

# Newsletter

## Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

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Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter

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### John Paul II's Extraordinary Synod - 1985

John Paul II has called an Extraordinary Synod of the world's episcopal leaders (November 25-December 8th) to "en-graft Vatican II onto the Church's life in the light of new requirements." He is attempting to institutionalize the recent Council's authentic policies, an accomplishment which eluded his predecessor. Canon 346 declares that on this occasion the Pope and the elected president of the *National Conferences of Bishops* will deal exclusively with "matters which call for speedy resolution." The result likely will be policy decisions for the universal Church affecting changes authorized by several popes over twenty years. But in so doing, the Synod cannot avoid dealing with aberrations which have occurred outside or against the law of the Church since 1965.

In preparing for the forthcoming Synod, the Vatican Secretariat in charge (Cardinal Tomko) sent each of the world's episcopal conferences a set of 13 questions for study and reflection. A synthesis of the responses from the delegates (Bp James Malone will represent the U.S.) will be reported at the beginning (November 25th) of the Synod's deliberations.

Bishop Malone has summarized the task that remains ahead: "The purpose of Vatican II, as Pope John envisaged it, was the renewal of the Church—not, however, for its own sake, but as a necessary step toward effecting the reintegration of the natural and the supernatural, the this-worldly and the other-worldly the sacred and the secular, in the lives of individuals and the structures of society. Thus, he believed, the Church would better serve a world which, having largely lost touch with the transcendent and having lapsed into a deadening secularism, found itself by the middle of this century in a profound cultural crisis—yet, paradoxically, for just that reason more open to the saving message of Jesus Christ than perhaps it had been for many centuries." The Bishop asserts that if Vatican II did not lead to dissolution and collapse within the Church, much that was hoped for 20 years ago has not come to pass. (*Origins*, July 4, 1985)

These questions were sent to a random sample of the membership list of the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars*, some of whose selective and partial responses are published in this *Newsletter* for the information of the reading public. The full texts of the responses are being collated at the present time for future distribution.

Those reported in this issue come from a variety of competencies in the academic, catechetical or pastoral life of the Church.

There are many opinions expressed in these paragraphs, some under the pressure of time and circumstance, all of which were solicited freely with the assurance of free expression. All of them are the writers' special understandings and convictions. No one statement represents the approved views of the *Fellowship* itself. (See pp 3-18)

#### WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS ISSUE?

*Fr. Thomas M. Gannon, S.J. — On Proclaiming the Christian Way — p. 11*

"The changed attitudes of a large number of Catholics will not be reversed by proclamation. It is difficult, if not impossible, to foresee a return to Pre-Vatican II beliefs regarding sexual morality and authority. The dilemma of the 'progressive' bishops will not go away." (Woodstock Report, May 1985, p.7)

*A Wife on Woman — p. 18*

"A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife... What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder... From your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." (MT. 19:3 FF)

*On Catechesis — p. 12*

"The man who infringes on even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven." (MT 5, 19)

## The President's Corner

*The Chicago Catholic* in its July 12, 1985 issue continued its opinion survey on the question: Is the Church better off than it was when Vatican II ended in 1965? What are the pluses and minuses for the Church as an institution, a community—for yourself, for others?

Not as strikingly as when Pope John XXIII at St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls on January 25, 1959 unexpectedly announced his intention of holding an ecumenical council, still to a notable degree Pope John Paul II's equally unexpected announcement also at St. Paul's, January 25, 1985, that he would convoke an extraordinary synod of bishops to reexamine the changes made by Vatican Council II "in the light of new demands" has provoked reflection and discussion in the Church and outside of it as to its internal condition. Such movement is doubtless behind *The Chicago Catholic's* survey and other polling of views that is going on. As time passes, there are fewer and fewer of us around able to make the comparison of then and now.

Many would agree the reexamination is called for. Not, they could argue, that Vatican II was not good and even necessary for the spiritual life and development of the Church. There had to be an airing of the issues; Vatican I's doctrinal task stood like a half-finished building on the horizon of history; and many practical orientations had to be set. And who can forget the stirring moments of the Council's beginning when all the world, all the thinking world, that is, learned from Pope John XXIII a new word, *aggiornamento*, and Cardinal Achille Liénart, Bishop of Lille, called for more than merely nominal input by the bishops into the work of the conciliar commissions.

Somehow or other, but chiefly through the pervasive media, everyman was drawn into the discussions, and in the aftermath of the Council practically anybody could become an interpreter of its decisions. Many of the interpretations came from people who, as the late Father Paul K. Meagher, O.P., used to say, did not know enough theology to bless themselves. To interpretation was added experimentation—pastoral, educational, liturgical. The experimentation was unbridled; there was little "control," scientific (methodological) or disciplinary, and the results were in many cases disastrous. There was rarely effective evaluation of the experimentation, rarely a national or international pooling of results, so that experimenters were promoted to preside over failures of greater and greater magnitude. This was the basis, real enough, for a kind of bitterness that affected the spirits of many perceptive and sensitive Catholics.

This the Holy Father, *ecclesiae catholicae episcopus* (bishop of the whole church) has personally come into contact with as he has conducted his worldwide apostolate. He has wisely determined that an evaluation will be made of the effectiveness of Vatican II's decrees and their implementation. He has, moreover, also decided that the evaluation will be with a universal scale of participation, with bishops representing the whole world in attendance, as is fitting when the subject of discussion is a Council that had an ecumenical dimension, that is, a universal dimension. The November 25 synod is the Pope's idea (Cardinal Casaroli has said), and all that one has seen of Pope John Paul II's initiatives so far indicates he will with the help of the Holy Spirit be able to make it an effective instrument of his purpose.

There is going to be a fairly numerous group of activists, not distantly akin to those mentioned by Father Meagher, who will be recognized in the next few months as they try to smudge the clear and careful lines of Vatican II's statements and decrees and so try to harmonize them with un-Catholic developments since that time. One way to support the Holy Father will be to keep referring to what the great Council *actually* said and to authentic interpretations and implementations of the Holy See since that time. There will be, one suspects, many opportunities for members of the Fellowship to exercise in a loyal and articulate way the special charism of our group, scholarly support of the authentic magisterium.

— Fr. Earl Weis, S.J.

### Ode to Efficiency

Once upon a time, there were four people named Everybody, Somebody, Nobody & Anybody.

When there was an important job to be done Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

When Nobody did it, Everybody got angry because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought that Somebody would do it, but Nobody realized that Nobody would do it.

So it ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done in the first place.

### Items of Interest

- Gloria Steinem, co-founder and editor of *Ms. Magazine* and Board member of the Ms. Foundation for Woman, the only national multi-issue grant-giving fund of its kind in the United States, has joined the advisory committee of the Society for the Right to Die. The Society for the Right to Die was previously the Euthanasia Society of America. (Society for the Right to Die Newsletter, Spring, 1985)

## Synod's General Questions

1. *What was done to make the council known, faithfully received and implemented?*
- a. *What efforts were especially successful at the international, national and local levels?*
- b. *Were there any major omissions or failures?*
- c. *Should anything specific be done now to communicate the teaching of the council and implement it?*

### Fr. George W. Rutler, STD

a. I can think of few, if any, successful efforts at any level, other than official papal commentary. The Council was deficient in planning the pastoral implementation of its own teaching. The expressed aim of Pope John XXIII to more effectively proclaim the sacred deposit of the Faith (v. *Ad Petri Cathedram*, 1959) was in response to the secularization of culture; but the Fathers of the Council seemed to underestimate the degree to which a secularized atmosphere had already affected the instincts of many Catholics. Consequently, many false impressions of the Council were circulated and much subjective speculation promoted itself without discipline of norms. The most damaging impression was that of relativism, particularly in the matter of ecumenism.

### Miss Carol Cowgill

b. The major drawback to making the Council known was that the liturgical and pastoral implementations were seldom tied to the scriptural and theological bases in the Council documents. Besides this, the exploration of the Council documents was extremely superficial, since those who explained them seemed not to have assimilated the biblical bases well. Therefore, there was always a lack of balance, as if one leg of a table were shorter than the others. This kept the laity from that sense of wholeness that would enable them to assimilate the Council's teachings with joy and a sense of rightness. This has resulted in a residue of fear and suspicion.

### April Ousler Armstrong

Many believed *Gaudium et spes* focused only on the "social and cultural dimensions" in "a new age in human history." (art. 54) Rightfully the Council reminded us that "Christ... gave His Church no proper mission in the political, economical, and social order. The purpose which He set before her is a religious one." (art. 42) With urgency the Vatican II Fathers emphasized the problems of atheism (now almost forgotten), marriage and war. They spoke of "excessive self-love, worship of pleasure, and illicit practices

against human generation." (art 47) Could it be in "excessive self-love" of personal fear of war some confused our priorities after the Council? Many known Catholics today consider artificial birth control normal, abortion acceptable, euthanasia merciful, while demonstrating on the horror of nuclear war, the economy, and poverty. War and hunger are terrible. But more terrible is unfaithfulness to Christ, "Lord and Lightgiver." We cannot pray for peace when little is done for the innocent thousands aborted here. *Lumen gentium* reminds us of the "narrow path" to holiness for the People of God. We seldom hear that mentioned.

2. *What benefits for the life of the church in your area followed from the council?*
- a. *How is Catholic life in the United States better today than it was in 1965 as a result of Vatican II?*
- b. *How is Catholic life in your diocese better today than it was in 1965 as a result of Vatican II?*

### Fr. Brian Van Hove, S.J.

The extreme and "insane" authoritarianism of local pastors or school officials and teachers has abated. In 1965 when I was in high school, a nun was reprimanded by her superiors for doing too much "parlour work" (she was counselling us, and conducting a discussion group that was very beneficial). When this nun was transferred, she was not allowed to tell us—and we wept because suddenly she was gone.

In those places where the norms are carefully observed, the *novus ordo* seems to have been well accepted and successful. Mass is the principal contact ordinary people have with Catholicism, and so this is critical. The new liturgy can be genuinely popular in time, other things being equal.

Scrupulosity—a real problem of the past—has all but disappeared. Few people fret for hours about *minutiae*. This is a healthy development. Consciences may be less informed, but at least they are not as deformed.

In some places, there has been a renewed interest in decor and beauty. Art and historical interest have produced some tasteful items—some of the shabby and pietistic depiction of Christ and the saints is gone.

The simplification of chancery and church court procedures has been a welcome relief. Bureaucracy, so necessary for life has been nicely streamlined.

On the local level there has been an interest in prayer and prayer groups. Where these are low-key

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and simple, and without foreign vocabulary, they have overcome some of the excessive individualism of the past. They are not as genuinely widespread or as popular as the former devotions and novenas, however.

Friendly contacts (social) with other faiths is much more preferable than the hostility this writer remembers in the 1950s in this country.

In 1965 we were naive about the fruits of the Council, and we expected too much. All the talk about a new Pentecost had built up false and even silly hopes. A certain realism has returned, and a gradual respect for the real intent and spirit of the Council seems easier to find now than in 1965. Many who lost their balance have returned.

### Father Edward Bayer

There have been a number of good things which have come out of the Second Vatican Council. First, there has been what I consider an honest and healthy expediting of nullity cases regarding marriage. (I realize that there are abuses around in this matter.) Also there is a better theological basing of these cases, and it draws from both the scripture and the Magisterium as that has been articulated recently in the Council and in further provisions which have been made, especially by the Holy See. Secondly, I would count as a plus the ability to recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit and the genuinely ecclesial elements often present in the separated Christian bodies.

There are unfortunately also bad effects resulting at the archdiocesan level, not from the Council's work, but from its distortion and subversion. There has been first of all an almost total obliteration of priestly identity within some dioceses. This begins with confusion about and then an abdication of priestly decision-making authority, then teaching authority, and finally, in at least some cases and increasingly among a large number of priests, of the sacramental nature of the priest's central role in the Eucharist. There has also been a hidden (and sometimes not so hidden) agenda to "democratize" and to "empower" lay consultative bodies. Lip service is sometimes paid to the *de jure* consultative nature of these bodies, but in reality, some bishops insist that priests *de facto* follow the lead of the parish councils. For example: the official guidelines for councils specify the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (not the Priests' Council) as the chief "collegial" body.

A very serious mistake throughout the country, is the upholding of a right of a parish council to appeal from the decision of their pastor to the Ordinary, as if the parish council and the pastor were standing in some kind of *ex aequo* position *vis a vis* the Ordinary, so that

disagreements had to be solved by something analogous to a civil "adversarial" process. Utterly destructive of priestly (and lay!) identity! Possibly most serious of all "consultative council" problems is the pastor's apparent inability to disallow certain persons from running for office, e.g., even when such persons are known to him to reject, e.g., the Church's teaching on contraception and abortion, or the ultimate authority of the hierarchy. Such persons can and do use the Council to insinuate doubts about most fundamental points of faith and life.

There is also a kind of too proper, too aesthetic tone, and a false pomp in the carrying out of the liturgy. I am tempted to describe it as an "episcopalianizing" of the liturgy, that is, a great effort to provide the most detailed ritual niceties of aesthetics of celebration, while at the same time the very people who lead in planning, "performing" and presiding show less and less conviction about the Catholic doctrine, morality and church order.

Regarding the pastoral area of my life as it applies to the *parish* level, I would list first among the good effects the challenging of Jansenism, the needless rigidities, and the erroneous presuppositions (e.g., racism) of many of our people. People tell me they have appreciated the opportunity to preach more widely and deeply from the Holy Bible.

I would list as a plus the increased prayer life of at least a certain number of people. I think particularly that the Charismatic Renewal and Marriage Encounter has been a great benefit to many.

Finally, the liturgy in the language of the people is a great boon, and lays the foundation for real spiritual development, much of which is already taking place. At the same time I think it must be made much clearer that the Church has competence precisely in the area of morality—and indeed an *infallible* competence—by reason of the fact that certain human actions are or are not compatible with our *de facto* creation and calling in Christ. The Church has no competency in the area of natural law as a kind of philosophic system, but it is precisely because of her comprehension of *each person in the person of Christ* that she can indeed detect when what it means to be "in Christ" is contradicted by certain actions, e.g. racism, the waste of natural resources, the using of persons as means to an end (abortion, euthanasia, non-therapeutic and dangerous fetal experimentation, "harvesting" of the "less fit" for organ transplants to the "more fit," etc.).

I believe also that one of the greatest lacks in the Council documents is in its treatment of the place and role of the priest, the man who finds himself between the bishops and the people. Regretfully I must note that the disordered consultative ecclesial process favored by many bishops make it extremely difficult and in many cases impossible for a priest to remain true to his pas-

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toral vocation. The revised Code offers little obvious recourse.

### Fr. Earl A. Weis, SJ

Catholics in the U.S. are more theologically sensitive after the Council than they were before. This does not mean that the theology they are sensitive to is good theology, but they do now have a greater understanding of the importance of theology itself. And so while interest in theology is greater, interest in solid theology that ties in with Catholic tradition is on the decline.

What is the theology that ties in with the Catholic tradition? It is a theology that looks to the scholastic philosophy for its conceptualization and some of its method.

Catholics are more conscious after the Council of the intimate relationship between one's belief and one's practice. And so in the areas of personal spirituality, personal moral life, family life, social life, business life, and political life, people are more embarrassed if the one is not normative of the others. Secularism is no longer the "in" thing it was for such a substantial part of the century.

As far as the spiritual life of the members of the Church is concerned, there is a greater appreciation of the role of liturgy in one's life, although there is a good deal of fumbling going on in the further development of the liturgy for the spiritual benefit of the substantial portion of the Catholic people. Superficiality is the prevalent vice here.

Psychopathic scrupulosity seems to be on the decline, but so is the appropriately frequent reception of the sacrament of penance.

The general shaking out of doctrine and practice that came with the Council was good and necessary for the life of the Church, but Catholic prudence is now called for to arrange matters for the orderly processes and progression of the Church's functioning.

*3. Were there any errors or abuses in the interpretation and application of Vatican II? Why? What was done or should be done to correct the situation?*

*a. What problems have arisen in the last 20 years with regard to communicating and carrying out either the letter or the "spirit" of Vatican II?*

*b. What caused these problems?*

*c. Do they still exist? If so, what should be done?*

### Fr. John Hardon, SJ

a. The twenty years since the Second Vatican Council has had an uneven history in the United States.

*Positively*, there has been a greater interest in the Bible as a source of instruction and inspiration among the faithful;

—a fostering of authentic ecumenism, where Catholics have found greater solidarity with Protestants in their common respect for the Bible.

*Negatively*, however, there has been

—a growing tendency among Catholics to identify Revelation exclusively with the Scriptures, to the exclusion of Sacred Tradition;

—an increasing tendency among Catholic biblical scholars to ignore the Church's Magisterium in the interpretation of the Bible;

—a widespread policy of replacing the Church's Magisterium with the Protestant idea of private interpretation of the Bible as the norm for faith and morals;

—a readiness in not a few Catholic educational circles to substitute human reason for Divine Revelation.

Summarily, therefore, the last twenty years have seen a notable lessening of respect for the revealed word of God. This has had devastating consequences on the Catholic Church in our country. As a result, religious education is being stripped of doctrinal content. Once flourishing Catholic schools, from elementary to university level, have only a shadow of their former religious vitality. Hundreds of thousands of once believing Catholics have either gone over to Protestant churches that still recognize the Bible as God's revealed word, or they have given up their Catholic faith entirely.

### Anon.

c. The remedy: a serious return to the authentic Council teachings, a serious catechesis of the faithful in these teachings, and a serious effort to make clear to all Catholics that these teachings are binding and normative, not optional.

### Anon.

Bishops will need to assert their authority by forcefully teaching what the Church teaches and by making appointments of people who believe and teach the same. Such people may be somewhat difficult to find, given the deterioration of the last decade or more, but the task is not impossible. It will take some years of education to achieve an adequate reflection of the Council.

## Synod's General Questions

4. What new needs associated with change, emerged in the implementation of the council? What should be done after the 1985 synod, so that the church's life will continue to develop according to the spirit and letter of Vatican II?

a. From the doctrinal perspective, what has been the impact of events during the last 20 years upon the faith of U.S. Catholics?

b. From the pastoral perspective, what impact have happenings during this same period of time had upon the religious practice of U.S. Catholics?

c. Is there now a need for new structures, programs, initiatives at any level of the church—and, if so, what are these? If now, is it then your view that the church at all levels should continue to proceed more or less as it has for the last 20 years?

### Dr. Edward Capestany

*From the doctrinal perspective,*

a) The issue of the magisterium and the theologians has to be settled more drastically. There are too many free-lancing theologians "at large." Related to this is the issue of the implications of the new Code of Canon Law and the Catholicity of many so-called Catholic Universities.

b) The issue of the Church as "the people of God" has to be settled because many put the bishops and the pope outside of it, elaborating on a distinction between the hierarchical Church and the Church itself.

c) Many bishops have forgotten their main function of "teachers" of the faith. Too involved in political issues. This is also a "pastoral" issue.

d) There is a need of *going back to the texts* of the Conciliar documents. This will eliminate the abuses done in the name of the Council.

e) The issue of the annulment of marriages has to be clarified. Many Catholics are having very serious doubts about the position of Christ Himself on the issue.

*From the pastoral perspective,* a. (perhaps doctrinal also). Too much disregard of the Sacred Congregation on the Declaration of Sexual Ethics.

b. On the problem of the internal renewal of the religious orders, particularly of the Jesuits, perhaps, those who want to be faithful to the old rule should be given the chance to associate for that purpose. This was the way the internal reformation was accomplished by Saint Theresa of Avila and Saint John of the Cross. Other ways are not working. I felt I should write to the Pope on this issue.

c. We need more reenforcement of the doctrine of the Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Some liturgists are pushing Him outside of the Church, as a building. Also more reenforcement of Marian devotions is needed.

d. The door should continue to be open in relation to those who love the Tridentine Mass. Some liturgical issues in relation to the Mass of Pope Paul VI have to be clarified. (To what extent is it true that the people have imposed their ways?) However, the participation of the faithful in the liturgy has increased.

*In general,* as to all the issues: We should support more the leadership of J.P. II.

### Prof. Joseph A. Varacalli

The first question, i.e., "How is Catholic life in the U.S. better today than it was in 1965 as a result of Vatican II?" Based on my academic studies of pre-Vatican II American Catholicism, as seen through my particular normative understanding of Catholicism, my basic answer is "*not much*." Quite frankly, I am appalled at the capitulation of a once distinctive Catholic culture to American secular culture that was hastened (unintentionally by the Magisterium, not so unintentionally by the liberal/radical Catholics) by the reality of Vatican II. There is no doubt in my mind that there *was* much unnecessary and undesirable provincialism during the pre-Vatican II era; I am no Vatican I advocate by any means. I think that Vatican II has, *in principle*, laid out a perfect form of internal Church organization and set of principles by which Catholics can relate to outer non-Catholic culture. The trouble is that Vatican II has *not* been implemented but much abused (partly by intransigent Traditionalists but mostly by arrogant leftists). Vatican II, in the U.S., "has not been tried and found wanting, but simply has not been tried." Vatican II—in principle represents to me the *final form* to which the Church must aspire; it represents, *in nuce*, perhaps the final resolution between the "traditional" and "modern" mentalities and ways of acting.

### Anon.

Factual evidence contradicts the opinion of those who like to believe that "Catholic life in the United States is better today than it was in 1965 as a result of Vatican II." Admittedly, the Council had its "pluses," but the Gospel of St. Matthew VII, 16 offers a sharp reminder: "Ex fructibus eorum, eos cognoscetis."

Stark reality gives indisputable proof in the ruins of empty seminaries, churches, convents, schools, hospitals, orphanages, and the loss of interest in encouraging vocations. If Catholic life be better, why is there still so much confusion and controversy about liturgy, how account for the cavalier attitude towards Sacraments, why is there such disrespect *in* and *for* the Church, her laws and the Magisterium? The ease with which annulments can be had, has undermined family life.

## Synod's Particular Questions

1. How is the constitution *Dei Verbum* understood and applied so that the knowledge of divine revelation and scripture may spread more widely and become part of the life of the faithful (scripture, tradition, magisterium, exegesis, approved versions, habitual reading, biblical apostolate, pastoral use, etc.)?

a. Are there ways in which the attitude and practice of U.S. Catholics in regard to revelation, scripture and tradition are better than they were 20 years ago?

b. Are there ways in which the situation is worse than it was 20 years ago?

c. What should be done now?

### Msgr. Orville Griese

a. For the past 21 months, I have lived in a parish in St. Louis where they have completed the RENEW program—in fact, had it in my parish up in Wisconsin previous to coming to St. Louis. The best feature of the program, in my opinion, was the “small-group” meetings. If oriented to scripture study, it really opened the eyes of participants to a book that was more or less closed to them (Bible): the first reaction was: “Who am I to comment on the scriptures,” but after a session or two, it was uplifting to see 8 or 10 people sharing insights on applying the scriptures in their lives. In fact, in this St. Louis parish, the pastor organized (in addition to a weekly bible-study group) the “prayer of the Church” (Holy Office) for the layfolk at 7:30 each morning (before the 8:00 a.m. Mass—pastor or associate always join in. The groups include about 20 people—I note that the parish where I will reside in Boston also has “prayer of the church” services.

### Fr. Richard W. Gilsdorf

In my recent experience as a Pastor I would also add a matter not in my academic field. In considering problems of the Liturgy a key method for restoring genuine Eucharistic life in the Church would best begin by re-establishing uniformity to the now chaotic praxis of reception of Holy Communion in the Western Church. The ecclesial sign of unity should be clearly visible in the moment when the Faithful receive *Communion*. The continuing post-conciliar revisions and options in this matter have resulted in a jungle of diversity, confusion, “a house divided.” This is bad liturgy, bad ecclesiology and has led many to a grave loss of devotion and of Eucharistic faith. The Synod would apply a wholesome remedy by calling for a restoration of unified praxis.

### Fr. William Most

Examples: 1. R. Brown and others charge numerous errors in Scripture. In *Critical Meaning of the Bible* (Paulist, 1981, 14-22) he charges there are scientific, historical, and even religious errors in the Bible. He claims Vatican II, DV 11, permits this view. DV says: “The Books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully, and without error *that truth which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation.*” Brown thinks the underlined words are restrictive, not descriptive—only things needed for salvation are to be inerrant. He admits it might mean the other way, but he ignores the fact that Note 5 by the Council on this passage sends us to the texts of Trent, Leo XIII, Pius XII, rejecting absolutely all error. He does not mention the fact that Pius XII in *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (EB 538) cites Vatican II would reverse a solemn definition. He gives Job 14.13-22 as a clear case of error; denial of afterlife. (I answer this claim in detail in chapter 7 of my forthcoming book, *Free From All Error*, Prow Press). Brown says to attempt to answer is “unmitigated disaster,” (p. 17 CMB).

2. Thomas A. Hoffman, SJ in “Inspiration, Normativeness, Canonicity and the Unique Sacred Character of the Bible” in CBQ, July 1982 insists on errors. Note 17 on p. 451: “The term inerrancy is dropped in this paper as having no positive theological contribution to make.” To try to answer claims of errors is (p. 452) “basically patching holes on a sinking ship.” To defend Scripture shows a lack of faith (p. 467): “What is at work here is a search for a security that is not only nonexistent but incompatible with the total dependence upon the faith-covenant that is at the heart of Judaeo-Christian religion, a kind of idolatry that gives a certitude that trespasses upon the true Christian faith-relationship with God.” This is an echo of Kierkegaard’s leap of faith, and of R. Bultmann (*Kerygma and Myth*, 2nd ed. London SPCK, p. 210).

3. Wilfrid Harrington, O.P., *The New Guide to Reading and Studying the Bible*, (Glazier, p. 28) quotes from Hoffman’s article explicitly, defines “Inspiration—animation with the Spirit of Christ, which is to say that a writing is experienced by the faith-community as communicating the power, truth and presence of the Holy Spirit.” Sounds like Calvin (or Luther (subjective interior testimony). On p. 24: “There is, however, one thing we need to be clear about and candidly acknowledge: one cannot *prove* the Bible is the word of God. That is a matter of *faith*. Its humanness is evident to commonsense.” What about apologetics which proves the teaching authority of the Church, which can then declare the Bible has the Holy Spirit as its chief author? No sign of that—that would mean inerrancy, which many deny today.

## Synod's Particular Questions

### Fr. Donald Keefe, S.J.

a-b. The body of the question supposes that *Dei Verbum* is in fact being applied properly. However, there is now in common and often naive use a theological method which too often undercuts the main thrust of the document, viz. the unity of the apostolic preaching and the consequent inseparability of Scripture, Tradition, and ecclesial Magisterium. Its main symptom is the conviction general among exegetes that it is their proper function to determine what part of the apostolic tradition, and therefore of the doctrinal tradition, is supported by Scripture, and what part must find some other ground. This presumes that the biblical scholars, and not the old Magisterium, has the last word as to the meaning of the Old and the New Testaments. This conviction is at one with the now conventional academic insistence upon an academic magisterial function which in practice amounts to a *toties quoties* veto power over the Church's use of Scripture. This theological method is clearly not founded, as *Dei Verbum* requires, upon Scripture and Tradition, but upon a set of abstract postulates which then impose their own rationalist criteria upon Scripture and Tradition, whose free historicity is entirely alien to the historical determinism implicit in that idealist calculus of reality. The consequence is the dehistoricization of Scripture: whatever in it can be accounted for by that determinism—historical, sociological, economic, etc.—is so accounted for, leaving little or nothing which is capable of free and revelatory significance. The popularity of Hegelian themes in contemporary Christology particularly is consonant with this methodology, as it is not with the free historicity of the Old and New Testament.

The historical sciences, like other sciences, cannot without conversion to the freedom of the Trinitarian revelation of the Lord of history enter into a true understanding of the free historicity of the Scripture and the Tradition, and of the Church's worship in truth. It is not possible to recognize as Catholic, as Christian, the new historical consciousness of the Catholic exegete, historian and theologian, when that consciousness simply repeats the banal rejection of Christian historical optimism which was ancient when Paul preached the Resurrection on the Areopagus to the sophisticates of that day. In the final analysis, all valid reading of Scripture is also prayer; an exegesis which is not before all else worship in the Church is not able to serve the Church, for it is not free to do so, being in the service of another truth than hers, and another community.

To conclude: *Dei Verbum* takes for granted the Catholic historical optimism consequent upon the historical presence of the Risen Lord in the Church's worship. This optimism can no longer be taken for

granted, particularly in academic and sub-academic circles, where it is commonly accounted a nonhistorical naivete. It is then displaced by a learned refusal of any historical mediation of God to man.

2. *Is the mystery of the church in its double aspect, i.e., communion and hierarchical institution, rightly understood and put into practice? Does the church's task of sanctification clearly appear in ecclesial life (cf. Lumen Gentium)?*

a. *Are U.S. Catholics more involved in the life of the church than they were 20 years ago?*

b. *Are there ways in which the situation is worse than it was 20 years ago?*

c. *What should be done now?*

### Sr. Bernadette Counihan, OSF

Since Vatican II the "American Church" has swung completely to the "communion" aspect and abhors the hierarchical/institution aspect. One of the preludes to the "revolution" in the School Sisters of St. Francis (Milwaukee) was having lecturers come in to show us (with diagrams) that the Church is not a hierarchical triangle with Pope, Bishops, priests, and laity in descending order, but a circle (on the floor) with everyone on the same ground level.

### Sr. Miriam Paul Klaus, M.D.

Given the fact that only 6% of U.S. Catholics who use family planning use natural methods, it is clear that the 94% have not thought things through, and have not understood the intrinsic connection between Who made them, and how He made them, that is, with a body, which is the sign—the Sacrament—of the person, and which was sanctified when God took that body to Himself, and when he made the Eucharist the sign of the Mystical Body... I wonder if any contraceptive realizes that the use of contraception posits a de facto denial of the Incarnation, the resurrection of the body, and the Assumption of Mary. In fact, I could state confidently that most people have no idea that this is what's involved.

### Mr. John Kippley

c. 1. Develop and administer a meaningful profession of faith and practice to replace the Oath against Modernism to be taken annually by all bishops, priests, seminary professors, and all Catholic college, high school teachers of religion and theology. Also by all members of USCC staff, strictly enforced.

2. Develop and administer a similar profession of faith and practice to be made annually by parish lec-

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tors, extraordinary ministers, choir members and directors, and parish council members.

3. Establish an orderly process by which married men can be ordained as priests. This has been accepted in principle by the ordination of former Episcopalian and Protestant ministers. Such a process should involve service in the Legion of Mary, St. Vincent de Paul, and Couple to Couple League apostolates. The main reason for this is to alleviate the manpower fears of orthodox bishops.

4. Declare Curran, McCormick, McBrien, Kosnik, Keane, etc. as "not a Catholic theologian" and get them out of their prestigious positions of power.

5. Adopt the CCL/NFP program as the official and preferred vehicle for NFP instruction. (It is the only program that provides theological support for *Humanae Vitae*, according to Msgr. McHugh, and may be the only program in the world to encourage mother-baby togetherness. Then make the CCL/NFP instruction a normal requirement for pre-marriage instructions. This should have a remarkable effect on Catholic family life in America.

6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Authentic seminary reform run by a non-American bishop; liturgical renewal—perhaps widespread use of the Anglican-use liturgy; restoration of Friday abstinence under pain of *venial* sin to re-establish the power of the Church to bind and loose; Housecleaning at USCC; moratorium on USCC pastoral letters.

*3. Is the doctrine of the council on the universal and particular church rightly understood, and are ecclesial relationships based on the spirit of genuine collegiality and communion as regards: the pope, Holy See, bishops; conferences of bishops toward bishops, priests, religious, laity, etc. (cf. Lumen Gentium, Orientalium Ecclesiarum, Christus Dominus, Apostolicam Actuositatem, etc.)?*

*a. How well have the understanding and practice of collegiality and collaborative relationships entered into the life of the church at all levels in the last 20 years? Cite examples of successes, failures.*

*b. What should be done now?*

### Fr. Thomas Dubay, SM

The picture in the United States is a mixed bag, but I think that most bishops and religious superiors do consult other people in reaching their decisions. Some do this very well and fairly, others not. During the past decade American bishops, with some exceptions, have given the general impression that they wish to collaborate mostly with men and women on

the left of the opinion spectrum, and they tend to leave aside in a cool manner those in the middle and on the right. That this impression has foundation in fact can be seen in the people many (most?) bishops have chosen to advise them. I may cite a few examples:

1. U.S.C.C. personnel are in number overwhelmingly toward the left of center. I know of no case (though there may be such) of a man/woman in charge of a department that could be considered 'on the right.'

2. The religious advisory committee chosen by the episcopal committee for the study of religious life contains no name that I recognize as representing me (and I consider myself to be in the middle of the spectrum: entirely in favor of everything in Vatican II and the new canon law).

3. Many (most?) bishops have in their own dioceses surrounded themselves with a middle management that definitely tilts to the left. In some cases, not rare, pastors and school administrators are called to task by this middle management for no other reason than that they want, e.g., orthodox texts.

4. The speakers chosen either by the bishop or the middle management to address priests in the diocese and other important groups are often on the left; sometimes they are open dissenters.

5. The staffs that are chosen to prepare episcopal documents have this same tilt.

Hence it is not surprising that orthodox scholars feel very much left out in the cold. They do not have the impression that the bishops are interested in their views. The same is true of many religious men and women who have tried in the last two decades to do nothing other than what Vatican II and the Holy See have been asking. The latter shows concern and warmth but they do not get much of this from the main stream of the American episcopacy.

*4. Is there a correct understanding of liturgy and correct liturgical practice according to the spirit of Vatican II (cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium)?*

*a. Are there ways in which the attitudes and practices of U.S. Catholics in regard to liturgy are better than they were 20 years ago?*

*b. Are there ways in which the situation is worse than it was 20 years ago?*

*c. What should be done now?*

### Fr. Paul Quay, SJ

a-b. Improvements: Greater ease, especially for the sick & dying, ill-instructed Catholics, and non-Catholics, to follow "what is going on" particularly at baptisms, weddings, Mass. Greater knowledge of

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and interest in Scripture through the new Lectionary. A growing fund of good, contemporary liturgical music, chiefly hymns and songs ("chant" for Psalms has been neglected.) More frequent Communion and Mass for shut-ins; concelebration for infirm priests.

Worsenings: Each "real falsification of the Catholic liturgy" mentioned in *Inaestimabile Donum* and the abuses there rejected in #1:

1. Almost all sense of Mass and sacraments as sacred actions has been lost: neither awe at Mass as Christ's sacrifice nor sense of it as our worship of the Father in self-oblation through Christ. (a) "English" of Mass-texts is not a language used to God or man; barren, disconnected, without depth or elevation; often ungrammatical, sentimental, or silly; and containing serious doctrinal errors; getting worse through "inclusive language." (b) The laity, even priests and religious, rarely receive the sacrament of penance. Yet all go to Communion, often despite grave sin, partly constrained by public awareness that only grave sin is ground for not going, partly denying guilt since they feel no hatred for God and disbelieve Church moral teaching. Special Masses for active homosexuals are publicly approved by Ordinaries, with no demand to cease or repent of such unchastity. (c) Mass is often a theatrical performance, whose "success" depends chiefly on the quality of the music (with applause at the end) and on profane intrusions such as: reading of secular or still-living authors, movies, dancing, clown-vestments, etc. Or, Mass becomes an exercise in good-fellowship, often said on coffee tables, ash-trays pushed to one side; young people encouraged to sit or lie on the floor; often unwashed and ungroomed. Despite such efforts, percentage-attendance at Mass, especially among the young, continues to drop. Many older people stay away, claiming that the irreverence makes Mass an occasion of sin to them, whether of contempt, hatred, loss of faith, or despair.

2. Mass is seen as "private property" of those who say it or for whom it is said. The authority of the Holy See is less often repudiated by arguments than simply ignored as nonexistent. (a) e.g., on Sundays, omission or alteration of the Creed, or privately composed "Creeds"; laymen, even Protestant ministers, giving the "homily"; priests invoking God as "Our Mother" or "Our Father and Mother," referring to the Holy Spirit as "She"; (b) Use as altar breads ordinary leavened bread or bread filled with sesame seeds, or olive oil, or honey and spices, etc.; (c) distribution of Communion to priests at large concelebrations by laity; parishes with 100-300 "extraordinary ministers"; girls vested in alb and cincture to do all that acolytes do except, perhaps, present gifts at the altar; (d) El-

derly priests and those in religious houses saying Mass with no server at all, while refusing to concelebrate for fear of outrageous words or actions likely to be sprung without notice.

3. No such freedom is permitted those who would question or oppose these abuses. (a) Kneelers are removed from the pews; statues, tabernacles, altars, high altars, stations of the cross and now crucifixes are removed—all in opposition to the will of the majority of parishioners. (b) Bishops who have forbidden use of the Latin *Novus Ordo* in public—whence the desire for the Tridentine Mass, since, wherever the *Novus Ordo* is regularly said, no such desire is manifested—show no sign of disapproval of the totally unofficial forms now widely used. Seminararians are required, often under threat, to attend and take active part in illicit Masses. Priests who follow Vatican norms are excluded from saying Mass for college students, seminarians, etc. and generally marginalized.

4. The ordinary adult Catholic suffers from lack of instruction, due to replacement of sermons by homilies, especially on those doctrines that are not extensively or clearly presented in Scripture or that require continuous, thematic explanation.

SUGGESTIONS: 1. Cultivate once again extralitururgical prayer-life (e.g., charismatic prayer groups, parish "missions," retreats, Benediction, novenas, vigils, and all legitimate modes of devotional life) to reduce the desire to make the Mass serve as receptacle for every religious practice, from which every sort of religious experience is sought.

2. Since the major cause of liturgical chaos and demoralization of faithful lies not in the abuses but in toleration of abuses by Ordinaries, let bishops be publicly rebuked or even punished who do not eliminate widespread liturgical abuse.

3. Let all translations or newly composed liturgical texts be prominently displayed (for comment, not use) in every diocesan newspaper at least a full year before the Bishops' Conference is to discuss them.

4. Restore former feast-dates where historical reasons rather than liturgical ones caused the change. 5. Restore a complete fast before Communion of 5 or 6 hours.

### Anon.

1. Stop all further experimentation, and insist on the consolidation and universalization of whatever gains. Suggest an examination of the beauty of those recently admitted to Roman Communion under permission for Anglican Use.

2. Mandate a regular Latin Mass (with chant) in every parish to preserve some awareness of univer-

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sality and participation in a world Mystical Body.

3. Mandate homilies on the Eternal Truths, especially the Last Things, on appropriate Sundays, perhaps every Lent.

### Fr. C. John McCloskey

Iron-clad liturgical norms promulgated by the Holy See and fully enforced by the Local Ordinaries. The most important place to start, however, would be in the proper liturgical training of future priests in the seminaries. The 1987 Synod on the laity might address this problem also.

### Prof. Donald J. D'Elia

I was present one evening when a young priest, a director of vocations for his Order, lectured a group of extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers and other parishioners of St. Joseph's R.C. Church in New Paltz. He spoke about the "new" Church since Vatican II, no longer hierarchical but circular, no longer with authority coming down to the people but rising up from the "People of God." As for the liturgy, the same young priest—in the presence of the associate pastor—next explained to the assembly that "the people make the Eucharist happen." He went on to say, if the priest on beginning the Mass found that the assembly was unresponsive, he should not proceed to celebrate Mass, as the Eucharist will not happen—for each person in the assembly is a "celebrant," including the minister! This young priest apparently was ignorant of the fact that he was teaching what was tantamount to the Lutheran doctrine of Consubstantiation. Later, when I politely observed that this denial of the objective efficacy of the Eucharist was not orthodox Catholic teaching, Father appeared surprised and replied that he had taken the argument from a Canadian theologian's book that bore the imprimatur!

5. What has been done to put into practice the council's prescriptions and wishes concerning the formation and education of priests and religious and the Catholic education of youth (cf. *Optatam Totius, Perfectae Caritatis, Presbyterorum Ordinis, Gravissimum Educationis*)?

a. How are U.S. programs and institutions of formation and education (for priests, religious and laity) better than they were 20 years ago?

b. Are there ways in which the situation is worse than it was 20 years ago?

c. What should be done now?

### Prof. William E. May

On Friday, June 14, a reporter for a Catholic paper called to ask for my reaction to a recent Gallup poll. The poll disclosed that a *majority* of Roman Catholics (some 52 percent) did not consider premarital sex to be morally wrong. (A similar Gallup poll, taken in the early 60's, had shown that some 85 percent of Roman Catholics thought that premarital sex was wrong.) The reporter wanted to know whether I was surprised by this most recent Gallup poll.

I told him that I was not. I was not surprised because a significant number of Roman Catholic theologians, particularly those widely influential in institutions of higher learning, catechetical institutes, and seminaries, had come to hold that nothing the Church teaches on specific issues of morality has been proposed infallibly. Indeed, the majority of theologians in this country concur with Francis Sullivan (cf. his *Magisterium*) that the Church *cannot* teach infallibly on specific issues of morality, such as the morality of premarital sex, homosexuality, adultery, etc. Moreover, a majority of theologians whom I know claim that *dissent from noninfallibly proposed teachings of the Church* is perfectly legitimate, and that theological opinions dissenting from such noninfallibly proposed teachings can be regarded by the faithful as probable opinions that they may safely follow in shaping their own lives. This is simply a fact that must be honestly faced. It is no wonder, then, that a *majority* of Roman Catholics in this country now think that premarital sex is not necessarily wrong, whereas twenty years ago and even less a solid majority of Roman Catholics in this country would not hesitate in saying that premarital sex is always wrong.

To my mind, this Gallup poll is a startling revelation of the *failure* of U.S. programs and institutions of formation and education for priests, religious, and laity to carry out the prescriptions and wishes of Vatican Council II. The Council has been seriously and egregiously misinterpreted in this country, particularly in institutions of education and formation, and it has been made to *seem* to endorse positions that are clearly and vigorously repudiated in the documents of the Council.

What needs to be done? It's hard to say, but in my opinion patient, persistent, and courageous actions by the bishops of the country is what is most essential. While they frequently repeat Church teaching and assert that they hold it, at times they give the impression that they are willing to tolerate and even to accept in a limited way opinions clearly contradicting firm Church teaching. If they were boldly and firmly to say that anyone who holds that one can rightly contracept, masturbate, engage in homosexual acts,

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abort, etc. is *not* teaching in conformity with the Church and is therefore not to be given a hearing, then something might turn things around.

### Mother Assumpta Long

#### I. Benefits Already Realized

The revision of Constitutions and the newly formulated Code of Canon Law brought to religious a living law, freed from the obsolete as well as invigorated by an ecclesial character. (P.C. #3) *Essential Elements*, when received in obedience, gave new hope for authentic religious life, by deepening and refining a theology of that life. Congregations that lived and accepted *Essential Elements* are being blessed with vocations.

The education of religious includes, "the scriptural, liturgical, doctrinal, pastoral, ecumenical, missionary, and social." (P.C. #2) Thousands of religious are taking advantage of opportunities in other fields not directly religious but necessary to the understanding of culture past and present.

#### II. Problems and Difficulties in Carrying Out the Conciliar Decrees.

The primary and serious problem in carrying out the intention of the Council is one of the integration of intellectual training into the spiritual life. Lacking in particular is the spiritual depth derived from the more traditional practices and attitudes of the best religious of former generations.

- a) Structures, without which nothing can be done for this world or the next, are disdained. Spontaneity, "sincerity" and "naturalness" are over-valued.
- b) There exists over-intellectualization and its price is a weakening of faith, hope, and charity and ultimately loss of religious vocation.
- c) Self-confidence is replacing self-effacement.

#### III. New Initiatives Proposed for Future Action

It is the responsibilities of those governing, especially religious superiors, to emphasize, without neglecting intellectual formation, the parts of *Perfectae Caritatis* that carry essential prescriptions for the following of Christ. They can do this by their own example and exhortation, planned days of retreat and recollection, courses in the spiritual life and above all making these essential prescriptions the focal point of the prayer of Community. Some examples of these essential prescriptions, omitting the vows proper and common life *per se*, are the following:

- a) Union of the religious with Christ "through a self-surrender involving their entire lives." (P.C. #1)
- b) Continued interior renewal (cf. P.C. #2)
- c) "A more diligent observance of rule and constitutions" (P.C. #4)

- d) Living for God alone by death to sin and renunciation of the world (cf. P.C. #5)
- e) A life hidden with Christ in God (cf. P.C. #5)
- f) A more deeply spiritual approach to the sacred Scriptures and to the mystery of the Eucharist (cf. P.C. #6)
- g) A greater interpretation of the religious and apostolic spirit (cf. P.C. #8)

None of the above can be implemented without the direction of spiritual, experienced, and wise superiors who do not hesitate to teach and admonish by word and example. Neither should they hesitate to implement essential elements, so important to our vowed commitment.

6. *What is the state of catechetics and moral education, especially with regard to conscience formation (i.e., in reference to the magisterium and moral theology, social ethic, sexual morality, etc.) (cf. Gaudium et Spes, Dignitatis Humanae, etc.)?*

a. *Are there ways in which U.S. programs of moral education and formation are better than they were 20 years ago?*

b. *Are there ways in which the situation is worse than it was 20 years ago?*

*What should be done now?*

### Fr. Michael Wrenn

There is no one uniform pattern in U.S. Catholic educational circles because of the failure to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate pluralism. Both the *National Catechetical Directory* and *Catechesi Tradendae* are only cited by those who continue to teach in accordance with the Magisterium. Immediately after the publication of the *National Catechetical Directory*, an attempt was made by a number of writers in the religious education periodical *The Living Light*, the official publication of the Department of Education of the United States Catholic Conference, to downplay a number of key directives of the Directory. I have treated this in a past issue of our Newsletter. When *Catechesi Tradendae* was published, excerpts of it were printed with comment in this periodical. Most graduate schools of Religious Education in this country continue to follow the moral theology of Curran, McCormick et al. Diocesan based and Pontifical Catechetical Institutes are however exceptions to this. The Value Clarification, morally neutral methods of Simon and Kohlberg still find acceptance, though decliningly so, in many Catholic educational programs in the U.S.A. In the area of sex education, there is no overall concern for educating toward chastity.

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It is important to stress that the *National Conference of Diocesan Directors - C.C.D.*, a professional organization of religious educators (diocesan directors) is decidedly extremely liberal in its concept of Church, morality, the nature of Revelation, Liturgy, etc. The National Catholic Educational Association Forum of Directors of Religious Education is a decided improvement, but still a rather weak counterbalance to the N.C.C.D.-C.C.D. Nevertheless, some of the chief administrators of Catholic education in this country hold to a view of Catholic education which is concerned with speaking and making sense to the "New Catholic." Back in 1978, I attended an International Catholic Education meeting, at which one of these administrators endeavored to provide such a definition of Catholic education for the "New Catholic" who does not believe in a number of areas of Catholic faith and practice. His intervention fell on deaf ears at the International Conference but his philosophy continues to find a hearing and a following in this country. Allow me to submit the following examples of cognitive dissonance in religious education as support of my contention. The "New Catholic" definitely continues to be served. In the June 1985 issue of *The Living Light* there is an article by Kate Dooley, O.P., of the Department of Religion and Religious Education at the Catholic University of America, entitled, "Reconciliation and Penance in the Wake of the Synod." She presents an overview of the document and then her own reflections on this Papal and Synodal document. (Pages 328-335) Her concluding paragraph speaks for itself:

"This document, as the title suggests, is exhortative in nature and is not a legislative text. It is not the sum and substance of the Synod's deliberations. In the Synod process, many theological and pastoral concerns were voiced that were reflective of a variety of viewpoints and cultures. Pope John Paul II has selected what he considers the most pressing issues. The exhortation is part of the ongoing discussion about penance and reconciliation. It is in that context that the document must be read and interpreted."

Similarly in the same issue, pages 362-363, there is a review by Robert M. Friday of Catholic University of America of *Sexuality: A Christian View* by Rev. Gennaro P. Avvento, S.T.D. Once again the conclusion to the review says it all.

"Personally I found Avvento's book readable and insightful. I believe that it can be used fruitfully for its intended audience as long as one recognizes that the official church would have some serious reservations about a number of Avvento's conclusions. It is a good and probing

study guide into a thorny area of moral inquiry. Even though it does not break new ground, it does help the reader to appreciate both traditional and contemporary approaches and why these collide in matters sexual. Each chapter concludes with several Questions for Discussion which enhance the value of the book and insure that its readers will continue the inquiry beyond the limited scope of the text into their own personal life context."

I would say that this situation is worse nationally than it was twenty years ago. Valiant attempts to stem the tide have been tried but, by and large, these have not produced a national consensus in line with the stated goals and objectives either of the *National Catechetical Directory* or *Catechesi Tradendae*.

What should be done now?

1. Bishops need to take direct responsibility for this enterprise in their dioceses. Diocesan directors have, in many instances, coopted the teaching function of Bishops. They should be known as *Diocesan Advisors*, rather than directors.

2. There should be one textbook series, K-12, published under the direct auspices of the Bishops of the United States. Guidance from a Holy See Reference Text for religious ed programs would be needed.

3. There should be a Holy See conducted evaluation of Graduate and Undergraduate Schools of Religious Education in this Country and elsewhere. This should be called for at the Synod.

4. The Synod should once and for all clarify the Church's position on dissent and charitably invite reverential and obedient submission.

5. There needs to be a series of clarifications regarding Scriptural Inspiration, Inerrancy, the Nature of Revelation, Historicity in the New Testament and how to reconcile Faith and Exegesis.

6. An International Catechetical Congress should be convened by the Holy See (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education and Sacred Congregation for Clergy) no later than Spring 1987 for the purpose of setting forth uniform guidelines regarding goals and objectives in the field of Catechetics and Religious Education. The question of professionalism needs to be thoroughly covered and needed correctives presented in order to reestablish a relationship between a religious educator, the local pastor, the Bishop and the Holy Father.

7. The Synod should set a timetable for proper education about the Church's positions on matters of faith and morals which have been misrepresented over the last 20 years. The Church Universal must reestablish a proper interactional flow between its

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stated institutional educational goals and the perception of these goals by those serving their implementation, Bishops, priests, theologians, religious educators, etc.

### Fr. Joseph Mangan, S.J.

#### I. Positive

- 1) The scientific exposition of moral teaching is more thoroughly nourished by scriptural teaching.
- 2) There is an improved emphasis on the dignity of the human person.
- 3) There is an improved concern for the social dimensions of human actions.

#### II. Negative

- 1) Dissent from authoritative Magisterial teaching, which is legitimately exercised at the speculative level in scholarly journals, is being exercised illegitimately at the practical level, i.e. in practice, and defended as legitimate.
- 2) Dissent from authoritative Catholic teaching instead of assent is being taught at the catechetical level and beyond.

#### III. Needed for the future

- 1) Article 3 of the *Declaration on Religious Freedom* of Vatican Council II needs to be fully interpreted doctrinally, including text and context, especially the words: "...a man is bound to follow his conscience faithfully... he is not to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his conscience. Nor on the other hand, is he to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience, especially in matters religious."
- 2) An explanation and evaluation of the limitations of the individual's conscience.
- 3) A delineation of the difference between true freedom and license (Vd. *Church in the Modern World*, n. 17; *Sharing the Light of Faith*, n. 101).
- 4) An explanation of the strength of authoritative Magisterial teaching for the faithful and their conscientious moral judgments and personal action.
- 5) A delineation of the difference between legitimate and illegitimate pluralism in moral matters in practice.
- 6) An emphasis on the need and importance of teaching children and adults to assent to authoritative Catholic teaching (Vd. *Sharing the Light of Faith*, nn. 47, 104, 190).

### Fr. Ronald Lawler, OFM Cap.

a. The invitations of Vatican II to authentic renewal in moral theology (OT 16) and its illustrations of how to approach this renewal (GS and DH), papal documents of the American hierarchy (notably *To Live in Christ Jesus* and the *National Catechetical Directory*) gave light that have been used to make moral education far better in some places. The popularization of radical dissent in the Church, and the moral revolution in the world, have driven many moralists to far better work in moral theology than we had in the years before Vatican II.

b. *First*, there is far less of it. Far fewer students at grade school or secondary school level have any religious education at all. Moral education for adults (which had primarily been in sermons, missions, etc.) has practically ceased. Everywhere I have lectured I ask large groups of people: "When did you last hear a sermon defending Catholic teaching in marriage or sexual morality?" The usual answers are "Never!" or "So long ago I cannot remember." *Secondly*, outcomes of tests are terrifying. In an essay published in 1982 Bishop Bevilacqua surveyed polls on catechetical outcomes (in G. Kelly, ed., *Catechetical Instruction and the Catholic Faithful*, Boston, 1982). To read them is to realize why Fr. Andrew Greeley said that if he were a bishop, and read such statistics, he would call a panic meeting. A Gallup poll in May, 1985, showed that only 33% of Catholic today think that premarital sex is wrong; 46% of "Protestants" (*read*: "actual Protestants and the great secular America") think premarital sex is wrong. In 1969 Gallup had found that 72% of Catholic thought premarital sex is wrong. *Thirdly*, though much better moral education goes on in some places today, that is relatively rare. In Catholic graduate schools of religious education and even in seminaries, a demoralizing radical dissent is common in moral matters. When Catholic moral positions are taught at all, they are often presented as "official," "party-line" positions rightly rejected by many good Catholics; so that each may in "conscience" accept whatever view he or she chooses.

c. (a) Pastoral leaders must insist that Catholic moral teaching be taught firmly, clearly, intelligently, persistently. (b) Appropriate "helps" must be given in the pressures of today's media age: really Catholic ministering to families and youth must be immensely improved.

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7. *What have been the results of Vatican II as far as the promotion of evangelization and the missionary spirit is concerned (cf. Ad Gentes, etc.)?*

a. *Are there ways in which the attitudes and practices of U.S. Catholics with regard to evangelization and missionary activity are better than they were 20 years ago?*

b. *Are there ways in which the situation is worse than it was 20 years ago?*

c. *What should be done now?*

### Fr. Robert Levis

In response to the question of the results of Vatican II on evangelization and the missionary spirit, I report nothing but a pronounced decrease, lack of enthusiasm, and disinterest. This pronounced decrease in missionary activity on the part of the Catholic Church of America was most sudden, came clearly from a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of many of Vatican II documents. The document on religious freedom and others were construed as fostering a spirit of religious indifference, that natives could well be saved in their own faith systems provided they were faithful to them, that past missionary activity proved most harmful. So many missionary groups, like Maryknoll, saw themselves as featuring only the material well-being of the natives they served and as witnessing, in some abstract way, to the presence of Jesus Christ. This charge is easily proven by the statistical decrease both in the number of American missionaries to foreign lands and the sudden decrease in American converts through the last 20 years. The general spirit can be summed up in this attitude, "Why strive to make converts when each one can be saved in his own faith?"

### Prof. Charles E. Rice

In my opinion, Vatican II, as implemented is opposed to the way it was intended, has had a negative effect on evangelization and the missionary spirit. In some measure, the Council produced a greater readiness to talk with non-Catholics and a greater readiness on their part to consider the Church in an unprejudiced way. But the work of evangelization has been undermined by the uncertainty created in Catholic people by disloyal theologians and compliant bishops, and especially by the disastrous suppression of the Mass of Pope Pius V. The single most important thing that could be done of the Synod would be to restore the Mass without restriction. This would strengthen the faith and confidence of Catholics and would have a positive impact on evangelization and the missionary spirit.

### Fr. Joseph Hogan, CM

The coming Synod must attend to clarifying among other issues: 1. the priority of the spiritual in the work of evangelization, i.e., it is not a politico-economic ministry which results in a dangerous reductionism as is witnessed in the various liberation theologies; 2. that the new model of Church which is projected by this mind-set appears to be that of a *direct* democracy rather than the authentically understood collegiality. I say this because one hears repeatedly the term *own* or *ownership* which refers to input on the part of members to the policy of the Community (Church) which is implemented as submitted... only then can the members cooperate since now they feel that they *own* the policy. Somewhere along the line they are playing in both backfields or are both subjects and superiors, regulated and regulators in a mix that neutralizes both deliberative and consultative voices in the formulation of policy; 3. that there is a present problem of over-specialization in the area of social agencies committed to this type of evangelization. As a result, professionalism absorbs so much time and money in meetings, organizational efforts, bureaucracies, that there are too few workers in the arena or in direct contact with the materially poor.

8. *What progress has there been in ecumenical affairs and in promoting dialogue with non-Christians and with nonbelievers (cf. Unitatis Redintegratio, Nostra Aetate)?*

a. *How are the attitudes and practices of Catholics with regard to relationships with other Christians, non-Christians and non-believers better than they were 20 years ago?*

b. *Are there ways in which the situation is worse than it was 20 years ago?*

c. *What should be done now?*

### Robert Joyce

a. The attitudes and practices of Catholics in relation to other Christians, non-Christians, and non-believers are immensely better in respect to communication and sharing the total task of being human, and in acknowledging the complexity of the process of responding to the gift of Christian faith. Catholics and non-Catholics have much greater respect for one another's faith and are willing to share even in worship services to the extent that they can, without going directly against their own doctrinal commitments.

b. On the part of many or most Catholics—from the grass roots to the intellectuals—there is, nevertheless, an apparent loss of distinctive Catholic

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meaning, especially as regards the belief in the Real Presence and its implications for communal and individual prayer. Fear of offending our non-Catholic friends seems to have gone overboard—a good thing gone to extremes. So many seem to think that it does not matter what communion you belong to, as long as you are sincere. This can only dilute the importance of Christ's teaching and the importance of our listening well and determining which communion of the many obviously oppositional denominations is revealing the fullness of His message.

c. What should be done now? Stay the course with our profoundly and paradoxically ecumenical Holy Father—one who speaks the truth of Catholic faith while reaching out genuinely to share whatever can be honestly shared with all persons of good will, especially our fellow Christians.

We need to be careful not to give out false hopes for Christian reunion, while letting the Spirit of the living God work within all of us in the fullness of time. We can become stronger in our Catholic faith and be content without being contentious.

### Fr. Peter Stravinskis

By and large, relations between the Church and other religious groups in the United States have improved, at least to the point that the most offensive and visible manifestations of anti-Catholicism are absent and, from our side, a genuine attitude of openness and fairmindedness is in evidence. One could best characterize this first generation of ecumenism as an "era of good feeling."

9. *Is there a good and growing understanding of the role of the Church regarding the world and the temporal order according to the teaching of Vatican II (cf. Gaudium et Spes, Inter Mirifica)?*

a. *In what ways are the attitudes and practices of U.S. Catholics with regard to social doctrine and social action better than they were 20 years ago?*

b. *Are there ways in which the situation is worse than it was 20 years ago?*

c. *What should be done now?*

### Fr. Francis Canavan, S.J.

It can be said that in the past twenty years there has been a growing understanding of the Church's role regarding the world and the temporal order. Catholics and others are more aware than previously that the Church is concerned with mankind's temporal problems and addresses herself to them. They may not like what she says or even admit her right to say it,

but they can no longer ignore the fact that she is saying it. Besides, many of them welcome what she says, at least when it happens to coincide with their own political beliefs.

All of this is to the good insofar as it offsets the individualism so deeply rooted in our culture, and reawakens the sense of community which is so important a part of the Catholic tradition. It coincides, however, with a recrudescence of individualism in matters of personal morality. The result in many cases is the kind of Catholic who "follows his conscience" in regard to his own conduct but compensates for this with an active "social conscience."

There is a real danger, too, in the United States of the hierarchy using up its moral capital by taking too many stands on too many issues that are not simply moral issues. There is no line between morality and politics which the hierarchy can easily and scrupulously observe. But issues, without ceasing to be moral issues, become more and more political to the extent that policy decisions made in response to them depend upon more and more judgments about factors other than clear and simply moral principles. The hierarchy should be chary of making recommendations about such questions of policy. It can and should tell us the framework of moral principle within which we as citizens must make policy. But it only impairs its own moral authority by making an unending series of policy recommendations which were better left to the politicians and the citizens.

For example, I know very little about Nicaragua and do not pretend to know much. But it seems clear to me that any judgment on American policy toward that country and its present government depends on two prior judgments. One is a judgment on the nature and the goals of the Sandinista regime: is it or is it not a Marxist-Leninist regime which aims at a typical Marxist dictatorship? The other judgment is about the probable consequences of alternative American policies toward that regime: do we drive it into the arms of Cuba and the Soviet Union by a tough policy, or do we facilitate its evolution in that direction by refraining from interfering with it? No one, including the hierarchy, can give answers to these questions that are anything better than political opinions. The hierarchy should therefore steadfastly resist the pleas of activists to come out with recommendations on these and similar matters.

### Prof. John A Guegan

1. Benefits received. *Gaudium et Spes* does an admirable job of summarizing the Church's social doctrine. With little need for supplement, it can stand as a sourcebook to which anyone may turn to inform himself about—or review—that doctrine.

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2. Problems and difficulties: Those created or aggravated by the dissolution of marriage, the weakening of the family, threats to life, and the dominance of education by secular humanism. Difficult to understand and accept are the following: (a) the divine, rather than human, origin of society and government; (b) the meaning of the common good and the need to balance rights with duties, especially in the area of work; (c) the relation between education and the final end of human life; (d) the notion of education as formation and not mere information; (e) applications of the principle of solidarity, especially in international relations; (f) applications of the principle of subsidiarity, for example with respect to rights and duties of parents in the education of their offspring; (g) the rights of workers to organize and otherwise protect their legitimate interests; (h) the contribution private ownership makes to human freedom and responsibility; (i) the concern of the Church about a more equitable distribution of wealth. It strikes me as particularly difficult to raise sensitivity in those areas because certain biases of the American ideology are deeply ingrained and constantly absorbed from the general environment, especially "rugged individualism," the over-emphasis upon private rights, consumerism, and the orientation in social and economic relations toward taking more than toward giving. Because these biases are so deep in our society, I conclude that it would be exceedingly difficult to move bishops, priests, and teachers to make the serious and systematic effort it would take to form American Catholics in all aspects of the social doctrine of the Church. The tendency is always to bend it to our own circumstances, making these the given, rather than the doctrine.

3. Proposed initiatives. What else can be done about the social doctrine, or indeed, about any other doctrine of the Church but to preach it!... in season and out of season. It must first be taught to priests, seminarians, religious and lay teachers if it is to be communicated by them to the whole body of the faithful. Theology courses in Catholic colleges and in campus religious centers at the state schools also offer an important area for concentration on this aspect of the apostolate of doctrine. Finally, the pulpit can be used more effectively to teach the social doctrine when current issues afford the opportunity to address it.

### Prof. Christopher Wolfe

a. There is a greater realization that the Church does have a teaching on social affairs, especially due

to the catechesis of recent popes around the world. It is much more difficult today to compartmentalize religion in a purely "interior" world of one's own soul and to refuse to examine its implications for one's life in the world.

#### b. Problems.

1. a widespread inability to distinguish between the Church's social doctrine and the non-authoritative way in which individual Catholics (lay and cleric) seek to apply that doctrine in concrete situations;

2. the new clericalism: clerics invading the area for which the laity are primarily responsible: the sanctification of temporal realities by their free and responsible action in matters left to human opinion (i.e., most concrete political problems);

3. the reduction of theology to politics among some academic theologians and often to a politics which is naive or heavily influenced by ideologies which the Church has condemned (most frequently, Marxism, but occasionally pure laissez-faire capitalism, too).

4. the scandal of Catholic politicians in the U.S. acting in complete disregard for the Church's teaching, especially on abortion, and constructing apologiae which would confine the social doctrine of the Church to a matter of personal opinion which need not be acted on in the public sphere (albeit with the need to live with compromises that are unavoidable and understood as temporary necessities).

c. There should be some serious house-cleaning in academic theology: most directly in seminaries and more indirectly in the case of religious and teachers at universities that proclaim their "religious values" primarily at fund-raising time; the Church must figure out a way to disassociate Catholicism from the views of theologians who claim to be—and whom the media baptize as—Catholics, though they do much to attack the Church and confuse the faithful.

The social doctrine of the Church ought to be preached more and particular applications of it should be pressed less by clerics.

### Prof. William J. Parente

I can say that I think "the Church's task of sanctification" has been somewhat obscured over the last twenty years because of a tendency on the part of ecclesiastics to become involved in what appear to me to be strictly secular concerns. This problem is aggravated in that the orientation of concern tends to be straight *New York Times*.

## Items of Interest

- William Cardinal Baum (Prefect) has distributed for evaluation the Congregation for Catholic Education's draft of a document dealing with Catholic higher education. The purpose: To define the Catholic character of colleges and universities which claim to be Catholic. Cardinal Baum wishes critiques to be returned to him by November 30, 1985.

- *The Joint Committee of Catholic Learned Societies and Scholars.*

JCCLSS hopes to form a Bishops' and Scholars' Committee which would assure broad contact between bishops and scholars. A committee composed of bishops from the Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices and of scholars appointed by JCCLSS will provide a link between the two communities.

Other issues interesting the Joint Committee are:

(1) Canon 812 of the 1983 code requires that those who teach theological disciplines in any institute of higher studies have a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical authority.

(2) The proposed papal constitution on higher education. This document has been released to various consultors, many of whom reacted strongly against it.

(3) The Joint Committee expressed its concern to Archbishop John Quinn, the Chairman of the Committee on Doctrine, about the withdrawal of the imprimatur on the Wilhelm Catechism, a catechetical work that had been used in dioceses throughout the country.

(4) Two member organizations, the Canon Law Society of America, have issued a statement on "Doctrinal Responsibilities," setting forth procedures for promoting cooperation and resolving disputes between bishops and theologians.

- The new National Office address of the Pope John XXIII Medico-Moral Research Center is 186 Forbes Road, Braintree, Mass. 02184. The Center publishes monthly a newsletter named *Ethics & Medics*. Contact Fr. Edward J. Bayer, STD, who is director of Continuing Education.

- Five American archbishops, including Cardinals Bernardin of Chicago and Law of Boston, joined thousands of ordinary Catholics in honoring and praying for Monsignor Josemaria Escriva, Opus Dei's founder, at memorial Masses throughout the country this past week. The occasion was the tenth anniversary of Msgr. Escriva's death. The other archbishops were James A. Hickey of Washington, D.C., John Quinn of San Francisco, and Rembert Weakland, O.S.B. of Milwaukee. Other cardinals and archbishops around the world issued statements on the anniversary of Msgr. Escriva's death.

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, addressing a packed Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago, referred to Msgr. Escriva's message and commented, "It is essential to the vocation of Christians in the world that they carry on Christ's mission in and through their involvement in the secular order, contributing to its sanctification, to the restoration of all things in Christ."

"Monsignor Escriva was an innovator, but he also stood firmly and squarely with the Christian tradition. His message was a call to return daily to the roots of the Christian way of life and to live it creatively and courageously in our contemporary world."

- A list of 10,000 names of American women who have signed the *Affirmation for Catholic Women* was presented to Pope John Paul II at the papal audience held on June 12 in Rome. The list is a preliminary and partial list of signers of the document which is a statement of unity with the teachings of the Catholic Church on all matters dealing with faith and morals, with the *Magisterium*, the teaching authority of the Church, and with the Holy Father.

"God Bless American Women," the pope said after receiving the statement and names. Helen Hull Hitchcock, one of the founding members of the organization, Women for Faith and Family, made the presentation to His Holiness.

The St. Louis-based organization which has been distributing the *Affirmation* and collecting signatures, says that it has received over 15,000 signatures and hundreds of letters to date. Collection of the signatures will continue at least until late next year, spokesmen for the organization say.

An earlier list of about 4,000 signatures had been sent to Bishop Joseph Imesch, chairman of the NCCB Commission currently studying a Pastoral Letter on the subject of women. *Women for Faith and Family* has received word from Bishop Imesch that it will be included in hearings to be conducted by the commission.

In addition to collection of signatures to the *Affirmation* (which has also been translated into Spanish for use among Spanish-speaking Catholic women) *Women for Faith and Family* is sponsoring a national conference to be held in St. Louis on October 4, 5, 6, 1985. Among the speakers who will address the conference are Bishop Thomas J. Welsh of Allentown, Pennsylvania, president of *The Pontifical Commission on the Family for the United States*, and Mother Angelica, founder and director of the Eternal World Television Network (EWTN), a Cable Network located in Birmingham, Alabama.

For copies of the *Affirmation*, or for further information, contact *Women for Faith and Family*, P.O. Box 8326, St. Louis, Missouri, 63132.

## The Influence of Philosophy on the Expressions of the Faith

by Leo Elders, SVD

The fact that God's message to man has to be expressed in human concepts implies a certain vulnerability of this message. We all know of wrong attitudes of Christians in the field of moral behaviour: many Christians of the 16th and 17th centuries thought the Negroes were inferior men and could be used as slaves. Everyone in those days seemed to think so. Christians of the 19th and 20th century thought they could wage war just for nationalistic reasons. They were tragically wrong. Some Christians of the 20th century think they may resort to artificial contraception or to abortion, just because it seems obvious to them. They are wrong again.

Now what happens in the field of morals, also happens in doctrine. St. John Chrysostomus writes that it is proper to heresy to substitute its own ideas for the dogmas of the Church (1 *Cat. bapt.*, 24). This sort of manipulation, dilution or falsification of the faith already took place at the very beginning: the Apostles warn of false preaching. St. Ignatius of Antiochia in all his letters (exc. that to the Romans) speaks of the danger of doctrinal error. A short look at the history of the Church shows that the main heresies are almost always the result of the intrusion of wrong philosophical thinking into the expression of the faith. This is the case with Gnosticism, Arianism, Monophysiticism, Pelagianism etc. Let me explain this by a few examples: in Neoplatonism there are intermediaries between the First Principle and man, as the Intellect and the World Soul. Some Christians used this system to explain the Trinity of Divine Persons. But in doing so they adulterated the true faith which holds that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are sharing the same divine nature and are equal in power. In this way, Arianism was born. Another example is that of Nestorianism as taught by Diodorus of Tarsus and others: according to Aristotelian philosophy human nature is something entire in itself and subsisting. Hence Jesus of Nazareth must be a complete human person. It follows that the Incarnation of God's Son is no more than a loose connection between God and man. Finally I quote the case of Pelagius who was influenced by Stoic philosophy and taught that man must become virtuous by his own efforts.

It is not surprising that the orthodox Christians felt that wrong interpretations of the faith were caused by philosophical thinking. This is what Tertullianus noted when he wrote that Plato, although in good faith, became the supplier of all heresies (*De anima* 23, 5). Hippolytus of Rome writes that the chief Christian heresies are a resuscitation of pagan systems of thought (*Refut. haer.*). This happened not only in the ancient Church. Something similar took place in the Middle Ages. Abaelardus attributed to the Holy Spirit the properties of the world soul of Plato's *Timaeus*. The history of heresies in the 12th and 13th century is for a great deal dependent on the introduction of Aristotle's works and Arab philosophy (cf. G. Théry, *Au-tour du décret de 1210, I: David de Dinant*, Paris 1925, p. 109). In his *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, St. Bonaventure asserts that all errors arise from the wrong use of philosophy and from man's evil will.

In view of this past history of the Church we may assume that even today certain currents of contemporary thought will affect the way in which some theologians and authors express and explain the faith. In an essay published 25 years ago ("Was ist Häresie?", in *Häresien der Zeit*) Karl Rahner spoke of crypto-heresies: everyone is affected by the bacilli and viruses of his time, even if he does not always get sick. He cannot help taking over some of the ways of thinking and some of the attitudes of his environment. This places us before the question which trends in contemporary philosophy influenced Christianity. Such an influence, if present, can be positive or negative. After the last war so called Personalism developed in France and this movement (which was partly a fruit of Christianity) helped Christians become aware of their duty to promote the human person and his rights. Other examples could be given of such positive influences. But here we shall only deal with negative influences. A first widespread attitude of modern man is subjectivism. Subjectivism is not a particular philosophy, but a more general attitude which is central in existentialism and in a good deal of contemporary ethical thought. We may define it as an attitude which attaches more importance to one's own individual position, feelings and views than to objective and general considerations. Subjectivism stresses freedom over and against authority. It stresses personal experience over and against general rules. It considers individual man the centre of reference, so that man will interpret reality in such a way that it fits in with his own ideas rather than admit things as they are.

Subjectivism implies a certain rupture between man and the world. In the age of the Renaissance, man began to consider himself in isolation from nature and society. Subjectivism probably was promoted by modern technology inasmuch as it made people more interested in what they can make themselves than in what nature offers them.

Subjectivism is also dependent on philosophical insights: Fichte, Feuerbach stressed the place of the human individual. Merleau-Ponty asserted that there is no Absolute behind human thought. For Sartre each individual must decide in total spontaneous liberty what reality means to him. Modern art also offers some interesting examples of this subjectivism. In the past novelists tried to describe human life in its reality, but the so-called "roman nouveau" (Alain Robbe Guillet and Others) say that writing is an adventure of liberty. To them and to some modern painters art is an experiment with their own freedom.

At the level of the faith subjectivism makes people consider their own needs, their own feelings and thinking all important. Objective teachings, such as Christian doctrine, are easily pushed aside as insignificant. Dogmas which are difficult to

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believe in, are said to be superfluous. In moral life, one's own private convictions become the law. Some even go so far as to say that St. Paul's ethical teaching cannot be applied to our age, because he did not know our situation and our personal problems.

This subjectivism is also the cause of many difficulties at the level of catechesis. In Europe and America quite a number of studies written on this subject suggest that catechesis should not be the teaching of a definite message, but a dialogue with others, in which one listens to their experiences and tries to make them aware of what they are as human beings.

Related to this subjectivism are two other fundamental ways of thinking, viz. perspectivism and historical relativism. The philosophical system of Maurice Merleau-Ponty is called perspectivism insofar as this famous French philosopher holds that my knowledge of reality is always dependent upon the condition of my body, my own past experiences, my needs and feelings. The outside world as such in its pure objectivity cannot be known. What we know of things are perspectives which change according to what man is able to notice or chooses to notice on account of his own condition. The world appears in certain perspectives, according to the human subject who is considering it. The reality of the world is replaced by a series of perspectives or phenomena. Man himself is the fundamental reality. Even the absolute knowledge of the sciences must be replaced by a sort of dialectic between the human subject and the world.

This way of thinking was also propagated by Jean-Paul Sartre, and it seems to have influenced the thought of the Belgian theologian Edward Schillebeeckx, but before dealing with the theory of this author we should first mention historical relativism.

The 18th century has often been called the age of ideology of progress and development. Quite suddenly philosophers began to think that there is a continuous progress toward a better world. Hegel's philosophy of dialectical idealism also subscribes to the ideology of progress. In his view the state of thought and philosophy depends on the stage of the general evolution of thought. In so-called historicism this conviction was expressed in a more easily understandable way. Thus Dilthey said that man's thought is dependent on a certain age of history. Just like we cannot get outside our own age, it follows that philosophy and theology as well as the sciences are determined by the spiritual climate of the historical period in which they occur.

Perspectivism and historicism have exercised a great influence upon theology in the past 20 years. Edward Schillebeeckx has become one of the major exponents of this way of thinking. Although he admits that certain basic categories of human thought remain present in successive historical periods, he holds that the vast mass of our concepts and attitudes are time-bound and depend on the period of history in which we live. According to Schillebeeckx the message of Jesus has been expressed in concepts proper to certain groups of Christians of the first or second century, but these formulae are no longer valid for us. We must, in our turn, formulate the core of the message of Jesus in concepts of our own historical period. Let me give a few examples of how Schillebeeckx applies his theory. What is essential in Jesus and his mission is that he is the eschatological prophet, that is, he brings God's ultimate message of salvation to mankind. His disciples used categories of their environment to express this conviction. For instance, they called Jesus God's Personal Wisdom, or also a Divine Man (*theios aner*), or they used the term *Logos*. The gospels were written with the help of categories of specific groups of Christians. For instance, Jesus' words "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, give to God what belongs to God" are already coloured by the way of thinking of Jewish Christians in Palestine. These Christians could not start a revolution against the Romans, who just were too powerful. Therefore, they submitted to Roman authority and paid their taxes, and so this community coloured the word of Jesus by means of its own experience. We, Christians, of the 20th century, are therefore not bound by this word of the gospel. We do not know precisely what Jesus himself said. Jesus' words are hidden behind the gospel text. We must reformulate in our own way what Jesus' message implied, or, rather, what Jesus means to us.

It is easy to give countless other examples, taken from the works of Schillebeeckx. The Belgian theologian applies his theory to Jesus' resurrection, to the theology of the gospel of John, to the letters of St. Paul, etc. The core of the resurrection of Jesus is the spiritual experience of the apostles that God has forgiven them their unfaithfulness during Jesus' passion and they must continue to preach the message of Jesus. The apostles used categories of their own Jewish environment to express their inner certitude that the cause of Jesus was going on, and that God offers salvation to man. and so they spoke of a bodily resurrection, but this way of speaking need not be historical. The same applies to what Jesus and Paul are saying about the indissolubility of marriage. Marriage is a social fact which takes different forms according to the stages of culture. In our own culture, marriage has become a partnership in love. When this no longer exists, there simply is no marriage so that indissolubility does not apply to modern marriage.

Professor Schillebeeckx then brings his theory in connection with the history of Christian doctrine: in the course of time this doctrine was formulated in the concepts of particular ages. These concepts lose their value, and must be replaced by new ones. This holds true of the dogmas of christology, of the doctrine of redemption, of Mary's virginity, of the Eucharist, and of the Church and ministry. Schillebeeckx likes to speak of a naive Greco-Roman articulation of the faith, which for us is not obligatory. He considers the Church as a movement rather than as an institution. This means that the form which the Church has taken in the course of time is not necessary, but just a possible form, which can be exchanged for a better one.

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The same is true of the ministry. In the course of time ministry in the Church had different forms. It would be absurd to make one of these obligatory for ever. The only thing which is necessary in the Church is that there are ministers, but all the forms of ministry are contingent. It follows that on this point there is no real divergence between Protestants and Catholics.

I hope that the examples I have given above show which are the consequences of the introduction of perspectivism and historical relativism in theology. Of course, some theologians are more radical than others. The theory is quite widespread, however. For instance, in my own country it has become the dominant theology. We also find popular expressions of it, such as: modern thought is superior to all earlier insights. For this reason, modern thought and science must become the norm of Christian life.

Fortunately this relativism is not shared by all. A good number of neopositivist philosophers and scientists are firmly opposed to it. Karl Popper, in his book *The Open Society and its Enemies*, II, 369, calls this relativism the main philosophical error of our time. Like everywhere else, there is a grain of truth in perspectivism and relativism, but the theory is substantially false. The total historicity of truth is untenable.

We must turn to some other leading philosophies. Analytical philosophy as it was worked out by the Wiener Group and taught in Oxford and elsewhere in the Anglo-Saxon world also exercised a profound influence, in the first place on Protestant theology, but also on some Catholic authors. It is a central affirmation of analytical philosophy that our language, our sentences, must have a verifiable meaning. However, in most cases the object of religious assertions cannot be verified at all. For this reason religious language lies outside scientific and rational discourse. At best it may be compared to artistic creation. It expresses feelings and evokes emotions. It may even make Christians act in a certain way, but we do not know to what extent it has to do with reality. In this way, religious language becomes a creation of man and the concept of God is a product of man. This theory leads to a "death of God" theology.

Thus far the influence of analytical philosophy has not been very strong on Catholic theology, because it was not widely accepted in France and Germany. However, there is a widespread attitude which is related to it, viz. the conviction that one should only admit what has a meaning to oneself, what agrees with one's own experience or what one can verify. In this way an empiricist point of view is latent in many publications about the faith.

Connected with analytical philosophy is positivism. For the sake of simplicity let us understand by positivism a system of thought which is so impressed by the world view of modern science that it tends to reduce all philosophical and theological knowledge to scientific. Central in the positivist view is the conviction that whatever happens in the universe is caused by homogeneous causes. It is unscientific to resort to God as the Supreme Cause. Man belongs to the material universe and is the product of a slow evolution. Only science can give the answer to what man and his destiny are. Whatever lies outside this world of science, does not really matter much. The "homo positivus" that is, man marked by this positivism, sees the world in a horizontal way and sometimes loses his capacity for a deeper understanding. The sciences, indeed, construct systems to grasp the phenomena and to master nature. In this way they promise progress and affluence to man. However, they do not lead to a knowledge of what is essential. Gabriel Marcel once wrote that science and technology seem to remove man from the world of mystery and being, which is at the same time that of the presence of God and of hope.

Positivism goes hand in hand with a certain anti-intellectualism. But we must restrict ourselves to only a few of the dominant trends of thought, and so we must now briefly consider Marxism. As an heir to part of Hegel's legacy Marx holds that man's social condition determines his thinking and his being. For this reason no real education of man is possible when we do not first influence the social conditions in which he has to live. Marx went moreover very far on the road of shutting man up within the society in which he lives, to which he must be subservient. Man is a being who makes himself; any dependence of God is to be rejected. Marxism has profoundly influenced a number of Christians: the result is that they read the gospels in a Marxist understanding of class struggle; Jesus' message only has a temporal dimension. Others think that man depends so much on his environment, that it is impossible to preach the gospel if we first do not change society and introduce social and economic equality. If a normal economic development is unable to bring about such a development, we must resort to revolution, war or even terrorism. This way of thinking appears to have entered liberation theology.

There is another favorite doctrine of Marxism which must be mentioned in this context, viz. that man depends so much on his environment that he is no longer guilty of his shortcomings. Society and the others are to be blamed. Originally this idea was first clearly taught by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, then it came to be present in Germany and began to exercise its influence. In German philosophy theories of ontological guilt are widespread. We find these theories in Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger: moral sin, if admitted, is not important; ontological *alienation* is what matters. Through Nietzsche this way of thinking influenced Freud who worked out his own theory of the origin of guilt feelings (parricide; the separation of the *super-ego* from the *ego*). Let me explain Heidegger's position somewhat more: man is a being which lost its true place (*Unheimlichkeit*). He has been thrown into the world but should return to Being. Man's finitude is the reason why he is guilty. When man admits this ontological guilt, he makes himself free. In this way moral sin is absorbed into ontological fault. The so-called "good conscience" is rejected by Heidegger, because it does not see man's miserable condition.

In the Western world there is a very widespread attitude now of criticising society and existing structures. There even is

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a feeling that the world is rotten. Very seldom people place the responsibility with themselves. They rather tend to blame others. It goes without saying that these ways of thinking make Christian life more difficult, since they expel awareness of one's own moral faults.

We must now turn to a last current of thought which we shall call existentialism (although the attitude which we are going to describe is more widespread than the existentialism of one or another philosopher).

It is a fundamental theory of Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and others that God and man are mutually exclusive. If God would exist as an infinite being, there is nothing left for man. Man would no longer be free. For this reason God cannot exist. In this absolute way Christians do not hold existentialism, but there is nevertheless a widespread feeling that they are autonomous in the field of moral life and must decide themselves what is right or wrong. In other words, Christian ethics should not be based upon the will of God, but on the autonomy of man. Moral obligations, imposed from above, are against man's freedom and are oppressive structures. The desire for autonomy in the field of moral life is often connected with the desire to reach a greater happiness or a higher quality of life. Unfortunately, one often discovers a certain infantilism or easy going eudemonism behind this sort of saying.

The question of autonomy and heteronomy in moral life is an important issue. It does have an historical background. Often it goes together with the rather superficial view that one has to follow one's own conscience. But conscience is then used to denote a sort of personal evaluation, influenced by one's desire, and not an objective judgment of the intellect.

We cannot now discuss it in detail, but we only notice that this type of existentialist subjectivism has a great influence on many Christian authors in Europe and in America. Moral life is perhaps one of the fields where the influence of modern thought makes itself felt most.

The cases we have mentioned are far from exhaustive. I do hope however, they show how Christians are always exposed to the influences of prevailing currents of thought. Now that the Western world has to large extent become secularised, dominant philosophical trends will carry very little of Christian substance, but often be at variance with Christian views. They nevertheless determine the spiritual climate in which Christians live.

If Christians lead a life of prayer and virtue and let themselves be guided by the Word of God and the teaching of the Church, they'll be able to avoid most of the above mentioned ways of thinking. In order, however, to become aware of the dangers which threaten, a philosophical analysis is of the greatest value. In his age, St. Thomas Aquinas considered it his duty to reject those philosophical currents which were contrary to the truth of Christian revelation. The Christian philosopher today should also put his shoulders under this task. (*Fr. Elders is a seminary professor in Rolduc, Holland*)

## Cardinal O'Connor: Politics and Abortion

"I don't understand when elected public officials and legislators tell us who plead for what we believe to be the obvious imperative for change—when they tell us: 'Alright, but you tell us how to change the law. You have to tell me what kind of legislation would pass. You tell me what kind of law would accord with the Constitution.'" Now in very sincere charity I must ask: "Is that not your professional responsibility?"

In very sincere charity I must say to elected public officials and legislators: "You don't ask me, for example, how many military personnel are required to defend the lives of Americans from potential aggression. You legislate the number. You don't ask me what prescription drugs should be permitted or prescribed, you make them legal or illegal. You don't ask me what kind of automobile practices will save life. You legislate the use of seat belts. You don't ask me how we can control alcohol abuse. You raise the drinking age. Why then, when we come to the fundamental question, the absolute imperative of saving human life, why do you say to me or suggest to me: 'I would be glad to propose legislation, I would be happy to support a change in the laws, but you must tell me how to do it.'" I don't understand that.

In my judgment we justifiably expect our public officials to have the professional competency, the ingenuity, the personal integrity to promote, through responsible legislation, a state of affairs in which every human life is safeguarded, and to preserve the magnificent tradition of our nation which teaches, again, that the weakest among us need the strongest protection and that all of us are created equal and endowed by our Creator with the inalienable right to life.

As I see it it is simply not enough to fault the Churches, to fault parents, to fault school teachers, for failing to teach the sacredness of human life. It's self-evident that in our society the great teacher is the law. However we violate it, we are taught that the law is to be respected. Indeed, some of those in public life who most aggressively defend their support of abortion do so while insisting that they are sworn to uphold the law. But if the civil law is to be observed so carefully and so reverently, if public officials are sworn to uphold and defend it, then it does not seem to me to be appropriate really, to blame the Churches, the parents, the school teachers for not doing a good job in teaching the truth about abortion that it violates divine law. What a strange twist in our society, that a public official must support in conscience a civil law that contradicts divine law! (*Right to Life Convention, June 22, 1985*)

## Books Received

• Rene Laurentin/Ljudevit Rupcic, *Is the Virgin Mary Appearing at Medjugorje?* (Word Among Us Press, P.O. Box 3646 D.C. 20037, 169 pp. no price)

The apparitions reported here are now controversial but Fr. Laurentin is a believer, which gives a special flavor to the account.

*Christian Classics* P.O. Box 30 Westminster, MD 21157)

• Hilda Graff, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (554 pp. \$18.95)

Two volumes in one about what contemporary thinkers are saying about Christian teaching on Mary. Hilda Graef is an English author of some substance with four major works to her name.

• George Vass, *Understanding Karl Rahner*, Vol. I *A Theologian in Search of Philosophy*; Vol. II *Foundations of a Theological System* \$25 for the set.

The author, a Jesuit, student, and friend of Karl Rahner, wrote these volumes to unlock the mystery of Rahner himself. For all theological students and scholars.

• Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church* (518 pp. \$14.95)

An especially important volume for pastors and bishops and those interested in the emerging laity.

• Colman J. Barry *Readings in Church History* (Three Volumes in one: 1371 pp. \$50.00)

First published in 1960 this is a remarkable collection in three parts: From Pentecost to the Protestant Revolt; the Reformation; the Modern Era. All readings are selective but here are about 300 documents in ready reach.

• Walter Farrell, O.P. *A Companion to the Summa—Four Volumes* \$50.00

Those old enough to have been saddened by the untimely death of Fr. Farrell many years ago will be delighted by the resurrection of his classic four volume analysis and commentary on Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*. Published first by Sheed and Ward between 1938 and 1942. These volumes were theological handbooks for many priests and budding priests. They have stood the test of time. The titles of the four volumes are: I *The Architect of the Universe*; II *The Pursuit of Happiness*; III *The Fullness of Life*; IV *The Way of Life*. Christian Classics is to be complimented on this re-printing.

### Ignatius Press

• Hans Urs, Von Balthasar, *A Short Primer for Unsettled Laymen*, (137 pp. \$7.95)

This book is exactly what its title promises, short essays on everything about the contemporary Church from dogma to ecclesiology to politics and simply written.

• John Cardinal Wright, *Resonare Christum* Volume I (1939-1959): Papers edited by R.S. Almagno, OFM 419 pp. \$16.95

Anyone who ever heard Cardinal Wright speak values the memory of eloquence, learning, devotion to the Church and wit. Here are 30 of his best from the Boston/Worcester years, from animadversions on Jesuits and Popes to interviews with John Deedy and Donald McDonald.

• Joseph M. Schiedler, *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion*, 350 pp. \$9.95

Mr. Scheidler founded the Pro-Life Action League in 1980 and has helped close six abortion clinics in Chicago. The banning of abortion at Cook County Hospital prompted the *Chicago Sun-Times* to do a 20-part expose of "the Abortion Profiteers," and helped Illinois achieve the most restrictive anti-abortion law in the country. This is his story of the 99 ways to stop abortion.

### Mellen Press

• Fr. John McDonnell, C.M., *The World Council of Churches*, Mellen Press, P.O. Box 450, Lewiston, New York 14092 - 467 pp. \$49.50.

*Eighteen packed chapters about WCC from its earliest stages to its 1983 convention, with special development of the impact of Vatican II and the future role of the Catholic Church.*

### Daughters of St. Paul

• *Life a Gift of God: U.S. Catholic Leaders Speak Out on Life Issues*, 230 pp., \$6.00 paperback \$7.00 hard-bound.

Major addresses of U.S. Catholic bishops on human life, its rights and meaning, including all the controversial statements of Cardinals Krol, O'Connor, Law, Bernardin. Eighteen in all.

### Orbis Books

• James McGinnis, *Solidarity With the People of Nicaragua*, (Orbis Books 162 pp. \$7.95)

This is an explanation of the problems of the people of Nicaragua with a sympathetic view of the revolution. Published by Maryknoll.

## Special Notice

The Executive Board of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars will meet at the Sheraton International Hotel (O'Hare Airport) Chicago at 9 a.m. September 28th. The following members are reminded to appear: Rev. Earl A. Weis, S.J., President; Dr. Joseph Boyle, Vice-President; Dr. Joseph P. Scottino, Executive Secretary and Treasurer; Rev. Kenneth Baker, S.J.; Dr. Anne Carson Daly; Dr. Raymond L. Dennehy; Dr. James Hitchcock; Rev. Msgr. George A. Kelly; Rev. Ronald Lawler, OFM Cap.; Dr. William E. May; Prof. Ralph McInerny; Rev. Richard R. Roach, S.J.; Rev. James Schall, S.J.; Rev. William Smith; Dr. Paul Vitz; Rev. Michael Wrenn.

## Cardinal Wright Award

Dr. Herbert Ratner, longtime protagonist of Catholic family values will be the 7th recipient of the Cardinal Wright Award, given annually by the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars for extraordinary service to the Church. Dr. Ratner, convert to the Church, one-time leading medical consultant to the Cana Conference of Chicago and nationally known for his editorship of *Child and Family*, is likely to be one of the most beloved Catholic physicians in the U.S. Not only is he a former president of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians Guilds but he presently is a member of Cardinal Gagnon's Pontifical Commission on the Family.

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