse, throws light on what the Creator intended for woman." (p. 79 - The Box)

of grace. Its logical consequence is liberation from multiple slaveries: cultural, economic, social and political, but all of these derive ultimately from the sin harbored in the heart of each.

"These are fundamental Christian truths, yet many theologians reject them as if they were 'spiritualistic' speeches. In that way, it is considered 'dualistic' to recall that the Gospel presses us to transform the earth, yes, by bringing it the greatest possible measure of justice,

but with out gaze fixed ahead, toward the kingdom of God, which is not of this world. Yet it is precisely forgetfulness of the divine transcendence that not only empties Christianity from within but brings everyone to the tragic contemporary plight we know so well." (p. 79 col. 2-3)

### On The Episcopacy

*[M. asks whether in certain episcopates there is not such diversity of views as to hinder common action.]*

R: "In the year just after the Council it was necessary to reformulate the indentikit of the candidate for the episcopacy. My impression is that a primordial feature in that period was 'openness to the world.' A precious characteristic, indeed, fit for those times. But after the crisis of '68, it was realized that what was needed was, yes, bishops 'open' to the world, but also capable of opposing its negative tendencies, of seeking to correct deviations when possible. So in these years the choice of bishops has become more 'realistic.' But no less conciliar for that: is not one of the chief recommendations of Vatican II a realism alert to all the signs of the times?" (p. 80 col. 1)

*[M: Ratzinger noted that the episcopal conferences "have no theological base, as the individual bishops have, but only a practical, concrete base."]* (p. 80 col. 2)

*He called it "paradoxical" that Vatican II "wanted to reinforce the role and the responsibility of the bishop." He said: "Instead, the insertion of the bishop in episcopal conferences, ever more strictly organized, threatens to obfuscate his personal responsibility for the diocese where, in communion with the Church, he is pastor and teacher of the faith. The guidance of the position of the Church entrusted to him is above all his, not the local episcopal conference's. The Catholic Church holds herself erect on the equilibrium between the community and the person, in this case the bishop and his individual responsibility. Bureaucratic strictures, necessarily anonymous, need, in order to make decisions, preparatory outlines drafted by the apposite offices, and end up by producing texts that have been somewhat flattened. Personal positions have been smoothed out. Thus the scandal and folly of the Gospel, that 'salt' and that 'leaven' necessary today more than ever, end up less in evidence, especially when the situation threatens to grow ugly. In my own country, Germany, there was an episcopal conference back in the '30s. Well, the really vigorous documents against Nazism were those that came forth from courageous individual bishops. Those of the conference, instead, appeared a bit pale compared with what the tragedy demanded."...*

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"You know, we Catholic priests of my generation were trained in seminaries where we were advised to avoid disagreements, always to seek points of agreement, and never to make oneself conspicuous by unconventional views. Likewise, in many episcopal conferences, *esprit de corps*, perhaps the desire to live in peace, or one might even say conformism, push certain rather passive majorities to accept the positions of enterprising minorities." (p. 80 col. 3)

## Items of Interest

- The Castello Institute of Stafford VA is dedicated to cross-disciplinary research in defense of the inviolability of innocent human life from conception till natural death. Since science and technology have such an impact on human life, its development, maturation, freedom, and final fulfillment, the Director, Father H. Vernon Sattler, (a founding father of FCS) wishes to make an appeal to all interested FCS members to send in their names and addresses to get on the Castello Institute mailing list and to propose research topics within its ambit. The Castello Institute hopes to provide housing for visiting scholars on sabbatical, and eventually grants for "pro-life" position papers, critical bibliographies and complete research protocols. For example, Castello is exploring the possibility of a grant to study the psychological impact of the abortion experience upon men and women. Anyone interested?  
Members of the FCS have already been contacted by individual letters, and the response has been very gratifying. However, Castello would like to be in contact with every FCS member. "C'mon, send the questionnaires in!" (Route #6, Box 162-F, Stafford, VA 22554).
- *The Chesterton Review* celebrates its tenth birthday by launching a new Chesterton project, the first Collected Edition of Chesterton's works. *Ignatius Press* will be the publisher. Each volume will include two or more Chesterton books, with notes and introductions by a Chesterton specialist. The first volume (*Heretics, Orthodoxy* and the Chesterton essays in answer to Robert Blatchford) is already at the printers.  
Information is available from: *The Chesterton Review*, Rev. Ian Boyd, C.S.B., Editor, St. Thomas More College, 1437 College Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N 0W6 Canada.

## Items of Interest

- At the last meeting of the Fellowship's Baltimore-Washington Chapter Pope John Paul II's "theology of the body" was discussed. Bill May commented briefly on the four central ideas developed by Pope John Paul II: (1) The human body is the expression — the sign or sacrament — of the human person; (2) the human body, precisely because it exists as a masculine and feminine, is the means and sign of the gift of the man-person to the female-person and vice versa (the nuptial meaning of the body); (3) because of original sin, our consciousness of the body as the sign or sacrament of the person has been obscured — lust has entered the human heart — and the capacity of the body to express the person has been diminished; finally (4) Christ has redeemed us and our bodies and has won for us the grace of God. By opening our hearts to Christ's saving grace we can thus rediscover the nuptial significance of the body and come to love others even as we have been and are loved by God in Christ.

The participants noted the relevance of the Pope's views to issues of sexual morality and marriage, in particular, its bearing on the question of contraception. John Paul II has, since July of this year, been developing a series of talks explicitly relating to the theology of the body to the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*, insisting that this teaching is founded on the significance of the body as the sacrament of the person, a significance grounded in biblical revelation.

Some 24 members of the Fellowship with guests attended the meeting, an encouraging number. Four students in attendance decided to apply for membership in the Fellowship as a result of the meeting.

- From Professor Anthony LoBello: "I believe the members of the Fellowship would appreciate knowing that there is in the USA a Latin Liturgy Association, which promotes the more frequent celebration of Holy Mass in Latin according to the 1970 Ordo. Our Association does not engage in controversy, and we observe the law in each diocese. Bishop Ott of Baton Rouge and Bishop Connare of Greensburg (Pennsylvania) are the two ordinaries on our Episcopal Advisory Board. We respectfully invite sympathetic members of the Fellowship to join us." Office of the Secretary, Dr. Robert J. Edgeworth, Dept. of Classical Languages, Latin Liturgy Association, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803.
- The Linacre Quarterly is seeking scholarly material on topics such as the ethics of genetic engineering, active euthanasia, non-therapeutic experimentation, the philosophical basis for medical-ethical theory, etc. Write to John P. Mullooly, M.D., Editor, 8430 W. Capitol Drive, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222 (414) 463-6350.



# Eighth Convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

March 22, 23, and 24, 1985

Sheraton International at O'Hare (Chicago) 6810 North Mannheim Road Rosemont, Illinois 60018

## Theme: Issues in the Wake of Vatican II

### Friday, March 22nd

3:00-8:00 p.m. Registration  
 4:00 p.m. Meeting of the Board of Directors  
 8:00 p.m. *Keynote Address:*  
 "Magnetic Fields of Theology:  
 An Historical Estimation"  
 Monsignor Eugene V. Clark, Ph.D.  
 Author of *Liberalism vs. Ultramontanism*  
*in the 19th Century*  
 President, Patron of Arts of Vatican City,  
 New York City

*Discussants:*

Father Francis Canavan, S.J.  
 Fordham University

Doctor Stephen M. Krason  
 Intercollegiate Studies Institute  
 Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

Doctor Raphael J. Waters  
 Niagara University

9:00 p.m. Reception

12:30 p.m. Lunch

### Saturday, March 23rd

9:00 a.m. FIRST PLENARY SESSION  
*Panel:*  
 The Bishops' Pastoral Letter on  
 the Economy.  
*Chairman:*  
 Doctor Christopher Wolfe,  
 Marquette University  
  
*Papers:*  
 "Comments on the Bishops'  
 Pastoral Letter"  
 Doctor Rupert Ederer  
 State University of New York at Buffalo

### 1:45-4:00 p.m. SECOND PLENARY SESSION

*Chairman:*  
 Doctor Joseph Boyle  
 University of Saint Thomas  
 Houston Texas

*Address:*

"Contemporary Moral Reasoning"  
 Professor G.E.M. (Elizabeth) Anscombe  
 Cambridge, England

*Address:*

"Infallibility and Specific Moral Norms"  
 Doctor Germain Grisez  
 Mount Saint Mary's College  
 Emmitsburg, Maryland

"The First Draft of the Bishops' Letter"  
 Doctor Regis A. Factor  
 University of South Florida,  
 Saint Petersburg

4:30 p.m.

Concelebrated Liturgy

6:00 p.m.

Convention Dinner  
*Remarks:*  
 Father William B. Smith  
 Saint Joseph's Seminary  
 Dunwoodie, Yonkers, New York

*Discussants:*  
 Doctor Charles Dechert  
 The Catholic University of America

Philip F. Lawler  
 American Catholic Conference

8:30 p.m.

### THIRD PLENARY SESSION

*Chairman:*  
 Father James Downey, O.S.B.  
 Institute on Religious Life  
 Chicago, Illinois

10:15 a.m.

*Panel:*  
 Catholic Political Thought  
*Chairman:*  
 Doctor Raymond L. Dennehy  
 University of San Francisco

*Address:*

"The Crisis in Religious Life"  
 Father Dubay, S.M.  
 Chanel High School  
 Bedford, Ohio

*Papers:*  
 Maritain's Political Thought"  
 Doctor Ralph McInerney  
 University of Notre Dame

9:30 p.m.

Reception

"Public Morality in Liberal Democracy"  
 Doctor John A. Guegen  
 Illinois State University

### Sunday, March 24th

7:00 a.m.

Concelebrated Liturgy (Private)

(Cont'd Page 24)

## Books Received

- Finbar Connolly CSSR, *God and Man in Modern Spirituality*, (Christian Classics 245 pp. \$9.95 paperback)

Father Connolly has spent many years doing missionary work in India, where he lectured frequently on spirituality. This book contains the content of his lectures. The book attempts to reconcile traditional and more modern approaches to spirituality. How successfully the author bridges the differences each reader will judge for himself — between the “worldly life” and the other-worldly life”. Some chapter titles manifest the thrust of the book: “The Kingdom — a Call to Become Your True Self — An Invitation to Discipleship, Community, Involvement in the World.”

Fr. Connolly is a good writer who uses plain English in a charming way. The ecclesial aspects of the book's approach are deemphasized which may explain why the book lacks an *imprimatur*, even though there is no reason why it should not have one.

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- Mansour Labaky, *Kfar Sama: A Village in Lebanon*, (Ignatius Press 144 pp. \$7.95 Soft-cover)

Father Labaky has written a profoundly moving testimony of the heroic faith of the Lebanese. This is the story of a people's stubborn determination to face the catastrophe of war with no other weapon but a strong faith in God.

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- Stephen M. Krason, *Abortion: Politics, Morality and the Constitution*, (University Press of America, 707 pp. \$29.50 paperback)

Here we have a comprehensive in-depth study of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decisions which legalized abortion. The author closely analyzes the opinions of the Court and contends that significant errors were made in its understanding of many aspects surrounding abortion, considering its legal history, the status of the unborn child, the nature of the right to privacy and its applicability to abortion, and of the effects of abortion on women's health and well-being.

Dr. Stephen M. Krason has written a massive book that should be on the shelf of anyone engaged in the legal and social battles about the right to life. Originally a Ph.D. dissertation for the State University of N.Y. at Buffalo, this book is now a source book for the professional. The appendices (1) On the Constitutional Basis for Anti-Abortion Legislation; (2) A Model Anti-Abortion Statute, have an importance of their own.

Dr. Krason is a lawyer, political scientist, the Eastern Director of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute and a member of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. He is 30 years old.

- Peter Kreeft, *Yes or No? Straight Answers to Tough Questions about Christianity* (Servant Publications pp. 179 Paperback. No price)

Peter Kreeft, a philosophy professor at Boston College and a member of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, has written a book based on a series of imaginative dialogues between Sal the Seeker and Chris the Christian. Kreeft's basic thesis is that Christianity is God's marriage proposal to mankind. We can evade the claims of Jesus Christ for awhile but death brings evasion to an end. So, since the stakes are high, we had better tackle the tough questions head on and now. Where do we stand?

*Yes or No?* presents the gospel challenge with the opening question “Why Believe?” to the final question on relevance. In between we are asked to ponder God's existence, science, U.S. religion, the problem of evil, who is Jesus?, miracles, the resurrection, the bible, death, immortality, the four last things and other religions.

Here is an old fashioned book of apologetics written by a modern Socrates.

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- William E. May, *Sex and the Sanctity of Human Life*, (Christendom Publications 136 pp. paperback, No price)

Dr. May's prolific pen is appreciated by those interested in and committed to the teaching of the Church on the sacrament of marriage. Here we have published for the first time in one place May's views, which have up to now only appeared in scattered magazines, dealing with sex differences, fertility awareness, conjugal love, contraception, sterilization and their relationship to human life.

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- Wolfgang Smith, *Cosmos and Transcendence*, (Sherwood Sugden and Co., 168 pp. \$8.95 paperback)

This Viennese-born physicist-mathematician, who has been a professor at M.I.T. and Oregon State University, recently has taken up the study of Christian theology. In this book he examines some of the major facets of current scientific belief — first the fundamental dogmas of the physical sciences and its standing in philosophical literature. Later in the book he considers the question of organic evolution and the psychological theories of Freud and Jung, seeking to demarcate science from scientific fancy. His most significant chapter is called “Lost Horizons” and deals with “transcendence.” Smith interprets the first chapters of Genesis with great reverence. His desire: to turn the world to the face of its original source. This is a very interesting book for the general reader as for the scientist.

## Book Reviews

*The Genius of John* by Peter Ellis (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn, 1984, 330 pp.)

Here is a reasonable and well-reasoned commentary on the Fourth Gospel. Peter Ellis's *The Genius of John* does not have the encyclopedic scope of Raymond Brown's two volume *The Gospel According to John* nor the magisterial tone of Rudolf Schnackenburg's three volume commentary. What it may lack when such comparisons are made, however, is abundantly compensated for by the clarity, simplicity and beauty of its own independent approach to John's Gospel.

It has become habitual in some areas of current exegetical study of the New Testament to view the Gospel of John as something of an amalgam — a work produced by different hands or redactors who executed their task with greater or lesser degrees of skill. With such a genesis, the Gospel has, needless to say, developed from various sources, suffered various dislocations of its parts and been the subject for various suggested "reconstructions." This supposition that the Gospel as we have it is an amalgam — or an edited work — has naturally led many to reject the traditional attribution of authorship to John the Son of Zebedee or to the Beloved Disciple (if he were held to be someone other than John, Son of Zebedee), and to speak instead of a "Johannine School" or "Johannine Community" which, tracing its origins back to the Beloved Disciple, would have nourished the author and redactor(s) who gave us the Fourth Gospel.

One of the chief supports for the above view has long been the perception that, as a narrative accounts for the deeds and words of Jesus, the Johannine Gospel doesn't flow properly. There are apparent temporal, local and even logical dislocations in sequence which just cannot be reconciled with authorship by one person — unless one presumes that the author wrote over a long period of time and was incapable of picking up where he left off. It is in questioning this widely-held perception and in offering a reasonable alternate explanation for the apparent sequential dislocations that one of the chief — and, for our time, almost revolutionary — merits of Peter Ellis' book lies.

Drawing upon the (unfortunately) unpublished work of a Jesuit priest, John Gerhard, (to whom Ellis dedicates the book with the frank acknowledgement that "in all that pertains to the architectonic structure of the Gospel [the book] is totally indebted to [Gerhard]" - p. IX), Ellis sets out to substantiate Gerhard's thesis that the literary form of John's Gospel is not straight narrative at all. Rather, the Gospel is constructed along the lines of parallelism, a form of writing common among the ancient Greeks, Romans and Hebrews and one most

familiar to us from its employment in the Book of Psalms. According to Ellis, parallelism (or "chiasm" as he usually refers to it) is a development of the literary device known as "inclusion", a "technique in which what is said at the beginning of a piece is repeated at the end" (p. 9). For the author of John, according to Gerhard's thesis, the inclusion has been extended into a five member parallelism, abcb'a', in which 'a' is paralleled by 'a', b by b', c standing as the midpoint or transition. This format is so pervasive that not only the twenty-one sections (not quite corresponding to the Medieval and Modern arrangement of twenty-one chapters), but also each of the individual sections and the five major parts of the Gospel evidence this chiastic parallelism. Thus, section one (Jn. 1:19-51) with its reference to Jesus' first public appearance, the designation of Simon as Peter (Rock) and the presence of Nathanael and two unnamed disciples is paralleled by section twenty-one (Jn. 20:19-21:25) with Jesus final appearance in the Gospel, the pastoral commissioning of Simon Peter and the presence of Nathanael and the two unnamed disciples. And so forth for the individual parts and sections. As should be evident, chapter twenty-one of the Gospel — viewed by so many as an "appendix" — forms, in Gerhard's schema, an integral part of a unitary work. Indeed, the unity of the entire Gospel as issuing from the hand of one author is one of the most significant thesis of Ellis' book, and becomes, in turn, the basis for other notable insights.

Ellis methodically reveals the chiastic structure within each of the twenty-one sections and between the parallel sections. Not all the alleged parallels are equally convincing (the balancing between sections two (Jn. 2:1-12) and twenty (Jn. 20:1-18), for example, with the Virgin Mary at the wedding in Cana and Mary, the Magdalen, and the possibility of nuptial language derived from the Song of Songs (cf. p. 288-289), appears somewhat forced), but, on the whole, he develops a very strong argument in support of the thesis for the chiastic structure of the entire Gospel and its parts. In the process he unfolds an expert and frequently beautiful commentary on the Gospel. His remarks on the inauguration of Peter as "vicar-shepherd" (pp. 302ff) being but one example among many.

Ellis complements the strong argument he has made for the Gospel being the unified work of one author by accepting the Gospel's own claim to have been written by the Beloved Disciple (pp. 308-309) and intimates that this Disciple is one of the sons of Zebedee (p. 300). While this conclusion would appear to be inescapably drawn from the rigor of Ellis' entire argumentation, and is in full harmony with the unanimous attestation of the earliest evidence external to the Gospel itself, it is

## Book Reviews

not likely to be received happily by those committed — without truly demonstrative evidence — to other conclusions.

Ellis dates the Gospel to 85-100 A.D., arguing, chiefly from the premise that internal evidence (esp. Jn. 9:22; 12:42 and 16:2) indicates a date after the so-called "Test Benediction" excluding "heretics" was made a part of the Synagogue service in the mid-eighties. He may or may not be correct as to the actual dating, but the evidence offered will not bear the weight put on it. John's polemic against the Jewish leaders and references to their intent to put followers of Jesus out of the Synagogue are not necessarily indications that John was writing after a formal decision had been made to "anathematize" the Christians. To assert the same as an unarguable point is no more than the equivalent of saying that Hans Kung's anti-Roman polemic and all remarks by Catholics to the effect that he is not truly a Catholic theologian were written or uttered only after the 1979 decision of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith — an assertion manifestly inaccurate.

The above remarks, however, should be construed as only a minor criticism of a very fine book. Gerhard and Ellis have rendered a great service. This is a book to be studied with much profit. Hopefully, *The Genius of John* will be recognized as an invitation to restudy the origin and riches of the fourth Gospel.

James J. O'Connor STD  
Dunwoodie Seminary

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*Bioethics and Belief* by John Mahoney. Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1984/London: Sheed and Ward, 1984. 127 pp. \$8.95 paper.

For reasons that will be given later, I found it necessary, when reading this book, to put it aside several times so that I could walk about and cool off because of the irritation that it aroused in me.

The author is an English Jesuit who lectures on moral and pastoral theology at Heythrop College in the University of London. The book is quite well written, thoughtful and provocative, and on the surface one that manifests a wide acquaintance with the major moral and social questions posed by recent developments in the life sciences. The questions taken up are those of human fertility control, death and dying, the beginning of human life, medical research and experimentation, and the interrelationship between belief and medical science. In summarizing and commenting on the volume I will focus on the issues of human fertility control, the beginning of human life, and human experimentation.

Under the heading of human fertility control Mahoney includes a discussion of what he terms positive interventions, namely those intended to bring new

human life into being, and of what he terms negative interventions, those, namely, intended to inhibit conception. Mahoney argues that artificial insemination by the husband and the use of in vitro fertilization to alleviate the infertility of a married couple who provide the gametic materials for the procedures are both morally acceptable. He claims that opposition to these medical interventions is based either on an excessively static understanding of human persons and of natural law or else on a religiously based appeal to the "mystery" of marriage and procreation as willed and intended by God, an appeal that cannot stand up under critical scrutiny. He flatly asserts that "no answer appears to be forthcoming" to the question "why it is that only loving marital intercourse may be the context and cause of human procreation" (p. 16). Although he expresses some grave concerns over the use of donor sperm and/or ova for either artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization, he in no way shuts the door to the possible moral rightness of such procedures. In addition, he sees no reason why married couples may not freeze and store not only sperm and ova but also embryos brought into being for future implantation and gestation. With respect to contraception, he acknowledges that the Church still claims that this is an intrinsically disordered activity, but he thinks that this position, one based primarily on a "frustrated faculty" type of argument (cf. p. 24 ff), has little probative value and that it is quite reasonable for married couples to choose contraceptive and sterilizing means if there are serious reasons for avoiding pregnancies.

In his chapter on the beginnings of human life Mahoney devotes considerable attention to an analysis of the 1974 Vatican Declaration of Abortion, a Declaration that acknowledged the freedom of Catholics and others to speculate on the precise moment when a new human person comes into being while insisting that, for practical purposes, one must regard human life from conception onwards with the utmost respect. Mahoney's own position is that it is highly unlikely that there is in being a human person from the time of conception-fertilization. He believes that this position is supported both by scientific evidence and by philosophical reasoning. The scientific evidence he finds most pertinent is that dealing with twinning and recombination, both of which are possible prior to cell differentiation. The philosophical argument he finds most supportive of his position is that developed by Joseph Donceel in his celebrated article on delayed hominization, in which Donceel attempted to show that the Thomsitic theory of successive ensoulments in prenatal life is correct. As a result of his position on the beginning of human life, Mahoney concludes that abortion prior to cell differenti-

## Book Reviews

ation can hardly be regarded as homicide. While granting that the being destroyed by abortion at this stage has the "promise" of personal life, he maintains that various serious reasons can be advanced to justify abortion at this time.

In his chapter on human experimentation Mahoney, developing his ideas about the beginning of human life, argues that non-therapeutic experiments on early embryos, which he designates as "human biological nodes" (p. 98), can properly be carried out. And obviously his views on the beginning of human life are relevant to his claim, noted previously, that it is morally proper to freeze and store early embryos.

These are some of the major claims made by Mahoney in his work. My irritation over the work arose not so much because he took these positions — he is hardly original in doing so — but rather because of the onesidedness of his presentation. In discussing contraception, for instance, he merely repeats the well-worn arguments that have been stated and restated and restated over and over again since the debates of the mid 1960s. Not once in his discussion of contraception does he even indicate that the type of reasoning he employs has been subjected to criticism — devastating in my judgment — by numerous authors, including John Finnis and Elizabeth Anscombe of England, Germain G. Grisez, Joseph Boyle, John Kippley and many others in the United States, and not least, Karol Wojtyla, formerly of Cracow and presently reigning as Pope John Paul II. Not once, in his discussion of contraception, does he ever come to terms with the strong moral arguments developed by these writers, nor does he ever give consideration to the value of periodic abstinence and of natural family planning methods.

Similarly, in discussing artificial insemination by the husband and in vitro fertilization he totally ignores the very weighty arguments against these procedures developed by such writers as John Finnis, Paul Ramsey, Leon Kass and others. He facetiously asserts, as noted earlier, that "no answer appears to be forthcoming" to the question "why it is that only loving marital intercourse may be the context of human procreation." Despite this assertion, I submit that some weighty answers have *already been* advanced, and that Mahoney simply chooses to ignore them in his discussion of the subject.

Similarly, in his long discussion of the beginnings of human life, he builds on the same evidence (twinning and recombination) and philosophical argument (Donceel) that numerous writers of the same persuasion have advanced in the past decade. But he completely fails to take into account the substantive answers that have been made both to the significance of this evi-

dence and to the argument of Donceel, answers set forth by such writers as Germain G. Grisez, Benedict Ashley, Francis Wade, Thomas Hilgers, Baruch Brody, and many others.

In sum, Mahoney provides no new arguments for the positions he adopts. His comments on contraception are simply warmed over comments of Häring, Curran, et al., tirelessly asserting that the teaching of the Church is rooted in a static, impersonal understanding of the natural law. Since this claim has been so devastatingly rebutted by the authors cited previously, it is incredible that Mahoney can think that repetition of the same stale arguments is sufficient to establish his position. Likewise, his arguments to justify in vitro fertilization and husband artificial insemination merely repeat the types of arguments advanced for the former by McCormick and others and the line of reasoning adopted by Häring, Curran and others for the latter, without even attempting to take into account the counter-arguments advanced by the writers already noted. And the same is true for his discussion of the beginning of human life.

Although many of the positions taken by Mahoney are clearly contrary to the teaching of the Church (e.g., his views on in vitro fertilization, contraception, and the respect to be given human life from its conception), the work nonetheless carries an imprimatur. But, as we have learned from experience (e.g., the imprimatur given to Philip Keane's *Sexual Morality* and subsequently removed at the demand of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith), imprimaturs are no longer sure guides to the conformity of a book's teaching to that of the Church.

While the book is, as already noted, well written and, on the surface, sophisticated and urbane, I find it seriously deficient. Mahoney's failure to consider strong counter-arguments to the positions he advances might lead readers to conclude that there are no strong arguments to be made. This conclusion is definitely false, and in my opinion it is simply not scholarly for Catholic authors like Mahoney to write as though these counter arguments do not exist. He, and others like him, have the responsibility, if they wish to hold the views they do, to face their critics head on and answer their arguments. Mahoney, by failing to do so, does a disservice to scholarship and to his readers, at least in my judgment. His failure to do so surely makes his own efforts lose their appeal to credibility.

William E. May  
The Catholic University of America

## Book Review

George A. Kelly, *The Church's Problems with Biblical Critics*, (Franciscan Herald Press, 1985, \$2.50. Varied discounts for multiple orders.)

Msgr. Kelly updates his *New Biblical Theorists* (Servant Publications, 1983) with a review of new criticisms made of theologians who rely exclusively on the historical method for reading the bible. He uses especially the latest critiques by Rene Laurentin, Cardinal Ratzinger, and Francis Dreyfus.

*The Church's Problem with Biblical Critics* agrees with the assessment made by Loyola University's Thomas Sheehan that the root cause of the most profound present-day Catholic difficulties is to be found, not in American secularism, not in the sexual revolution, not in the revolt of religious women, but in the doubts raised by biblical scholars whether Jesus Christ ever established or intended to establish a Church at all. After comparing Sheehan's views with those of Fr. Rene Laurentin, Fr. Raymond E. Brown and Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the booklet takes up the strange efforts of partisans of the historical school to stifle critical examination of their hypotheses.

When certain radical suggestions are made in studies of the Church and its faith, scholars devoted to Catholic teaching must ask pressing questions of critics. But those fair and necessary questions of competent scholars are often dismissed out of hand. Scholars who do not bow to the pretended consensus are dismissed as "fundamentalists." Some radical biblicists even pretend that all sensible people are on their side. Falsely they say not only that the Holy See accepts use of historical methods (which it does, as one of a number of needed tools but they say or imply [falsely] that there is magisterial support for their radical conclusions which are reached without regard to other methods and resources upon which the Church has always drawn).

Fr. Brown's one term membership on the Pontifical Biblical Commission does not "prove" that all of

Brown's views are acceptable to magisterium, when those who work with Rome know that membership on a Vatican Commission is an invitation for in-put, not an endorsement of a person or all of his positions. Many members of the Pontifical Birth Control Commission, for example, were contraceptionists prior to their selection.

The final section of Kelly's analysis summarizes magisterium's complaints about the undermining of Catholic beliefs and takes up charges of fundamentalism. He concludes with a discussion of the questions: "Where do Catholics go from here?"

Msgr. Kelly counters Brown's view of the Virginal Conception. Fr. Brown treats the Church like a missing person. He has her birth record (Mt. and Lk.), a family album (the gospels) and some letters from relatives (the Epistles) as his only scientific sources, so he concludes from these "baby records" that the virginal conception of Jesus lacks scientifically controllable biblical evidence. But in this case the person (i.e. the Church) is not missing. The Church created Scripture and her assistance is always essential in reading Scripture. She is very much alive and well and, drawing on all the intelligent sources of faith, she assures us that Mary most certainly was a virgin. There is nothing more scientific for a believer than the infallible teaching of the Church, though the intelligent methods leading to faith differ from the precious but abstract tools of science.

Historico-critics still insist we cannot use Church teaching to settle important biblical questions, e.g. Christ's institution of the priesthood. But the living Church says differently. These are not only biblical questions. The divine origin of the priesthood and its nature is a matter of faith not to be abandoned to shifting secular methodologies.

This booklet will help the reader to understand why Rome is legitimately concerned about the effect of historical exegesis on the credibility of the Church.

—Ronald Lawler, OFM Cap.

## Items of Interest

Germain Grisez will have an article in the June 1985 issue of the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* entitled: "Public Funding of Abortion: A Reply to Richard A. McCormick." In the December 1984 issue of TS, McCormick concluded: "To rule out dissent on a matter like medical funding for abortion on the grounds that the wrongful character of funding is but an easy specification of an infallibly proposed teaching will not survive theological analysis."

- The International Academy of Philosophy, which has received the endorsement of Pope John Paul II, is soliciting contributions. The IAP is engaged in training intellectual leaders in Christian philosophy. The program of studies included three years of course work and a dissertation. The IAP hopes to establish endowed Chairs in honor of John Paul II and Dietrich Von Hildebrand. It publishes the journal *Aletheia*. For further information write Dr. Joseph Seifert, 403 S. Britain, Irving, Texas 75060. Donations are tax deductible.

## American Catholics and the American Economy: Some Disputed Issues Regarding Affluence and Misery

[Editors Note: Professor Dechert's review of the Bishops' economic pastoral is the result of consultation with various social scientist members. The views expressed here are their considered judgments.]

### Introduction

The first part of November, 1984, saw the release of two documents attempting to delineate the relation between Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy. A draft Pastoral letter on Catholic Teaching and the U.S. Economy had been in preparation since July 1981 when an *Ad Hoc* Committee, created by the bishops in 1980, convened to begin the process of discussion and consultation. Although testimony and suggestions were taken from some 125 persons representing a broad spectrum of viewpoints, the text itself is principally the product of USCC/NCCB staff (Fr. J. Bryan Hehir, Ronald T. Krietemeyer, Fr. William M. Lewers and Thomas Quigley), their Consultants (Fr. David Hollenback S.J., Msgr. George Higgins, Fr. John Donahue S., J.), reviewed and formally presented on 11 Nov. 1984 by Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland and the other members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee (Archbishop Donnellan of Atlanta, Bishop Speltz of St. Cloud, Bishop Weigand of Salt Lake City, Auxiliary Bishop Rosazza of Hartford).

By early 1984 the discussion and analysis, the already apparent foci of concern and orientations of the *Ad Hoc* Committee and its staff had begun to create concern. There was speculation in some parts of the American Catholic community that the Draft Letter would be a critique of the U.S. economy reflecting a statist, activist, social welfare orientation characteristic of the academic and intellectual Establishment's ideological positions; a belief in the efficacy of social planning, policies of egalitarian redistribution and an assistential society managed by university trained public servants. Because of this concern a self-appointed Lay Commission on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy was set up under the auspices of the non-profit American Catholic Committee in March 1984. Consisting of 29 prominent Catholic laymen, chaired by William E. Simon and Michael Novak, the Lay Commission took testimony from some 60 witnesses and prepared *Toward the Future-Catholic Social Thought and the U.S. Economy*, subtitled *A Lay Letter*. It was released immediately after the national election on November 6, 1984, five days before the *Ad Hoc* Committee's Draft Letter. This was done with the knowledge and assent of the *Ad Hoc* Committee which, however, took special pains to distance itself from the Lay Commission when the Bishops' Draft Letter was released at a press conference in Washington, D.C., November 11, 1984, on the occasion of the American Bishops's annual meeting.

This essay will concern itself with the Bishops' Draft Letter; an analysis and critique based upon the policy sciences as well as traditional Catholic social doctrine with its emphasis on personalism, the community, the principle of subsidiarity and the desirability of a widespread distribution of property as a basis of personal and familial freedom, productivity and creative participation in the order of Providence. The Lay Commission's Letter will be mentioned only peripherally, though in many respects the statements are complementary.

When the American Bishops are asked to approve a formal statement on the U.S. Economy in the Fall of 1985 it may be hoped that the constructive aspects of both statements will be incorporated while the individualist (Liberal-Conservative) vs. collectivist divergence characterizing European and Anglo-American politics will be transcended in the uniquely Christian holistic vision of man and society expressed in the Conclusion of the Bishops' Draft Letter. (pp. 320-333).<sup>1</sup>

The document itself is long, nuanced and far more complex than may have been suggested by initial press comments ranging from the panegyrics of *Commonweal* and *Newsweek* ("*God as Social Democrat*," 19 November, 1984) to the negative editorial reaction of the *Wall Street Journal* and George F. Will's column headed "*The Vanity of the Bishops*." (*Washington Post*, 15 Nov. 84. p. A23).

More thoughtful commentaries can be expected from a variety of sources in the U.S. and abroad as the senior editors of such business oriented reviews as *Fortune* and *Nations Business* and of cultural and religious journals analyze the Draft Letter in depth. From my own perspective this draft appears, by and large, to reflect the long standing USCC/NCCB approach toward national legislation and state intervention as the principal route to a more peaceful, just and equitable America. This orientation is based on the Catholic immigrant experience of an exploitative WASP political/economic/cultural elite (many of whose core values have been internalized by American churchmen, e.g. "Do something! Do good - Now!"), the prescient plea for social reform in the National Catholic War Council "Program of Social Reconstruction" (12 Feb. 1919), the cooptation of the American Catholic community by the New Deal, electorally in its massive sweep of the working class and lower middle class "ethnics," intellectually in the widespread recognition of John A. Ryan, "Rt. Reverend New Dealer", as the representative American Catholic Social Thinker. The competing effort to fuse Catholic social thought and the midwest populist tradition was shown to be ineffective in the abortive Lemke campaign of 1936 and finally discredited in the loose "movement" headed by Fr. Coughlin.

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I can empathise with the American Bishops (and their advisers) for among my childhood memories are bread lines in Philadelphia, visions of desperate families evicted by foreclosure, furniture on the sidewalk, masses of men before closed factory gates, family savings wiped out by bank failure. These soul-searing memories are akin to the memories of bishops in my age cohort, certainly of Archbishop Weakland, Chairman of the drafting committee - except that his father died, leaving a widow and half-a-dozen children. He'll never forget the relief packages or those awful corduroys or the condescension of the well-off or the sneers of the kids at school. Welfare cheats! you can bet his mom didn't tell the relief people she was supplementing their handouts with some clerical work or that her son was being paid for mowing the church lawn. It is hardly surprising that the Draft Letter suggests U.S. government sponsored "relief and public works programs;" from 1932 through 1943 as holding "lessons for the present." (171)

The Draft Letter is finding a sympathetic reception among many American bishops. I suspect it will find a sympathetic reception in Europe, and especially in Rome. It tends to confirm the stereotypical view of America promoted by the American television series now seen around the world; a consumer society, hedonistic, amiable enough but corrupt to the core, uncaring - in ultimate analysis hard and self centered. The media in the U.S. and Europe represent the domestic policies of Ronald Reagan as selfish, bourgeois, lacking compassion - the foreign policy as belligerent crudely self-interested and intransigent. The fact that even American Catholics had (culminating a massive, long term swing begun in 1952 away from the national Democratic Party) voted in the majority for Reagan might suggest their corruption by affluence and their urgent need for the Bishop's moral guidance.

### Content of the Draft Letter

In the course of the press conference on 11 Nov. 84 at which the Draft Letter was released Archbishop Weakland pointed out that paragraphs 86-89 lie at the heart of the document. Basically these affirm:

1. "all persons do have rights in the economic sphere"
2. society must "ensure that no one among us is hungry, homeless, unemployed... denied what is necessary to live with dignity."
3. pluralism regarding appropriate "economic policies and institutional arrangements" to assure economic rights.
4. "active participation in economic life for all"
5. an "experiment in economic democracy: the creation of an order that guarantees the minimum conditions of human dignity in the economic sphere for every person."

Concretely the draft letter then suggests the following policies and institutions to characterize a morally superior economic order in America: (90-105)

- a. establish minimum levels of economic and political (and cultural) participation by all.<sup>2</sup>
- b. persons must be enabled so as to be active and productive (obligation and right to contribute to the life of society).
- c. economic activity involves not only the production of goods and services but the whole of social and environmental interactions and impacts.
- d. distributive justice must consider men's basic moral equality; diverse needs, effort, sacrifice and risk; skill; abundance and scarcity; overall human welfare.<sup>3</sup>
- e. "a strong presumption against inequality of income and wealth as long as there are poor, hungry, and homeless" unless "unequal distribution stimulates pro-

ductivity in a way that truly benefits the poor." "the level of inequality in income and wealth in our society and... on the world scale today must be judged morally unacceptable."

f. unequal distribution of economic goods can never be justified on the basis of race, sex or any other arbitrary standard.\*\*

g. Past discrimination justifies "positive steps to overcome the legacy of injustice." (Affirmative action).

h. "The fulfillment of the basic needs of the poor is of the highest priority." A "preferential option for the poor" gives precedence to meeting human needs over luxury goods or "profits that do not ultimately benefit the common good."

e. Investment should prioritize meeting "human needs and increasing participation" while recognizing the need for "increasing productivity." Economic choices should have special regard for the poor, the rights of workers, preserving the environment, social needs over military purposes.

There follow a series of institutional applications of these principles to (a) Labor (§ 109-114), (b) Business (§ 115-122), (c) Citizens and Government (§ 123-129), (d) Transnational and International Economic Actors (§ 130-137), (e) Consumers (§ 138-142), (f) The Church (§ 143-150): and policy applications to issues of (g) Employment (§ 158-185), (h) Poverty (§ 187-240), Food and Agriculture (not yet published), (j) Reshaping the American Economy (§ 241-269), (k) U.S. and the World Economy (§ 270-319).

Much of this reiterates and applies the tradition of papal social pronouncements from Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* to John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens*. Among such guiding principles are these:

- (a) Work, broadly construed, is an obligation, to be com-



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compensated in terms of criteria of justice (including consideration of family responsibilities) not merely market criteria. Social Justice requires provision for the marginal and incompetent, adequate provisions for health and safety, the right to organize.

(b) Investors (public/private) and managers play a critical social role but wealth and economic power should not be overly concentrated. Property is a stewardship, accountable to society. Private ownership should be widely distributed and protected as a source of "creativity and initiative" but "public involvement in the planning or ownership of certain sectors" is entirely acceptable.

(c) All have an obligation of charitable assistance, "voluntary action to overcome the wounds of injustice" and a "responsibility to remove the causes of this injustice... through government and the political process." Government is responsible for infrastructure ("communication and transport"), generating needed employment, restructuring social service delivery, eliminating discrimination and its effects, evaluating and mollifying the effects abroad of U.S. economic choices.

(d) "There is something wrong with the organization of work and employment" internationally. There is need for transnational development and "global solidarity" to improve the "quality of interdependence" under some effective international authority, the lack of which is a "structural defect" in the organization of the human community.

(e) Justice requires the satisfaction of "basic human needs" and is aligned with the Christian faith in putting limits on what we consume and how we view material goods. To be deplored are communications producing false needs, the tendency to consume rather than "save available resources" or to "save and invest in both the private and public sectors of our economy."

(f) The Church as employer and investor must give witness to justice; recognize rights to collective bargaining and make adequate provision for the livelihood and social security of its functionaries, lay, clerical and religious, in the manner "customary in their region."

(g) High priority should be given to the provision of "new jobs with adequate pay and decent working conditions," a family income "sufficient to enable one of the parents to spend time at home," and "an increased number of good jobs." (italics added) Greater investment, education and training, eliminating discrimination, massive direct and indirect public job creation, local and national job placement services are suggested as the solution to U.S. unemployment.

(h) Poverty is largely based on "structures" that "exclude non-whites from the mainstream."<sup>5</sup> The effects on income of broken marriages, race and sex discrimination

and marginalization cannot adequately be met by "private voluntary action," but by "humane public policy" "carried out through the *government*." (italics added). Policy recommendations include job creation and stimulated economic growth, "full and *equal*" (italics added) employment for women and minorities, "progressive taxation, foster self-help programs, higher quality education, child care, welfare reform and national equalization, "participation" by the poor and greater public trust in the honesty and good will of the recipients of public welfare.

(j) Reform of the American economy should look toward greater social solidarity, a sense of community, "new partnership between workers and managers," reduction of adversarial relations, economic participation through stock ownership and cooperative or worker-owned enterprises, a balance between governmental and private initiative with "provision for overall planning" and policy coordination, more universal participation in forming national economic policies, recognition of elected officials as the final decision-makers aided by consultative/technical bodies representative of labor, management and government.

(k) Internationally, U.S. policy should recognize that national actors are complemented by transnational businesses and associative groups and by multilateral economic institutions. Genuine interdependence should be encouraged "for the benefit of everyone," but especially the disadvantaged. Dialogue is needed, looking toward "restructuring existing patterns of economic relations" in the interests of equity and to "meet the basic human needs of the poor people of the South." Such needs should not be subordinate to U.S. national security interests. Rather the U.S. should support reform of the International Economic Order and prefer multilateral over bilateral programs of economic assistance. Overseas debt structures might well be the subject of renegotiation, even partial remission, and America's good will should be manifested by acceptance of the Law of the Seas Treaty, Genocide Convention, Covenant on Human Rights, etc. "Americans are a generous compassionate people. Our policies should reflect our best instincts; currently they do not." (§ 294). Policies should be promoted to cushion the negative domestic impacts of freer trade while accepting trade dislocations in the interests of poorer countries. Overseas private U.S. investment requires regulation in the interest of host countries. Affirmative action is needed in a "campaign for economic democracy and justice" at home and abroad; policies to "empower people," "give them a sense of their own worth," "improve the quality of their lives," and equitably share the benefits of economic growth. (§ 319).

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### Questiones Disputandae

The Draft Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy says a number of nice things about the U.S. economy; it's hard to fault the success of America in providing, overall, a high standard of living including widespread home ownership, high educational levels, a relatively sound currency, an extraordinarily large and productive working population. But the praise is muted.

"The U.S. economy has been immensely successful in providing for the material needs and in raising the living standards of its citizens."

- but "the country has recently gone through a severe recession," high unemployment, "serious doubts about the future." Middling farmers, workers in heavy industries, small proprietors, the poor and minorities "are often tempted to despair." (§ 8). These problems are rendered "more intractable" by the superpowers' "rivalry and mutual fear" and lesser nations' rivalries that divert resources from the satisfaction of human needs. (§ 11-12).

"In its comparatively short history the United States has made impressive strides in the effort to provide material necessities, employment, health care, education, and social services for its people." - but "there have been failures, some of them massive and ugly." Hunger, homelessness, unemployment, inadequately funded education, racial discrimination, unequal opportunity, low wages, insufficient child care services, environmental blight and decay, a scarcity of "real space for leisure, contemplation and prayer" are mentioned. (§ 81). "Forms of individual and group selfishness in the nation... undermine social solidarity..." (§ 85).

"... while economic freedom, personal initiative, and the free market are deservedly esteemed in our society, we have increasingly come to recognize the inescapably social and political nature of the economy." (§ 256).

The Bishops, as doctrinal and moral leaders of the American Catholic community, can have a substantial impact on policy and on the nation's future to the extent that they present realistic views of the nature of our social reality and can cogently appeal to the cumulative wisdom of the church to evaluate and recommend in a manner that forms the conscience and consciousness of those who make or influence public decision-making. There are already indications that many Americans, Catholic and non-Catholic, do not find the Draft Letter sufficiently realistic or comprehensive and are concerned that a major religious tradition is being instrumentalized in support of partisan ideological positions - dividing and confusing the faithful, in the ultimate

analysis reducing the moral authority of American Church.

There has been considerable self-congratulation on the "open" process in which the content of the letter (like the Bishops' 1983 statement on nuclear weapons) is being worked out through a process of public review and discussion. That the Draft Letter was prepared by the NCCB/USCC staff, released at a much heralded press conference by five bishops at the beginning of the American bishops annual meeting, followed by press reports of its subsequent enthusiastic reception by the bishops assembled (Washington Post, 15 Nov. 1984, A 9) and its "welcome" by President Reagan (Washington Post, 14 Nov. 1984, A 15), already gives it quasi-official status. Subsequent revisions and modifications will not erase these first impressions. For forty years the Association for Social Economics (formerly the Catholic Economics Association) has dealt with the American economy from a Catholic perspective; this cumulative fund of analysis has not been considered in the Draft Letter. A revised text for final episcopal approval will be hammered out over the next few months in a review process substantially directed by those who prepared the initial Draft.

The *Ad Hoc* Committee did not release the Draft Letter until after the 1984 elections, consciously trying to stay above the fray of partisan politics while enunciating and applying perennial principles. Yet many, Democrats and Republicans, have seen the document as highly ideological, characterized by the mindset that produced McGovernite "new politics" and has come to characterize a Democratic Party reflecting the "new class" interests and ethical concerns so well expressed by Mario Cuomo during the Democratic Convention; the image of a harsh uncaring society consisting of *haute bourgeoisie* and *lumpenproletariat*, having virtually no middle class, to be replaced by a caring community - "Mutuality. The sharing of benefits and burdens for the good of all." (Mario Cuomo, quoted by Joshua Muravchik, "*Why the Democrats Lost*," Commentary, Jan. 1985). "As Walter Mondale once put it, the United States 'is not as compassionate, as understanding, as sensitive as we think we are. Our priorities are screwy; our priorities are pretty close to being obscene.'" (*ibid.*).

Like the McGovern wing of the Democratic Party, the Draft Letter emphasizes equality:

"... this is a country marked by glaring disparities of wealth and income... gross inequalities are morally unjustifiable... the distribution of income and wealth in the United States is so inequitable that it violates this minimum standard of distributive justice." (§ 202). Civil and human rights enforced with the full power of a strong central government. (§ 209). Extensive redis-

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tribution through taxation and other mechanisms - with supplemental self-help and private efforts to aid "the marginalized." Not a few critics find unrealistic and, on the basis of experience, counterproductive, recommendations for universal employment in jobs that people want and like, where they want to work, at a compensation they find acceptable - if necessary at jobs provided by government; and for welfare payments for the unemployed, old, ill and incompetent, young, victims of broken families, and others living on the margins of society, provided by the public treasury, equal throughout the nation, without controls that might suggest distrust and without any obligation to work.

Forty years of American experience in emergency relief and developmental assistance abroad might suggest that provision from the abundance of the American economy and society for the wants and needs of the poor abroad, especially in the developing nations, without impinging on national sovereignties, human and civil rights, may require more than good will. Is it entirely fair to ascribe our failures to institutionalized moral defects? Do we really know how to accomplish these good results?

... the sins of indifference and greed continue to block efforts to secure the minimum economic rights of all persons. This sinfulness not only distorts the hearts of individuals, it has also become imbedded in certain of the economic institutions and cultural presuppositions of our society. (§ 85).

The Draft Letter deals with issues of poverty and emargination but largely ignores or denies any contributing personal responsibility by the victims for these results of structures deemed unjust. Ignored are Daniel Patrick Moynihan's analysis of the Negro family and prevision of the destructive effects of Aid to Families with Dependent Children legislation done in the early 1960s; the destructive and demoralizing results of the War on Poverty whose principal effect has been to institutionalize and expand poverty. (See Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: America Social Policy, 1950-1980*). The bishops seem to accept, for example, the inevitability of American Negro illegitimacy rising from 17% of those born in 1950 to 48% of those born in 1980. And what of the effects on society and the economy and on public morals and morale of divorce and separation, remarriage and the offspring of earlier marriages sharing the home, casual coupling outside marriage and resulting "single parent families." Why has the opportunity to show the disastrous economic and social effects of departures from traditional personal ethical norms been ignored, while castigating the structural poverty (to use the American socialist, Michael Harrington's term) it has

helped produce? Are many of the institutional recommendations really feasible and compatible; no discrimination by sex, race or civil status, equal pay for equal work, a paternal income sufficient to permit wives to remain at home with their children, a job compensation to unmarried mothers sufficient to make an economically viable family unit? What Solomonic wisdom could institutionalize such requirements - even in a command economy. Incidentally do unmarried fathers have responsibilities? And how do the bishops suggest identifying and compelling support payments from such fathers without violating their civil rights? A majority of mothers of minor children now work outside the home with significant effects not only on family income but on family care, moral and cultural formation of the young, and the transmission of parental values.

The Bishops' assumption that fraud and waste is negligible in large scale public welfare programs is simply not borne out by experience. Estimates of the ineligible in the welfare case load in New York City in the early 1970s ranged from 3% to 40%. (Charles R. Morris, *The Cost of Good Intentions: New York City and the Liberal Experiment, 1960-1975*, pp. 149-150) "The entire battalion of city agencies... were to be part of a massive effort at uplift, a final breaking-through of the barriers of oppression and discrimination that prolonged the abject misery of Blacks and Hispanics... It was a splendid vision, but one that was seriously flawed and... positively damaging." (*ibid.* p. 204) The American experience of the past thirty years suggests that problems of emargination and human misery cannot be dealt with effectively wholesale but only by individuals, small groups and communities at the local level as little constrained by legalism and bureaucracy as possible - and often by strategies of indirect approach. Yet in the Draft Letter, "We do not accept the view that private agencies such as the Church are the primary agents of care... All citizens bear this responsibility and it should be carried out through their government." (§ 150).

By arguing in this way the Bishops' Draft Letter not only appears to depart from a tradition emphasizing the role of mediating groups but may be embarking on a course potentially perilous to the resource base and capital plant of the American Church, for it later suggests that public welfare payments are to be equated with the "benefits" the tax code grants "to property owners in the form of interest and real estate tax deductions from the federal income tax." (§224). It is but a short step to the position that tax deductions for charity and the exemption of Church properties used for worship, education and other social services are an equivalent "benefit" in favor of religion, violating the principle of separation of Church and State. The notion that tax re-

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lief is the equivalent of a public disbursement implicitly ascribes to the state a discretionary right to the whole national product. What is not taken by the state is a gift of the state and public encouragement through tax code provisions of certain types of behavior, including home ownership or investment (or charitable contributions) may legitimately be construed as an injustice, depriving the poor of more nearly equal shares.

Although the Draft Letter deals at great length with issues of poverty, it accepts uncritically a statistical definition of poverty originated in 1964 at the Social Security Administration. It is based solely on money income and does not reflect non-cash benefits such as food stamps, medicaid, and public housing. (*Stat. Abstracts of U.S.* 82-83, p. 417). By implication the "poor," to whose aid we are scripturally exhorted, become identified with those below a governmentally defined "poverty line" that approximates \$10,000 for a family of four in the U.S. This statistical artifact takes no account of location (e.g. Kentucky mountain vs. center city Washington) or variant consumption patterns. It is tied to a basket of expenses and consumer items that may have little relation to the actual patterns of expenditure of a given poor person or family - or to their physical or psychic needs. By comparison with most persons in the world America's poor are, in financial terms, very well off indeed.

A footnote placed at the end of the Letter states: "Not incorporated in the estimates are the value of durable goods, automobiles, and the value of small businesses and private practices. The value of homes and the liability of home mortgages are also excluded." Yet for many, if not most working class and lower middle class Americans, net worth consists chiefly of their homes (including second "vacation homes" and/or rental properties), consumer durables and motor vehicles.

In *Statistical Abstracts of the United States 1982-1983*, we find Fixed Reproducible Tangible Wealth (non-residential)\$2 trillion, Residential Structures 1.1, Consumer Durables .6 (1972 dollars). Farmers in the U.S., though largely yeomen proprietors, are disproportionately rich because our basic debt (27%) for some 2.48 million units encompassing 1.03 billion acres. These kulaks certainly skew the wealth distribution curve.

The Draft Letter quotes Pope John XXIII approvingly: "modify economic and social life so that the way is made easier for widespread possession of such things as durable goods, homes, gardens, tools requisite for artisan enterprises and family type farm, investments in enterprises of medium and large size." (§ 120) What country has done this more successfully than the U.S.? As A.A. Berle has pointed out in *Power without Property* most middle-Americans have a substantial mediated

"ownership" of the national wealth in the form of claims on the pension funds that invest in medium and large size enterprises. Some part of such entitlement programs as Social Security may be construed as return on compulsory investment in an annuity.

While deploring the concentration of personal wealth, the Draft Letter fails to note a secular trend toward greater equality; the top one percent held 36.3% of the national wealth in 1929, it held 20.7% in 1972. To those of us in the Distributist tradition who value personal freedom and small enterprise of the type suggested in the foregoing reference to Pope John XXIII a secular trend ignored by the Draft Letter is significant and disturbing; in both 1950 and 1981 about 81% of national income was in the form of compensation, but employees share rose from 65.2% to 75.1%, while proprietors' dropped from 16.3% to 5.3%. The structure of America's vast middle class is changing; more are incardinated into corporate bodies.

Both the data selected as relevant and the analysis in the Draft Letter suggest an egalitarian, yet meritocratic bias. The "New Class" is an employee class, upwardly mobile, having bureaucratic and communications skills, well-educated - big earners, big spenders whose notion of democratic fairness are linked less to productive enterprise and more to politics, playing with the conventional rules of the economic and social game. "Who does what to whom—" - to paraphrase the opening lines of the Draft Letter.

Unfortunately the Draft Letter does not discuss the morality of the inflationary process roaring out of control less than a decade ago, or the likelihood that inflation domestically and debt repudiation abroad may well prove to be the mechanisms for egalitarian redistribution at home and consolidation of massive irreversible transfers of wealth from the wealthy North to the "developing" world. Alas it is arguable that inflation with its premium on a *carpe diem* mentality is conducive to equality in misery and the sad consequences once experienced in Germany. It is equally arguable that the massive transfers of wealth from North to South that have already occurred have contributed to famine in Africa, inflation in Latin America, and consolidation of tyrannical regimes on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Ideas embodied in policies and institutions have consequences; the webs of mutual causality, influences and motivation are manifold and often perverse in operation - "counterintuitive" has been a term much used by social science modelers of late.

It might appear to many that a discussion of the American economy can hardly ignore issues related to taxation, the public credit, national indebtedness, the public budget and monetary policy. Closely tied to these

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are problems linked to financial markets and the banking system; availability of venture capital, interest rates (with their impact on home ownership and the profitability of agriculture), bank failures, and the general sense of national well-being or malaise.

There are many moral issues inherent in the working of an innovative, rapidly changing modern economy characterized by unprecedented shifts in supply and demand schedules, new products, production technologies that are obsolete long before the capital plant is amortized. Questions of "just price" and "usury" are far from resolved in this modern context. In a world of unlimited demands on limited resources can an "interest group democracy" demonstrate the political wisdom and moral balance needed to maintain a creative dynamism while preserving Christian moral values and traditional institutions. Where and when and with what effect do modern information technologies touch upon human dignity and religious values when applied to financial administration, banking, insurance, health delivery and education (as economic activities), tax collection, entitlements and welfare, law enforcement and the citizens' security in person and goods, on the national security presumably purchased with defense expenditures or advanced through diplomatic, economic, informational or politico/military activities abroad. Are there moral limits on the use of such data? On "system integration" in the interests of welfare? At what level of paternalistic intervention by government, banks, unions, or insurance companies are the economic, social and moral costs of well-meaning benevolence too great?

One great advantage of "doing good" at the lowest possible level of social integration is that it tends to reduce the negative consequences ("dysfunctionalities") or at least make them more manageable. "Freeing the slaves" - a truly noble goal - can bring a civil war, Reconstruction, KKK, etc., etc., etc. Despite the Draft Letter's allegations to the contrary a substantial body of data and analysis, long experience, popular conviction and an increasingly influential body of elite opinion is convinced that Great Society type programs have contributed to some of America's most pressing social and economic problems. Does not the personalism, voluntarism and emphasis on vital communities found in the Church's tradition offer an alternative rather than a mere supplement to the activity of an omniscient state?

### Conclusion Toward a Modified Agenda of Concern

In perusing the Bishops' Draft Pastoral, I, for one, often have the impression of being caught in some sort of time warp, a return to my depression childhood - with

its deprivations, but also its (relative) innocence and simplicity; safe streets and inviolability of home and person, effective government and public transportation that worked, the verities of God and country. But in dealing with the American economy after WWII, and especially since the mid-60's one sees a new thrust a new *elan*, not precisely consonant with traditional Catholic moral or cultural orientations, but presaging a future freedom in abundance that can be and is being used for both creative and destructive purposes. *In Our Time* Tom Wolfe expresses this economic and cultural novelty in these terms.

The hedonism of the 1970s derives, in my opinion, from a development so stupendous, so long in the making, and so obvious that... it is barely noticed any longer. Namely, the boom of the booms. Wartime spending... in the early 1940s brought the Depression to an end and touched off a boom... The boom pumped money into every class level of the population on a scale such as history has never known. Truck dispatchers, duplicator machine repairmen, bobbin cleaners, policemen, firemen, and garbage men were making so much money - \$15,000 to \$20,000 (and more) per year - ... it was impossible to use the word "proletarian" any longer with a straight face.

By the late 1970s these new masses began appearing also in France, West Germany, Switzerland, England, Norway, Sweden, Japan and, to a lesser extent, Italy - which is to say, throughout the capitalist world. ... It had become common for skilled workers to make as much as \$20,000 a year, bringing them up even, in income, with middle-level executives and top corporate salesmen. In early 1979 the average hourly wage for workers in manufacturing plants was \$6.49 in the United States, the same in West Germany, \$7.29 in Norway, and \$8.46 in Switzerland. Inflation was becoming a threat, but the European workers' second homes, sports cars, vacations in Venice, and calfskin trench coats were real.

The old utopian socialists of the nineteenth century - the Saint-Simons, the Owens, the Fouriers - lived for the day when industrial workers would command the likes of \$6.49 or more per hour. They foresaw a day when industrialization (Saint-Simon coined the work) would give the common man the things he needed in order to realize his potential as an intelligent being: surplus (discretionary) income, political

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freedom, free time (leisure), and freedom from grinding drudgery. They never dreamed that their blissful utopia would be achieved not under socialism but as the result of a hard-charging, go-getter business boom. To heighten the irony, it was in the 1970s that socialism was dealt a blow from which it is never likely to recover. Starting with the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* in 1973, the repressive nature of socialism as a monolithic system of government became too obvious to ignore any longer. By the 1970s there was no possible ideological detour around concentration camps, and under genuine socialism the concentration camps were found again and again - in the Soviet Union, in Cambodia, in Cuba, in the new united Vietnam. By 1979 Marxism was finished as a spiritual force, although the ideologues lingered on. In objective terms, then, the time was ripe for... the Rise of the West. In subjective terms, however, the story was different. There was no moral force, no iron in the soul, not even a reigning philosophy, to give spiritual strength to the good times being had by all.

Solzhenitsyn, for his part, was not enchanted with American life, once he settled into his rural redoubt in Vermont. In his famous Harvard commencement speech of June 1978, he characterized the American way as soft, materialistic, morally impoverished. "The human soul," he said, "longs for things higher, warmer, and purer than those offered by today's mass living habits, introduced by the revolting invasion of publicity, by TV stupor, and by intolerable music... Two hundred or even fifty years ago, it would have seemed quite impossible, in America, that an individual could be granted boundless freedom simply for the satisfaction of his instincts or whims." What Solzhenitsyn was looking at, utterly stupefied, was the first era of: every man an aristocrat.

... the new masses began to... spin out the credit line and start splurging and experimenting with ways of life heretofore confined to the upper orders. In the 1970s

they moved from the plateau of the merely materialistic to a truly aristocratic luxury: the habit of putting oneself on stage, analyzing one's conduct, one's relationships, one's hang-ups, one's personality...

America now tingles with the things of the flesh while roaring drunk on things of the spirit. We are in that curious interlude of the twentieth century that Nietzsche foretold in the 1880s: the time of the reevaluation, the devising of new values to replace the osteoporotic skeletons of the old...

Although the Draft Letter concludes with proposals for reshaping the American economy it seems to have been written from the "outside" with little feeling for the breadth and expansiveness of the American character and economy, the role of the entrepreneur and risk-taker, the tremendous creative *élan* of a new nation forging itself. It seems written from the non-competitive, "play-it-safe" perspective of the monastery and chancery, the security assured by the humane policies that characterize the Church's educational and assistential bureaucracies. Perhaps this accounts for the sometimes carping, hypercritical tone of the Draft Letter, its emphasis on deficiencies in justice and welfare, its policy recommendations emphasizing egalitarian redistribution, sustaining and justifying (from the heart) increasing state intervention for moral objectives \* while recognizing (from the head) that "statism" is a proven menace and, in fact, contrary to the Church's longstanding position recommending decentralization of decision-making to the lowest competent level.

The concept of subsidiarity (§ 127) is associated in the Draft Letter with the term subsidium (help), and with the government which should provide such "help" to members of the social body. In this interpretation, although lip service is given to "institutional pluralism," government sets agendas and defines priorities and interactions. One recalls Pius XI's statement in *Quadragesimo Anno*, "... it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do."

Despite carefully chosen and highly nuanced language many commenators are finding that the mindset

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\* The Draft Letter recognizes, however, the extraordinary complexity of social systemic relationships, and implicitly, that policy resultants may be unanticipated. By and large the policies recommended are those that right-minded social scientists in the 1950s knew would resolve the social problem; subsidized housing, skill training, more education, nursery schools, health care, etc., etc., etc.. As Charles Morris points out "The expectations... were based ultimately on faith, not data. It was never possible to tell - at least on a scale that mattered - whether any of the social intervention programs made a difference. In almost every case, the changes... were of about the same magnitude as the random variations that occurred in the absence of any program at all...." (op. cit. p. 204).

## American Catholics (*Cont'd*)

underlying the selection of issues and of data thought relevant, as well as many policy recommendations tend to reflect the "soft left" of democratic socialism, dependencia theory and liberation theology. Support for "confrontation with the sinful structures that institutionalize injustice" (§ 62) or allusions to "degree of dependency," the relationship between countries /that/ "resembles the interdependence, respectively, of horse and rider." (§ 277, see also § 93) raise unanswered questions regarding the level and instrumentalities of legitimate social confrontation at home and abroad. Perhaps the core of opposition to the Draft Letter in its present form has focussed on what is perceived as a statist bias. This reaction was, perhaps, to be expected from spokesmen of America's business community; it is also found in elements of the emerging "Christian Right" which is a natu-

ral, though to many an embarrassing ally of the Church on such issues as abortion, euthanasia, and aid-to-private-schools. Oskar Gruenwald of the International Christian Studies Association writes: "While the American Catholic Bishops 1984 Draft Letter... stopped short of endorsing socialism, it argues for more government intervention in the economy which may lead to greater equality and the alleviation of poverty and unemployment but may also result in greater centralization of power, the growth of impersonal government bureaucracies, and increased threat to individual freedom and privacy." (Newsletter II, 1-2).

On the other hand the Draft Letter is largely unexceptionable by the standards of "mainline" American Liberal Protestantism.

### Concluding Thoughts

I am fearful that some might find in the Draft Letter a rationale for a sort of garrison state, or a national socialism in which ample latitude is allowed private enterprise and initiative under the tutelage of a guiding political authority that guarantees full employment, the abolition of poverty and a reasonable level of well-being to all in an egalitarian society. In practice this welfare state, with its illusion of peace, well-being and social solidarity, would have to be bought at a high price. Limited autarchy, some control of freedom of movement, forcible shifts in supply and demand schedules through state intervention, import/export controls, guidelines for domestic and foreign banking and credit operations, greater "self-policing" by the media in view of the national interest, extensive public works programs - the effective remedies of poverty, misery, unemployment and inequality might be bought at the price of the Servile State.

Social envy and class hatred based on inequalities ascribable to unjust structures are alien to both the Church's traditional social teaching and to the common sense of the bulk of Americans - the demographically, politically and economically predominant American middle class of farmers and proprietors, skilled and semi-skilled workers, managerial and professional employees. These people work and produce; they are generous in time and money to their churches and to charity; they contribute to social capital by educating their children at great familial expense; they pay taxes, fight our wars, and serve without compensation in an infinitude of volunteer and service organizations. Care must be exercised to avoid association with those who disdain middle America, subtly denounce it as unjust, racist, lacking compassion and a sense of fairness. Such critics reveal a "new class" elitism and contempt for the people and the people's good sense that can only bring them discredit.

Would it not be wise to exploit the American genius, remarked by the Tocqueville, for voluntary organization-in the service of the poor, the marginal and the emarginated in the interests of the common welfare; to encourage responses that are complex, variegated, multiform, decentralized, adapted to local conditions and culture, reflecting trust in the efficacy and sensitivity of mediating structures rather than the federal megamachine in the service of bankrupt social nostrums. Communities traditionally require of their members self-discipline and behavioral standards, subtly enforced, that result in the integration of individuals and families over time (often several generations) into the social fabric. The etiology of many of this country's most tragic social and economic dilemmas is complex, involving mass migrations, patterns of discrimination, profound cultural, behavioral and values differences that will not be fused in a melting pot but must co-exist in a pluralistic society - a new nation of communities learning to live together in peace, each at peace with itself.

—Charles Dechert, Ph.D.  
Catholic University of America

## Footnotes to the Dechert Article

<sup>1</sup>Paragraph references are to the numbered paragraph edition released to the press (and other commentators) on 11 Nov. 84.

<sup>2</sup>The extremely egalitarian bent of the authors is clearly suggested when they state, "This set of criteria implies that a certain inequality—can *sometimes* be justified." (Italics added)

<sup>3</sup>In C. 93 the bishops appear to accent a form of "dependencia theory"—See also C. 277.

<sup>4</sup>Not to exclude, presumably, voluntary action to overcome those self-inflicted wounds, resulting from folly or imprudence or the evil effects of accident or mischance.

<sup>5</sup>The extraordinary success of Chinese-Americans and the rapidly emerging Caribbean, South Asian and Indios immigrant populations are not mentioned nor are relevant cultural factors discussed.

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### 1985 Convention Program (Cont'd.)

(From Page 9)

9:00 a.m.	FOURTH PLENARY SESSION <i>Chairman:</i> Doctor James Hitchcock Saint Louis University  <i>Address:</i> "Derrida or Deity? Deconstruction in the Presence of the Word" Doctor R.V. Young Jr. North Carolina State University Raleigh, North Carolina	10:00 a.m.	Small group discussions, relating to Catholic Higher Education, Family Life, Priesthood and Religious Life, the Economic Order, Literature and the Arts, and other areas as desired.
		11:00 a.m.	Business Meeting (including Presidential Address)
		12:30 p.m.	Officers and Board meet at lunch