

# Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter

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## Our President's Message: *Humanae Vitae* In Context

During the 1960's I was working as an editor for the Bruce Publishing Company in Milwaukee. For several years early in the decade I was looking for someone who could write a good book showing the immorality of contraception, and in 1964 I met Germain Grisez, who wrote the book, which was published under the title *Contraception and the Natural Law*. At the same time other books by Catholics on this subject were appearing, many of them challenging the teaching of the Church and suggesting or, rather claiming that this teaching could and ought to be changed. Among the latter the most influential book, perhaps, was John Noonan's *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by Catholic Theologians and Canonists*. By the middle of the decade a host of books and articles in defense of contraception by noted Catholic writers, among them Louis Dupre, Michael Novak, Daniel Callahan, Rosemary Ruether and other notables, had appeared. Grisez's voice in support of the Church's teaching was a lonely one.

In 1967 the celebrated "Majority Reports" of the papal commission on birth regulation were leaked to the public and published in the *National Catholic Reporter*. Then everyone learned that the majority of the theologians (and other experts) on the Pope's own commission judged the teaching of the Church on this matter erroneous. Surely, everyone seemed to be thinking, Pope Paul will heed the advice and lift the Catholic "ban" from contraception.

Then, in July 1968 came the bombshell: *Humanae Vitae*, in which Pope Paul VI, rejecting the arguments of the "Majority Reports" reaffirmed the centuries' old teaching of the Church that contraception is intrinsically disordered and that every marital act must be open to the transmission of life.

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Hardly had the encyclical appeared when it was vigorously rejected for its "physicalism" and failure to recognize the needs of the faithful in a world that was becoming increasingly crowded and in which married people, in particular, had sufficient things to worry about without getting hung up over contraception. After all, it didn't seem to hurt anyone and it surely helped people cope with some very difficult problems.

Father Charles Curran of Catholic University led the attack. He and some associates quickly drafted a statement of dissent from the encyclical, and by mid-August it had been signed by over 600 of the "leading" Catholic lights of the day. My name can be found among the signatories, and for signing Curran's statement of dissent I was congratulated by some for my "courage" and my "intelligence". I sincerely repent of that act, for it was one of cowardice. It may be of help to some to know why I signed this statement and why I am heartily sorry for having done so.

When I signed it, I did not believe that I could, personally, practice contraception. Nor would my wife, who is truly courageous and whose intelligence is enlightened by a deep faith, have ever allowed it. However, at the time I was intellectually confused and I had been impressed somewhat by one line of argument in the "Majority Reports", namely, the argument that the whole of marriage ought not to be contraceptive, but that particular acts within marriage could be made contraceptive and in this way serve the good of procreation in a responsible way. In addition, I knew that a good number of people who love children and generously raise them were practicing contraception, and this made me wonder about the teaching.

But there was another, baser reason, why I signed the statement. Many of its signers had outstanding reputations as "thinkers" and "scholars", and I wanted to be counted among the elite, the *illuminati*, the bold, courageous, advanced thinkers in Roman Catholicism.

I believe that I began to repent of my act almost immediately. Deep down I knew there was something wrong with contraception, and I realized that my decision to sign the statement was, in part at least, motivated by base, vainglorious considerations.

In 1971 I began to teach Christian ethics, and this forced me to study, and study carefully, the nature of the moral argument. I began to see ever more clearly the sophistry of the "Majority Reports" and to realize that the reasoning used to justify contraception could be used to justify abortion, premarital sex, etc--something that is now readily admitted, as Father Curran himself acknowledged in an article on divorce and remarriage in 1976.

I found a clue to the sophistry of the argument that individual acts of contraception are all right so long as the marriage as a whole is open to children in *Humanae Vitae*, itself. There (par. 13) the Pope had said: "Indeed, it is justly considered that a conjugal act imposed upon one's partner without regard for his or her condition and lawful desires is not a true act of love, and therefore it goes against the requirements which the right moral order calls for in the relationship between husband and wife".

How true! Yet consider the justification of contraception based on the distinction between the whole of married life and individual acts within it: would not the same kind of reasoning justify individual acts destructive of the "lawful desires" of one's spouse, provided the marital life as a whole respected these desires? How stupid an argument that is, yet it is precisely the same kind of argument used to justify acts deliberately aimed at destroying the beautiful gift of fertility and to repudiate, within the marital act, the gift of human life. Only someone predisposed to justify contraception could accept this line of reasoning.

I began to realize that the moral theory invented to justify contraception could be used to

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## First Draft of the Bishop' Pastoral on Women

**"Partners in the Mystery of Redemption": A first draft from the NCCB Committee for a pastoral letter on Women. (Origins, Vol. 17, #45, pp 757-788, April 22, 1988): A Critique**

*Readers should be aware that, following recent practice, the Bishops of the United States have offered a first draft of an important pastoral on women and their concerns, for the thoughtful criticism of their fellow Bishops and also of scholars and others who have seriously considered this subject and the values it treats. The Fellowship of Catholic Scholars considers it a rewarding Christian duty and a moment for service to the Church to respond to the Bishops with the greatest objectivity, scholarship, care and respect. Of the many comments we received from our members we print below a full, balanced critique of Dr. Joyce Little, and add to it excerpts from longer pieces by Mr. Stephen Clark and Father Paul Mankowski. The Fellowship is pleased to enter a dialogue on a subject so compelling in interest to all Catholics and especially the Catholic women who sustain Catholic learning and the tradition, our families and our Catholic institutions.*

*The Editor*

### **PARTNERS IN THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION: A Critique**

"Partners in the Mystery of Redemption" is, in my judgment, a flawed document, both in structure and in content, requiring enormous revision before it is issued in its final form. I shall restrict myself to four areas in which I think revisions are most obviously required: 1) the questionable material included in the "Voices of Alienation" sections, 2) the imbalanced approach in the sections given over to reflections and responses of the bishops, 3) the "shotgun" approach employed where economic proposals are considered and 4) the disturbing theological statements to be found

within the document.

#### 1) Voices of Alienation

The "Voices of Affirmation" and "Voices of Alienation" sections are crucial within the present structure of this document, because they supply the material upon which the bishops are reflecting and to which they are responding. Unfortunately, however, these sections lack any sort of control or method by which what is included within them might be judged, much less reflected upon and responded to. These sections seem to be based on two assumptions, first, that every one is entitled to her opinion, and second, that all opinions are equal. Both of these assumptions are pervasive in the United States today and, while a case could be made for the former, nothing whatever supports the latter. Not all opinions are equal in value.

Are the women here practicing Catholics, imbued with a sense of the faith, or are they nominal Catholics of one sort or another, i.e., Christmas/Easter Catholics, cafeteria Catholics, cultural Catholics, Womanchurch Catholics? This question is particularly crucial with regard to the "Voices of Alienation" sections, where one might reasonably expect alienation from the Church to be expressed by women no longer, if ever, really in the Church. Since an understanding of the faith cannot be divorced from practice of it (*lex orandi, lex credendi*), we have no compelling reason to suppose, given the unmethodical way in which such opinions were solicited for this document, that Voices of Alienation come from women who have any real understanding of the Catholic faith. And, in fact, the responses in these sections bear a kind of similarity to one another which suggests that the women behind these voices are all steeped in

the same feminist literature. Are they equally familiar with Church documents particularly the enormous body of writings produced by the present Pope? Nothing in their responses suggests they are.

Furthermore, the fact that these voices of alienation never express alienation from the inroads feminism has made in the Church, never express disenchantment with any of the changes in the Church in the last twenty five years must cast further doubt on the validity of those sections in the document which purport to represent fairly the views of women in the Church today. (And how, we must ask, can the view that the Church is "blatantly sexist" (134) possibly be characterized as a statement of "affirmation"?)

Third, the "Voices of Alienation" sections include a variety of complaints, some valid and some not, with no effort made to distinguish between one and the other. The sections given over to "reflections" and "responses" also make no effort to sort out those concerns which are reasonable from those which are not. (One has to wonder how those who have been tortured and held political prisoners by right- and left-wing tyrants around the globe would react upon being told that their "experience of oppression" is shared by an American woman who finds herself in a parish that "has not much to offer" single people(70). And if women are as filled with initiative and intelligence and creativity, etc., etc., as Voices of Alienation would have us believe, then why don't those who are single start up activities for single people, rather than sit back and allow others to "oppress" them in this fashion? This woman, after all, doesn't claim to be "oppressed" because she was prevented from initiating such activities, only because she was presented with a lack of such activities. It boggles the mind that anyone could take a complaint such as this seriously.

Finally, the questions asked women are themselves badly flawed, inquiring only about "feelings" and "experience", without any reference to thoughts and reflections. And they ask only for the views of women *as women*, never for their views *as Catholics*. Furthermore, these questions assume that the "feelings" and "experiences" of a virtually random and, from the reader's point of view at

least, entirely anonymous, group of women are to be attended to. Otherwise, why take them seriously? However, we stand in need of salvation presumably because, among other things, our feelings and experiences require conversion. Yet there is never even so much as a suggestion that these garnered feelings and experiences (and interpretations) leave anything to be desired.

## 2) Imbalance of Reflections and Responses

The most pervasive flaw of this document, because it runs from one end of it to the other, is the imbalance of the reflections and responses from the side of the bishops. This is most obvious when one looks at the use made of several key words, namely, "sin", "compassion", "dialogue" and "idealism".

Although the document twice mentions original sin and its effects on all of us (35ff and 95), the discussion of actual sins is quite limited and narrowly defined. Sexism is at least six times condemned as a sin (28, 37, 39, 41, 147, 228), even as a "heinous sin" (39). Racism is once mentioned as sinful (147). Section 40 names, as "sins against women", rape, prostitution, adultery, abandonment and pornography. Section 172 tells us that the sinfulness of violence and sexual exploitation must be impressed upon men. Nothing else is characterized as sinful.

Apart from the obvious misnomer of characterizing attitudes such as sexism and racism as sins (wrong acts are sins, whereas wrong attitudes are errors), and the curious categorization of adultery solely as a "sin against women", we find in this document no reference to the sins of abortion, artificial contraception, and divorce/ remarriage, despite the fact that these matters are discussed at some length elsewhere. In fact, where abortion is concerned, one might gather from PMR that women get abortions solely under male pressure and are guilty of little more than playing into the hands of male irresponsibility (122, 171).

Indeed, although the document formally affirms Church teaching in these areas, we are counseled, with regard to family planning and

other sexual matters, to extend compassion toward those "who in good conscience have not lived in accord with the ideals set forth by the church" (121), toward those suffering from sexually-transmitted diseases (126) and toward those "who do not yet live by the standards the church upholds" (128). The document even suggests that we ought not to "close" the "dialogue" on abortion (76), without ever raising the question as to whether the Church ever entertained such a dialogue in the first place; and encourages dialogue with those opposed to church teaching on artificial contraception (121).

All of this might sound quite innocuous, were it not for the fact that we find in this document two different attitudes toward "ideals" and how we ought to regard them. On the one hand, we are told, early in the document, that "When our actions do not conform to our ideals, all suffer" (41). We are also told that the "ideals of Christian behavior are both desirable and possible" (110). Footnote 89 expresses a certain impatience with the failure to realize economic justice for women, noting that "Women wonder, of course, when this ideal will become a reality". Finally, at the end of the document, we are told that implementation of the bishops' recommendations is essential, "for ours must not be a counterfeit love of formal politeness, impersonal tolerance of empty words" (246).

On the other hand, a remarkable politeness and tolerance is extended to those who "fail" to live out the "ideals" of Catholic teaching regarding abortion, artificial contraception, chastity and marriage. Never are such actions characterized as sinful, never are we counseled in these matters to worry about "empty words". Several sections of the document deal with Church teachings on these matters as virtually impossible ideals. (87, 96, 121, 128) calling more for compassion and dialogue than for implementation. Section 74 goes so far as to suggest that the Catholic teaching on birth control is intrinsically "unrealistic". (And why is it that compassion, which means "to suffer with", is to be extended primarily to those who, in order to avoid suffering, do not follow Church teaching? How precisely are we to "suffer with" those who seek to avoid suffering?)

With regard to two issues in particular, the bishops even seem to give more weight to the "reality" created by the failure to meet these ideals than to the need to implement the ideals themselves. First, section 58, under "Voices of Alienation", tells us that "While the church has upheld the model of the nuclear family, women call attention to the fact that the ideal is no longer a reality". In their response, the bishops would seem to seek answers to the *reality* of broken homes more than to the failure to live up to the "ideal". The same approach is continued in section 142, where the "feminization of poverty" is taken up. Although the bishops recognize both the right of women to stay at home and the fact that most women are forced into the labor market for reasons which have nothing to do with a genuine desire to leave the home (138), the bishops address primarily not the question of economic injustices which force women out of the home, but the "reality" of women forced into the work force, with no serious exhortation to see that this unjust reality is changed in the direction of the Catholic "ideal".

Second, the bishops note in section 73 the existence of "a wide gap between what the church teaches about artificial contraception and the actual practice of many Catholic women". And once again, their response suggests that the actual practice takes priority over the official teaching. Hence, while church teaching on the matter is presented, no mention is made of the sins of artificial contraception or of the need to implement this particular Church teaching. Instead, dialogue is recommended. While insisting that their own recommendations must be implemented, lest they remain "empty words", the bishops seem to take a somewhat different view regarding Church teaching.

In the final analysis, this document gives the impression of seeking to please all of the women of the Church, regardless of point of view. Hence, actions against women are clearly characterized as sins, whereas actions by women never are so characterized. The bishops tell us that "We must work to ensure that no one will feel excluded or alienated because of our teaching and pastoral care" (110). This is an extraordinary statement, if only because it seems to bear so little resemblance to the earthly ministry of Christ, who alienated a good

many people by His insistence on bearing witness to the truth. It is also an extraordinary statement, given the fact that this document is most certainly designed to alienate anyone harboring a "sexist" view or guilty of any of those attitudes and acts which the bishops so clearly characterize as sinful. (And what about those seminarians with attitudes tending toward sexism or with "an incapacity to deal with women as equals", against whom these things will be "considered as negative indications for fitness for ordination" (228). No exhortation here for compassion, for counseling or for dialogue with these young men.)

Since the bishops state that no one should feel alienated by their teaching and counseling, it is not surprising, therefore, that the criticisms against Church teaching expressed by "Voices of Alienation" are never characterized as erroneous, nor any actions flowing from them as sinful. Those who feel alienated, at least those *women* who feel alienated, must not be made to feel any further alienated. (The bishops even make one ill-advised effort to ensure that Catholic males are not made to feel alienated, when they address themselves briefly and explicitly (in footnote 10) to the men of the Church. "To our brothers in Christ, male Catholics, let us add that neither we nor the women who assisted us in writing this pastoral intend to place on you the burden of blame for the injustices to women which must be acknowledged." This can mean only one of two things: either the burden of blame must be placed on non-Catholic males, which is shockingly anti-ecumenical, or the "sin of sexism" is agentless, which is shockingly unreasonable.)

Since the bishops twice insist, quoting *Justitia in Mundo*, that "Anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes" (3, 167), it would seem that the same principle ought to be applied to women who would speak to the bishops about justice. The absence of even a single reference to the sinfulness and injustice of women seeking abortion is one striking case in point. The failure of the bishops to address women as equally fallen, equally in need of conversion, equally bound to act justly, is one of the greatest weaknesses of this document, for it conveys, more than any overt language could, a

patronizing attitude toward women, a kind of "Let's not upset the little woman any more than she already is" mentality. Christ was compassionate to the woman taken in adultery, but it did not prevent him from calling a sin a sin. In general, attempts to please everyone have the effect of pleasing no one.

### 3) Economic Recommendations

The economic recommendations of this document are impossible to sort out. The bishops mention variously "equal pay for equal work" (167), "adequate pay" (137), "just wages" (155-6), "fair wages" (156), "family wage" (161), "family allowances and grants to mothers" (132), and reform of tax structures (136). While presumably no one would oppose just, fair or adequate wages, the question has to do with what constitutes a just or fair wage. "Equal pay" and "family wage" are not compatible, inasmuch as equal pay takes into account only the work being done, whereas family wage takes into account the financial commitments of the person doing the work. Furthermore, equal pay places priority on the rights of the individual and is supported by the feminist movement, whereas family wage places priority on the rights of the family and is supported by the Church (a fact which is implicitly recognized when Pope John Paul II is cited as calling for a family wage, without it being at all clear as to whether or not the bishops themselves would agree with him; indeed, the bishops give the impression, simply by the number of references they make to it, that they favor equal pay for equal work).

In any event, it is impossible to implement this aspect of the document as it now stands, inasmuch as it is impossible to implement all of these recommendations simultaneously and the bishops give no clear guidelines as to which of them they would like to see implemented. This requires considerable clarification.

### 4) Theological Aspects of the Document

The document is filled with a number of statements which should either be left out altogether or very carefully qualified. We are told that "sexist attitudes have also colored

church teaching and practice over the centuries and still in our day" (39). What teachings, what practices? The combined armies of the world could be marched through the hole this sort of statement opens up. And what does it mean to say the the *church* is called to "a radical conversion of mind and heart" (18)? How is this to be reconciled with the *holiness* of the church. And why does this document never suggest that any statement by any woman would indicate the need for a change of mind and heart?

We are told that "some women raise the issue that they are left out of both the discussions and the decisions leading to the evolution of moral teachings that govern their reproductive lives" (75). "Evolution of moral teaching" is so vague as to admit of no clear meaning whatever in this context, and hence could be used to justify a thousand aberrations. "Reproductive lives" is the language of feminists seeking "liberation" from reproductive living and should be dropped.

A voice of alienation asks, in the same section, "How can the hierarchical church, which claims to be in search of the truth, feel reasonably comfortable that it has found the truth when in decisions regarding procreation...the decision-makers represent only the male half of the human perspective? Surely complete truth and wisdom must include female virtues and perspectives". What does it mean to say that the hierarchical church is "in search of the truth"? Is not Christ the truth and have we not already found Him? Are we in search of the truth or a better understanding of the truth? What does it mean to say that the bishops are "decision-makers"? This makes it sound as though decisions by them are somehow of their own making rather than a discernment of the truth of Christ. Either these matters should be addressed or the comment should be omitted.

Section 101 tells us that "The mutual love of Catholic couples should be open to bearing new life". This is true as far as it goes, but does not address the critical teaching that *each and every marital act* is supposed to be open to children. This sentence gives the impression that the American bishops might be attempting an emendation of or at least a

distancing from Church teaching.

Voices of alienation expressing views suggesting a reopening of the dialogue on abortion and discussion on abortion "as a complex issue with diverse opinions" (76) and "clarification" of church teaching on such issues as artificial contraception and NFP (185) should either be dropped or addressed honestly, i.e., there never was a dialogue on abortion and Church teaching on artificial contraception is quite clear. A clear statement of Church teaching on the issue of the "right and responsibility to form and follow their own consciences" raised in section 74 is also required, lest silence on this very important matter be misinterpreted.

Use of the expression "image of Christ" (203) is problematic, because it is not really either Scripture - or tradition - based. We are created in the image of God, not the image of Christ. Such language could create real problems regarding the ordained priesthood, inasmuch as the priest operates in the person of Christ. If men and women are spoken of routinely as imaging Christ, this could be viewed by many as theological support for ordaining women.

By the same token, acceptance of women deacons and altar girls would send out a similar message, i.e., such actions would be regarded as steps toward ordaining women. This would be misleading and only prolong the anguish and ultimately deepen the alienation of those who cherish the illusion that the Church will someday accept women into the ordained priesthood.

Section 224 speaks of an attitude of male dominance in authority which has "influenced family and church structures and distorted the way in which we understand the truth of our heritage". Again, either such distortions should be very carefully specified or this statement should be dropped.

A place for God the Father should be found in this document. Such an omission carries inclusive language too far. "Parenting" is a word which should be used either very sparingly or not at all, as it suggests no real significance between mothering and fathering. "Discipleship of equals" is employed by

feminists in very un-Catholic ways and should also be played down, since it seeks to minimize the distinctions between male and female and to suggest a non-hierarchical structure in the Church (which certainly runs counter to St. Paul's notion of the one body and many members). Recognition should be given to the fact that many women dislike "inclusive" language, as well as to the limits which must necessarily be imposed on such usage within Catholicism. "Sexual equality" should be qualified by a careful consideration of sexual complementarity. There is only one statement which rejects "unisex" in the entire document (34), but much which suggests that the difference between male and female are so slight as to be safely ignored.

Language regarding marriage needs to be clarified. What is a "failed marriage" (66, 116)? What does it mean to say, as a voice of alienation does, "if the union must be served, ultimately leading to annulment" (68), inasmuch as an annulment is a statement that no union ever existed? If this woman's comment is to be included, then Church teaching should be made clear on the matter. What does it mean to speak of annulments within the context of "failed marriages" (116)? A response which speaks of "those whose marriages have led to divorce or ended in annulment" (117) is ambiguous and open to misinterpretation. In the statement that "sexuality is oriented biologically to procreation" (96), the word "biologically" should be deleted, as it lends itself to that severing of body and soul, of sexuality and spirituality, which the document itself explicitly and rightly rejects (97).

And how can the bishops let pass in silence the claim by a divorced/re-married woman that "unless my ex-husband dies I cannot be part of the most important (moment) of the Mass" (67)? First, of course, her ex-husband is her real husband, and second (and much more to the point), receiving communion is not the only, nor even the most important, way to participate in the Mass. If ill-informed comments like these are to be included, then informed responses should also be included.

The statement that "details" in Pauline theology are culturally-conditioned (86) should either specify what those "details" are or

be omitted altogether. The statement that "Mary is a woman whose decision led to an event of world importance" (243) ought to be rewritten, since it reduces the Incarnation and her *fiat* to the level of any number of decisions which have led to events of world importance.

A much better bibliography of materials which can be read should be supplied. Some way should be found, in particular, to incorporate the central elements of John Paul II's "theology of the body" into this document. An extensive list of his writings should be included as well.

Finally, since this document is addressed to "the entire church, men and women alike", there is no need to qualify church teachings by repeated references to "our tradition" (80, 86, 88) or "our heritage" (106, 161, 163). Since the Catholic tradition and heritage can be presumed, specific and repeated references to them would seem to serve no other purpose than to remind readers of the existence of other traditions and heritages. Yet there is no point why such reminders should be required in a document of this sort, unless the Catholic audience is being invited to view the Catholic faith either as simply one among many such traditions and heritages, all equally compelling and valid, or as having no relevance for anyone except Catholics. Surely the bishops do not want to suggest either of these alternatives--especially in a document where such suggestions would be purely gratuitous.

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## AND...

### **The Use of Scripture in "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption"**

(EXCERPTS)

The character of the first draft of "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption", the

proposed pastoral response of the American Catholic bishops to women's concerns, determines the nature of its use of scripture. The document is a moderate feminist position paper, the adoption of which would put the American bishops officially behind a certain version of the feminist program for American society. The main difference of the pastoral response from a normal feminist document is the way it arises from and addresses a Catholic milieu and the absence of direct contradiction of official Catholic teachings.

The pastoral response uses a feminist methodology. The methodology is not based upon a clarification of revelation in scripture and tradition with an application to the current situation guided by the precedents of Catholic history. Such a traditional Catholic methodology would not yield, for example, the existence of the sin of sexism. Rather, the pastoral response uses a methodology that begins with an examination of actual experience of some women and seeks upon that basis to develop an effective approach. The all-important step in such a process, the evaluation of that experience, is most commonly done throughout the pastoral response by unacknowledged feminist criteria or by Catholic views understood as if they were identical with feminist criteria. In such a method, scripture can only be peripheral, and indeed an examination of the document confirms that scripture is only used in a peripheral way...

With some regularity, the use of scripture exhibits the common characteristics of feminist exegesis. The greatest defect, in my judgment, is a failure to acknowledge the difficulty of moving from the Scriptural texts cited to a modern ideological position which cannot find direct and clear support in scripture. The normal approach of the moderate feminists is to cite texts that speak positively about women (e.g. Jesus being nice to women), or that indicate some kind of sameness between men and women (e.g. Gal 3:28, Gen 1:27), and to ignore texts which teach or otherwise enjoin role differences between men and women. On the basis of such citations, it proceeds quickly to speak about feminist approaches by using terms like "equality", "discrimination", as if the texts supported equality and rejected discrimination in anything like the sense needed

to support the feminist positions. A classic example of such an approach in sec. 37 which roundly attacks sexism as "decisively condemned by Christ" and then smoothly cites Phil 2:7-8, Eph 1:9, Gal 4:4, Lk 1:38 and Jn 1:14...

To be sure, the feminist approach to exegesis is not obtrusive in the document, because the use of scripture is not. My recommendation is that less scripture, in fact, be used. A more fruitful and exegetically solid use of scripture would require a re-casting of the whole document in a way that is alien to its current intention...

Stephen B. Clark

*Mr. Clark is the author of a classic commentary on the Biblical theology of sexual roles entitled Man and Woman in Christ.*

**AND...**

**Remarks on the First Draft of the Letter "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption"**

(EXCERPTS)

...In paragraph 28 of the draft we read, "Women reject sexism, which makes judgments about people based exclusively on their sex rather than on knowledge of their character, ability or achievement". But the statement "women reject sexism" is *itself* a judgment about people. It is based *exclusively* on sex and without knowledge of the extraordinarily diverse characters, abilities or achievements of the individuals involved...The draft continues: "We need to critique statements about women which begin with such phrases as, 'All women are...' or 'she's a woman, therefore...'" On the other hand I have counted no fewer than 23 separate instances in *PMR* where the authors generalize in exactly this way: (1)

(Footnote 1 reads: The following are unqualified and unsubstantiated general statements of this sort: "Women want to participate more..." (16) "Women in all states

of life welcome efforts..."(25) "Women also cite the value of church documents..."(26) "Women warmly cherish these treasures..."(26) "Women acknowledge positive, life-giving experiences..."(27) "Women challenge the church..."(29) "Women are supportive of family-related movements..."(49) "Women observe that a fascination with violence..."(52) "The answer, women say, entails a rejection..."(52) "Women confirm that contemporary findings..."(53) "Women call attention to the fact..."(58) "Women call for a restored vision of partnership..."(60) "Women ask that the Church examine its beliefs..." (72) "Women expect the church to assist..." (77) "Women welcome the church's efforts..."(129) "Women seek help in obtaining education..."(141) "Women ask for sensitive pastoral care..."(154) "Women find that people in pastoral ministry do not always understand the complexity of their situation..."(155) "This vision inspires women and evokes their gratitude..."(174) "Women stand behind the church..."(184) "For Catholic women the church is home..."(234) "Women refuse to lose courage..."(234))

While *PMR* digresses from its theme more than once to condemn racism, it comes perilously close to betraying the very attitudes toward some races which it decries toward others. We are told that "Hispanic culture supports strong family values, but these are sometimes distorted by the false concept of masculinity called *machismo*. In the Southwest...women consider this traditional *machismo*, with its tendency toward psychological, physical, intellectual and emotional assumption of male superiority or abuse of females, to be the foremost factor contributing to the alienation of women." (150) And again, "The issue of male-female relationships and abusive male dominance in families and society were mentioned often and emphatically by Hispanic participants". (153) No effort is made here to examine evidence for the behavior of families of equivalent economic or social status to determine whether the basis for such abusive behavior may not lie in circumstances such as unemployment or poverty --rather than in the Hispanic male *qua* Hispanic. The authors have, even if unintentionally, helped to reinforce the negative stereotype of the Hispanic man as a

wife-abusing brute...

In para. 206 we are given a list of women influential in the spread of the early Church. Slipped quietly into the middle of this list is "Junia, whom Paul calls a relative and fellow prisoner, prominent among the apostles". Clearly the ambiguous phrase will suggest to many that Junia, a woman, was an Apostle. This is unbecoming. Scholars are quite uncertain that "Junia" was a woman; and Junia is not surely an Apostle. The English phrase is used to suggest as a fact what is not a fact. Surely an editorial qualification was called for. (2)

(Footnote 2 reads: See also the article by R.R. Schulz in the *Expository Times*, Vol. 88, 1987, pp. 108-110. It is interesting that St. John Chrysostom in his commentary on Romans assumed that Junia was both a woman and an apostle. His assumption was not shared by the Church. Virtually all modern translations, including the RSV, interpret the name as masculine.)

The *PMR* smiles fairly indulgently on certain departures from Church teaching (and sounds almost shrill in its condemnation of others). We read, for example, "We especially encourage a spirit of compassion toward those who in good conscience have not lived in accord with the ideals set forth by the church". (121) Why do the bishops *especially* urge a spirit of compassion *here*? Is it not the case that those who depart from Church teaching in these matters enjoy the consolation and approval of the media, the academy, and the secular arbiters of fashion? Is it not the case that it is the Catholic couple trying to *follow* Church teaching who feels isolated and powerless, that *these* are Christ's 'little ones'? Given the size and the power of the social forces to the contrary, isn't it the faithful couple who deserve our *special* compassion?

Buried in the end-notes to *PMR* are some statements and suggestions which deserve attention. Do the bishops really want to direct laypersons to Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza's book *In Memory of Her* to learn about "Jesus' manner of relating to women"? (n. 124). Do the authors agree with the statement of Benedict  
(continued on page 18)

## Secretary Bennett on Catholic Schools

### ADDRESS BEFORE THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION:

#### WILLIAM J. BENNETT

*Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett, addressed the National Catholic Education Association in New York on April 7, 1988. In a full talk rich in suggestions, Secretary Bennett cited some arresting facts. The paragraphs below are excerpts from his speech:*

...A little over two and a half million children are enrolled in America's Catholic schools. An average of \$4,500 a year is spent to educate their public school counterparts; the median tuition for a Catholic elementary school is about \$700 per year, for high school about \$1,500. Catholic school enrollments account for a savings of \$14 billion to taxpayers...

But parents choose Catholic schools for many reasons, one reason is that they get results. As University of Chicago sociologist James Coleman has shown, students in Catholic schools perform better on standardized tests, sometimes by as much as two grade levels on average over their public school counterparts. But a fact that is even more impressive is Coleman's recent finding about the comparable drop-out rates between Catholic and public schools.

Coleman found that the drop-out rate for sophomores in public high schools is about 14 percent. In private high schools it is slightly less, 12 percent. But in Catholic high schools it is only 3 percent, less than a quarter that of public high schools. Coleman attributes this to the family and community atmosphere of a Catholic school that watches out for its own, for the black sheep or, as in the parable of the lost sheep, for the one who strays or who might stray.

Some would like to argue that these impressive figures are the result of Catholic schools drawing from the better-off or the elite of our communities. But that is not the case. In fact, the effectiveness of Catholic education is especially pronounced among the disadvantaged.

Today minority enrollment in Catholic schools is 22 percent overall, up from 10 percent in 1970. There is a larger percentage of Hispanic and Asian students in Catholic schools than in public schools. And a substantial number of the minority students enrolled are non-Catholic, a testimony of their parents confidence in the education their children are receiving there.

Sixty-four percent of the black children in Catholic schools are non-Catholic, for example. In our ten largest urban areas the minority population in Catholic schools is astounding. In the city of Chicago it's 44 percent. Here in New York it's 55 percent. Across the river in Newark it's 74 percent.

Some try to suggest that these students are the cream of the crop. Again, not true. Twenty percent of Catholic high schools admit students expelled or dropped from public high schools for disciplinary reasons. Eighteen percent of Catholic high schools accept public school students dropped for academic reasons. While one-third of Catholic schools have selective admissions, one-third have open admissions and another third accept nearly anyone who applies. In the end, Catholic schools across the nation reject only 12 percent of those who apply. That means they have an acceptance rate of 88 percent. In any lexicon, that is not elitism...

But let's face the facts. You can't wait around for tax credits or tuition vouchers or other forms of new government funding. Yes, on one level, especially the political level, you have to press for the principle that a free people are entitled to choice in education. I believe that and Ronald Reagan believes that. Vouchers can provide the means to that choice -- a means, I believe, that would strengthen public education as a result.

(continued on page 19)

## FRIENDS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

RETIRED BISHOP RICHARD ACKERMAN  
 ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY BEVILACQUA  
 BISHOP ELDEN F. CURTISS  
 BISHOP THOMAS V. DAILY  
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 BISHOP FREMIOT TORRES  
 BISHOP WILLIAM K. WIEGAND  
 BISHOP THOMAS WELSH  
 BISHOP DONALD W. WUERL

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

**THIRTY DAYS:** It is difficult to over-praise (1) the arrival of *Thirty Days* as an incomparable source of information about the Church around the world, (2) its level of research and analysis of important, current questions for Catholics, (3) Father Fessio's enterprise in publishing an English edition, and (4) in risking his fiscal neck in direct mail advertising - which we pray will be successful. If you don't subscribe you are like a Southerner without grits or a Californian without sun glasses. Incomplete. Subscribe quickly: *Thirty Days*, P.O. Box 6718, Syracuse, New York 13217.

**RIGHT TO LIFE:** The National Right-to-Life Committee has published a pro-life review of 1987 and a look at 1988 called *A Passion For Justice*. \$2.50 each with discounts for bulk orders from 419 7th Street, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20004.

**PRESIDENT REAGAN:** President Reagan has had introduced into the Congressional hopper a bill called the "Pro-Life Act of 1988". It calls upon Congress to find that "scientific evidence demonstrates that abortion takes the life of an unborn child who is a living human being"; that "a right to abortion is not secured by the Constitution of the U.S."; the Supreme Court erred in *Roe and Wade* -- ergo "no funds appropriated by Congress shall be used to perform abortions except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term".

Do you see the quarterly *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature*, published at Marquette University (WI 53233), \$15.00 per year? Worth asking for the Winter 1988 issue on Walker Percy.

Father Ronald Lawler, O.F.M., Cap. S.T.D. has accepted an appointment to the post of Rector of Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell (imagine!) Connecticut. The seminary serves a number of dioceses. Msgr. Eugene Clark, Ph.D., succeeds him as the Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies in Catholic Doctrine at St. John's University, New York. Father John Hardon, S.J. has retired from the Institute and may be reached at the Jesuit Community, Georgetown, Washington, D.C. Msgr. William Smith, S.T.D., (Dunwoodie), Dr. Francesco Cesareo (Albertus Magnus) and Dr. Daryll Glick will offer courses at the Institute for the first time this Fall.

## June NCCB Meeting: Surprise, Compromise, Final Harmony

During the hottest, driest June in Minnesota history, 280 members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops held their 1988 summer meeting at Saint John's University in Collegeville. Temperatures soared above 100 degrees on June 24, the day their session came to order in the old college gymnasium. Indoor, too, heat flickered through diplomatic courtesy when debate veered closer than usual to plain speaking. The conference agenda included some touchy issues:

- \* the first draft of Partners in the Mystery of Redemption, a pastoral letter on "women's concerns";

- \* two new statements on military policy from the NCCB Committee on the Moral Evaluation of Deterrence chaired by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago: a "Report on The Challenge of Peace and Policy Developments 1982-1988", and "Building Peace: A Pastoral Reflection on the Response to The Challenge of Peace".

- \* a first draft Vatican document on "The Theological and Juridical Status of Episcopal Conferences", sent to the bishops for review and comment;

- \* a proposal to establish a time standard for administration of general absolution;

- \* settlement of the controversy stirred up last December by the NCCB Administrative Board when it issued The Many Faces of Aids without general conference approval;

- \* selection of an official television outlet from among three alternatives.

Many American Catholics had expected the most intense debate to center on the political issues: the women's pastoral, the statements on national defense and the AIDS document. Unexpectedly, it was instead the business of selecting a television network that consumed the

most time and most clearly signaled episcopal disinclination to rubber stamp committee recommendations.

### Content Control and Prime Time on TV

The choices were:

- (1) to strengthen or expand the bishops' own limping Catholic Television Network of America (CTNA), now seven years old;

- (2) to enter into partnership with mainline Protestant groups in developing a proposed inter-denominational network, to be known as VISN,

- (3) to approve a contract with Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), also founded in 1981, in Alabama, by Mother Angelica, a Poor Clare nun without experience or capital. EWTN is now a flourishing 24 hour network with a four million dollar annual budget, no debt, and an unswerving standard of Catholic orthodoxy.

William Steltemeier, Jr., president of EWTN, was there with a contract offer. A memorandum from Msgr. Daniel Hoye, General Secretary of the bishops' administrative agency, USCC, pointed out however that the Executive Committee was not endorsing it, but "simply transmitting the proposal for your consideration". (emphasis in original). Mark Chopko, USCC General Counsel, in another memorandum, provided a review of the VISN and EWTN proposals that recommended neither but tilted noticeably toward VISN. An investigative committee chaired by Archbishop Francis Stafford of Denver had advised against joining the VISN enterprise, but an April 25 news release about its report had not mentioned the fact.

Bishop Anthony Bosco of Greensburg, chairman of the USCC Communication Committee, argued vigorously for VISN membership, brushing aside the questions of

other bishops. Would the Conference face financial risk? Might the NCCB suffer moral embarrassment from having its programs sandwiched between unsuitable advertising or programming? Why had VISN failed to guarantee prime-time placement? Would competition from an interfaith network "kill Mother Angelica"? Membership in VISN would give the conference a vote on such matters of concern, Bishop Bosco replied, and as for Mother Angelica, "I believe she's immortal".

### Minimum Criteria

Archbishop Stafford, chairman of the Assessment Committee assigned to study CTNA, submitted a frank report. "Did we bishops understand what we were getting into when we established CTNA?" it asked. "The conclusion that we have drawn is that, *no*, we did not completely understand." CTNA has had serious financial problems.

The report offered 39 remedial recommendations, beginning with continued support and a more persuasively promoted USCC fund raising effort in all dioceses. CTNA, which broadcasts only to diocesan headquarters should be modestly expanded to reach Catholic institutions, offer data transmission from NCCB/USCC and more internal "pastoral communication", with an eye to eventual development of a 24 hour, direct broadcasting system.

Two earlier recommendations -- again joining VISN, and for "formal dialogue" to resolve "differences between EWTN and CTNA" -- were withdrawn so that Bishop Bosco of the Communications Committee and Bishop Thomas Daily of Palm Beach, an EWTN Board member, could present their respective proposals directly. But new recommendations had been added, setting minimum criteria for any cable agreement the bishops might consider:

- (1) exclusive control by the bishops of "content and dissemination" of programs;
- (2) guaranteed access to "prime time slots";
- (3) guaranteed cost and financial risk limits;
- (4) CTNA must retain authority as the Conference's "exclusive programmer and

distributor" to contract for time with any network.

Bishop Austin Vaughn of New York observed that there seemed to be no reason for keeping CTNA alive except that it had already consumed a great deal of money, and the bishops need a television outlet. But the committee report, with the new criteria, was approved by vote. Both VISN and EWTN, it appeared, would effectively be ruled out.

There was no assurance that VISN would meet the first three standards. EWTN's contract offer was generous: all NCCB meetings and any Conference program featuring a bishop on camera would be broadcast, and air time would be free. On the other hand, the relationship would be exclusive; no Conference programs could be aired on any other cable network.

That stipulation violated item four of the Stafford criteria. But the real sticking point was stickier, arising from those "differences between EWTN and CTNA" the Archbishop had mentioned. EWTN would retain the right to reject any program lacking a bishop.

When the two networks collaborated to broadcast "Papal Visit, 87", Stafford's report explained, "EWTN saw CTNA as promoting dissent and points-of-view about the Church and Church teaching with which EWTN was not in agreement". These "substantial philosophical differences" led EWTN to cancel plans for joint broadcast of the November 1987 NCCB meeting. The network had established an oversight committee of theologians and added two additional bishops to its board, but in the committee's opinion, still failed to recognize that the Bishops' themselves must control program content.

Bishop Daily, presenting EWTN's cable service proposal, explained that programs including bishops would be aired without review out of respect for their teaching authority. Other conference programs would merely be judged in the same way as any other considered for network use. He asked for trust in EWTN's "fine administration", and in Mother Angelica, "who struggles daily in order to "Go into the whole world" and preach the Good News of Jesus Christ".

EWTN president William Steltemeier responded to a flurry of objections. Bishop James Hoffman of Toledo said the review policy sounded like censorship. Steltemeier replied that EWTN has complete confidence in the bishops themselves, but knows that some theologians and laypeople occasionally stray from Catholic teaching. Problems exist in the Church today; the network is "on the firing line", and cannot risk offending its audience.

Archbishop John Roach of Saint Paul asked whether EWTN could reject even a theologian he personally certified. It doesn't happen often, Steltemeier said; only some ten programs have been rejected in seven years. But the Archbishop's approval couldn't prevent misinterpretation by those less learned. The network must be responsible for its broadcasts.

Archbishop Daniel Kucera of Dubuque complained that some EWTN commentators "did a hatchet job on us" during coverage of last year's NCCB meeting. How were its commentators chosen? All were theologians from pontifical institutes, Steltemeier replied; "we do not control them".

After conferring with Mr. Steltemeier, Bishop Daily said EWTN's offer had been revised. The review board would consist of five bishops: Bishop Raymond Boland of Birmingham as chairman, another bishop from the EWTN Board of Directors, and three more to be appointed by the NCCB President.

Critics were not placated. Bishop Pierre DuMaine of San Jose three times reminded the bishops that EWTN's contract offer did not meet the criteria already approved. Bishop John McGann of Rockville Center agreed, and suggested the Conference ask EWTN for a new proposal. Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco, who apparently had not internalized the message of *Partners in the Mystery of Redemption*, cautioned that Mother Angelica dominates EWTN, and in dealing with her, the Bishops' Conference might "be engulfed by the power of that personality".

When the VISN recommendation at last came to vote, Bishop Daily moved for a secret ballot. Despite the vehemence of its supporters, VISN membership was solidly

rejected, 51 to 118.

Bishop Norbert Gaughan leaped to a microphone calling "Point of order!" How could the bishops vote for approval of the EWTN proposal, he asked, when they had already voted to prohibit any exclusive contract? At the president's table, Archbishop May declared, "We cannot sign a contract that contradicts a previously approved agreement".

Again Bishop Daily moved for a secret ballot. Apparently the majority saw no danger in an exclusive arrangement with EWTN. The contract was approved 122 to 93. Asked later where the vote left the Stafford principles, Bishop Bosco said, "We may have to reactivate the doctrine on Limbo".

### Conference Status

USCC's defeat on the television decision suggested growing caution about the Conference's administrative arm, which may become more significant in the future as the NCCB addresses the Holy See's working paper on "The Theological and Juridical Status of Episcopal Conferences". Supporters of the movement toward joint exercise of authority through the NCCB appeared to be the majority, and the document was received with some hostility. In his address, Archbishop May said he believes, "that the bishop in his diocese, exercising his mandate and teaching in union with the pope and the whole college, is teaching in a collegial manner. If this is true of one bishop, it cannot be less true of three hundred...(therefore) the teachings and actions of the episcopal conference are true and effective, albeit partial, excercises in collegiality".

Archbishop May announced that a committee of former NCCB presidents will prepare a response to Rome for Conference approval at its November meeting.

### Partners

Observers concerned about the fate of *Partners in the Mystery of Redemption* were disappointed that less than an hour was spent considering it, but the orthodox were cheered to hear that the Holy Father will publish his own

statement on "the dignity and vocation of women" before the Marian year ends August 15.

In introductory remarks, Bishop Joseph Imesch of Joliet, chairman of the drafting committee, said "some have criticized the document saying that it represents only the viewpoint of a minority of women". That charge "is simply not true", he said. "The consultation confirms that all women have concerns...all women want to be taken seriously".

Earlier in the week, three of the national women's organizations which had testified before the drafting committee (Consortium Perfectae Caritatis, the Institute on Religious Life, and Women for Faith and Family), issued a joint letter to the bishops stating, "We are convinced that the Pastoral is so deeply ambivalent, so fundamentally flawed...that it should be rejected by the Bishops at the June meeting". Bishop Imesch said in a later press conference that he "wasn't referring especially to them". Some of their concerns were raised by individual bishops, however.

There were comments from six tables, Bishop Joseph Gossman of Raleigh urged that Bishop Imesch's helpful remarks be distributed along with the pastoral. Bishop Michael McAuliffe of Jefferson City suggested that a passage be added describing the evil effects of patriarchy on society, since "so many of our problems are centered there".

The rest, conservatives and liberals alike, were negative. Bishop Eldon Curtiss of Helena found the pastoral repetitious, and the footnotes "too verbose". The description of sexism as sin seemed "not sufficiently developed", he said: "How is it a sin?" Bishop LeRoy Matthiessen of Amarillo said there was too much "priest-bashing" and not enough discussion of husbands and wives. Bishop Eugene Gerber of Wichita asked, "Is it timely, in view of the Pope's forth coming statement?"

Bishop Daily complained that too much space was given to "listening", while Church teaching was "glossed over". The letter "seems to hold out a promise of contraception". And why, he asked, does it refer to "the official position" of the Congregation for the Doctrine of

the Faith? "Is there another position?"

At their tables, the bishops wrote responses to three questions. Do you "substantially" agree with the pastoral? Do you have "serious difficulty" with any part? What areas need changing? Comments will be sent to the committee and staff.

### The Many Faces of AIDS

The debate on the AIDS document took place behind closed doors, in executive session. But the real debate had taken place months earlier, and a compromise arranged. Face-saving rhetoric notwithstanding, the Administrative Board's retreat on *The Many Faces of Aids* was a stinging surrender before a massive protest. Twelve bishops submitted written interventions before the meeting, and sixteen reportedly offered oral interventions. The strongest negative statement came from Bishop Eusebius Beltran of Tulsa. Archbishop Kucera's paper called for a thorough restructuring of the NCCB/USCC. Archbishop Roger Mahoney said controversy over the AIDS statement "created polarizations among us as brother Bishops". He recommended a policy prohibiting any Committee or Administrative group from issuing a major statement without prior approval from the body of bishops.

Cardinal O'Connor urged that *The Many Faces of AIDS* be rewritten without the section on condoms. The mildness of Cardinal Law's intervention was surprising, since he had been identified as a leading critic. That he seconded the motion to write a new AIDS statement suggests that his major intervention had been made earlier and in person.

Doubtless the weightiest intervention was that received from Cardinal Ratzinger, calling for "full fidelity to the moral doctrines of the Church", rejecting the notion that "the classical principle of tolerance of the lesser evil" excuses "instructions in the use of prophylactic devices", and recommending advance consultation with the Holy See before "some" statements are issued.

In his statement to the executive

(continued on page 22)

**Reflection After Reading, "Admittance of Women to Service at the Altar as Acolyte and Lector" by Joseph Fessio, S.J.", in the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter, March 1988: pp 14-16**

If I understand Father Joseph Fessio the major reason women cannot serve as acolyte and should not now be serving as lector, is rooted in the nature of God and men, and in women's inherent, biological inability to symbolize either God or Christ. His argument is that males are able to image God because only a man can adequately represent God as One who gives being to creatures. A man can represent the divine creating, while a woman can represent created reality.

For him, woman best represents nothingness, the void, the matter, while man represents God creating and, I presume, God as nonmaterial and spiritual.

There are significant problems with this understanding of human reproduction even from the purely biological perspective. Does the woman give nothing? What about the egg? What about giving birth? For Father Fessio, what is judged to be creative and therefore Godlike, is limited to the moment of impregnation. There seems to be little appreciation for the active contribution of the woman in bringing the creation of the fetus to its full development over a period of nine months. Is impregnation which requires a matter of minutes more creative than giving one's bodily energy to the development of a child during the duration of a pregnancy?

One can also take issue with his understanding of lovemaking. Does the man receive nothing from the woman during lovemaking? Is she just a passive partner? Lovemaking is mutual giving and receiving. Both persons give themselves to each other and both receive; they give and receive expressions of love and affection in a mutual, interpersonal way.

All of this is preliminary to his explanation of why women cannot symbolize Christ and therefore, cannot serve as acolyte. He argues that the entire Church is feminine in the following way:

While the entire Church is feminine and maternal, the clerical ministry within the Church is by nature masculine and paternal. Because the Bishop, the priest (and by participation the deacon) not only represent Christ but act as Christ in the Eucharistic Sacrifice of Sacrament and Word, only the masculine sex can represent God facing creation and the Bridegroom facing His Bride the Church (p. 15).

Here Father Fessio says clearly that only males can represent not only Christ, but God as well. Presumably, woman's inability to image God, who is asexual, is due to Father Fessio's notion that only men are able to symbolize God creating. But he builds his argument on the scriptural image of the Church as Bride of Christ. Women acolytes would be contrary to that symbol.

Things become problematic immediately if we take this bridal imagery too literally; Father Fessio seems to do that. Does he intend to say that laymen, that is, nonordained male members of the Church, are "feminine" with regard to Christ when he says that the entire Church is feminine with the exception of its clerical ministers? (See quotation above.) If male can be *bridal* symbolically and metaphorically speaking (and I believe they can) why cannot females be priestly symbolically and metaphorically speaking?

Obviously, the bridal imagery is clearly that, *imagery*, and not to be taken literally. It is *one* apt image of the mystery of the Church among many: the Church as People of God, Body of Christ, Shepherd and Flock, Vine and Branches.

Father Fessio's assertion that only a male priest can act in *persona Christi* is rooted in his explanation of the Eucharist as a kind of "marriage" which requires a male priest who is bridegroom and a female Church which is bride.

While Christians accept and value the image of Bride and Bridegroom as one scriptural image of the Church, the celebration of Eucharist is not primarily the symbolic marriage of Christ to the Church, as Father Fessio seems to assert. Rather, the Eucharist is the Church's celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Christ's dying and rising in word, action and in the signs of bread and wine. I cannot find either in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* or in the Eucharistic prayers any basis for viewing the Eucharist as primarily a celebration of the marriage of Christ and the Church. What the Church celebrates is the dying and rising of Christ "until He comes in glory" (1 Cor. 11:26).

All of this is preliminary and apparently, background for Father Fessio's position that a woman cannot serve as acolyte. So far, he has only argued that women cannot be ordained priests.

...For Father Fessio, the reason only males can serve as acolyte follows from the fact that only males can be ordained to the priesthood. As assistant to the priest the acolyte becomes "as it were, the hands of the priest". In his view, the hands of a woman are unacceptable and a woman cannot assist at the altar, although what she would do is hold a book, carry cruets, pour water and offer a towel. For Father Fessio, the mere presence of a woman in the sacred space goes against the "very nature and character of the whole order of grace and redemption" and would result in "a confusion of woman's role as representative of creation and the Church".

Even if one accepts Father Fessio's reasoning that only males can be ordained to

priesthood, to argue that a woman cannot serve as acolyte because the acolyte's hands are "the hands of the priest" is tortuous and strained reasoning. Either the ministry of acolyte requires priestly orders or it doesn't. On this issue Church discipline is clear. The *Motu Proprio, "Ministeria quaedam"*, a 1972 directive on first tonsure, minor orders, and the subdiaconate, states that the ministries of lector and acolyte "are no longer to be considered as reserved for the sacrament of orders". (Par. 2928, *Documents on the Liturgy: 1963-1979*, ed. Liturgical Press: Collegeville, Minnesota, 1982.

In light of the fact that the revised code of canon law allows women "to exercise the ministry of the Word, to preside over liturgical prayers, to confer baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion" (Canon 230.3), it becomes increasingly difficult to justify the present discipline which restricts women from the service of acolyte.

Father Fessio's position is complicated. Thoughtful analysis, however, reveals serious weaknesses in his reasoning. One can dispute, for the reasons already mentioned, all of the following: His understanding of what men and women are able to symbolize by nature; his literal interpretation of the image of Church as Bride; his focus on the Eucharist as a nuptial celebration, and his assertion that only males can symbolize God and Christ. Because each component of his argument is vulnerable to challenge, his conclusion that women cannot serve as acolytes lacks cogency.

Katherine Kraft, OSB  
St. Benedict's Convent  
St. Joseph, Minnesota

#### (Partners ....continued)

Ashley, O.P. that the Church's approach to individuals caught in conflict situations should be "based on respect for the *subjective conscience* of each person at this stage of his or her spiritual development"? (n.87) Do the bishops believe the lay Catholic will be better informed by reading Susan Brownmiller's book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape?* (n.98) Do the bishops really feel that the portrait of the Blessed Mother given in

note 111 as a "housewife in a world where that state was drudgery" and "an old woman left with memories" is a substantial aid to Christian devotion? Do the bishops believe that the reference to Mary's *death* in the same note is a responsible pastoral stance in view of the traditional language of dormition?

Rev. Paul V. Mankowski, S.J.  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

## Liturgy and the Present Crisis of Culture

*Father Francis Mannion summarized for us the main points of a longer article he wrote on this subject.*

The liturgical movement had as one of its goals the transformation of human society. This transformation has not materialized for the reason that the modern Church and its liturgy have absorbed negative dynamics destructive of ecclesial life and liturgical practice.

The first negative dynamic is the subjectification of reality. By this is meant the modern disposition to regard the individual subject as the source of reality and significance. Accordingly, objective institutions and agencies are regarded as meaningless. In the process, liturgy is recast as therapy and loses its objectivity and traditional importance. The result is that liturgy is shorn of its transforming power. Accordingly, as worship becomes introverted and subjectivized there is a loss of interest in the public world and its transformation.

The second cultural eventual dynamic absorbed into modern ecclesial and liturgical life finds expression in the *intimization of society*. This embodies the widespread cultural conviction that personal intimacy and small community represent the authentic configuration of human existence. The correlative of this is a prejudice against the public, the institutional and the formal elements of society.

Absorbed into church life and liturgy, this gives rise to an emphasis on the small group, on informality, and on psychological satisfaction. Once again, as liturgy is shorn of its formality and its public, social character, it loses the ability to transform society.

The third cultural dynamic operative in church life and liturgy has its origin in *the politicization of society*. This refers to the conviction that political and legal processes represent the only effective and significant modes of social transformation. Thus the transforming power of education, the arts, family life, codes of civility, and moral traditions are neglected. When the process of politicization becomes operative in the liturgy, the rich and multimodal process of liturgical transformation and sanctification are collapsed into political agendas. Once again, the liturgy is robbed of its many significant modes of social transformation.

**Conclusion:** The negative cultural dynamics operative in ecclesial life and liturgy need to be confronted and reversed if the liturgy is to recover its traditional role of social transformation.

Rev. M. Francis Mannion  
Salt Lake City, Utah

(The full article of which this is Father Mannion's summary may be read in *Worship*, March, 1988, Vol. 62, Number 2.)

### (Secretary Bennett...continued)

But they are not imminent. In the meantime, I think you should note with some alarm certain recent developments in the debate on federal education policy. As you know, in 1965 we saw an historic compromise that allowed federal funds for programs aiding disadvantaged children *wherever* those children went to school. For twenty years this compromise has benefitted disadvantaged children in both public and private schools, including Catholic schools. But in the debate on the reauthorization of Chapter I last year after the Supreme Court's decision in *Aquilar v.*

*Felton*, we witnessed a substantial erosion in the commitment to equitable services for private school students.

Recently, I was challenged by a member of the education establishment who said that public funds should go only to public education. After all, these are *public* funds, she stressed. But I pointed out that public funds should go to all the public -- and that some of the public are enrolled in non-public schools, too. She said she hadn't thought about it that way.

## Book Reviews

Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Strategies for Growth in the Religious Life*, St. Paul Publications, \$7.95

This book tries to answer three key questions about Roman Catholic religious orders and congregations today. Why did the religious life collapse after Vatican II? How can religious congregations be revitalized? What kind of formation program do congregations need now?

The author, a Marist priest with a degree in cultural anthropology, approaches these problems through the social sciences. He relies heavily on the writings of the late Victor Turner, and makes extensive use of Turner's terms *communitas* and liminality. Here is how he answers the questions.

Why has religious life collapsed? Because of culture shock. In the 1960's and early 1970's a cultural revolution took place in the Western world. Father Arbuckle calls this the Revolution of Expressive Disorder. He sees the period as one of upwelling mystical religiosity, of political and social upheaval, of conflicting customs and ideas. A time of attack on taboos, rituals, form, limits, and boundaries. "The combined effects of the theological and cultural changes of Vatican II and the cultural revolution left Catholics breathless" (p. 13). Cultural props suddenly disappeared. Confusion and chaos resulted. And the religious life suffered: the cultural breakdown in the Church acted as a catalyst for thousands of religious to leave their congregations.

Nonetheless, in the midst of the present disarray in the religious life, Father Arbuckle remains optimistic. He believes that those in the religious life "are moving into a privileged moment", that they stand "on the verge of an in-depth revitalization" (p. 23). Religious congregations will be revitalized by "refounders" and "refoundresses". These refounding persons will evangelize and inculturate their congregations through innovation, new ideas, new methods and

services. The founding person will be a change-agent. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is a minor refounder for today's Jesuits; Pedro Arrupe is a major refounder. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross were major refounders in their time. The refounder or refoundress is a prophet who will lead a congregation out of "traditionalism" and mere "adaptionism" into "reformism".

What kind of formation programs do we need now for our revitalized congregations? The new novitiate should follow the pattern of the tribal initiation rites common in primitive African religions.

On the whole, this book lacks seriousness, and sometimes becomes downright silly. It uses Victor Turner's terminology, for example, in ways he never intended and would surely find unscientific, inappropriate, and appalling. Optimism here replaces true Christian hope; the cheery style and facile diagnoses and prognoses hold out false hope.

With graver consequences, the treatment of these important problems pays only lip service to Christian spirituality. One finds little or no mention of personal prayer, of community prayer, of the Eucharist, of the sacrament of penance, of retreats, of spiritual formation. Nor of the charisms of the religious life. "Charismatic" here means only leadership on the model of Charles de Gaulle and John F. Kennedy (p. 44). Jesus Christ is rarely referred to.

We read on, perplexed to discover that the religious life needs "self help revitalization" (p. 48), and we look in vain for a reference to the Holy Spirit. . . And one can be only astounded at simple-minded assumptions such as: all change is good; and at absurd conclusions, like: conservatives hold back the reform of religious congregations (p. 146).

And do we really want novitiates patterned on primitive tribal initiation rites?

Many religious have waited a long time for this book. It may make them as optimistic and cheerful as the author. Unfortunately. And tragically. The mentality represented by the book really frightens me. Its dissemination can cause great damage, hurt persons and whole congregations by leading them astray.

The fundamental problem with Father Arbuckle's analysis of the present state of the religious life lies in the reduction of the reasons for the current crises to fit into a social sciences framework. A social sciences analysis cannot adequately account for what takes place today in the religious life. The author's reductionist analysis results in an outlook and a program for the religious life that are strongly secularistic and desperately optimistic.

It seems clear, however, to this reviewer and to thousands of other religious, that the future of the religious life lies in a recovering of the sacred and in a strong hope that precludes false optimism. The religious communities that look like survivors - and some of these are prospering now - have either kept or rediscovered the sacredness of religious life, the meaning of consecration. And these all stress personal relationship with the Lord in prayer; they put their hope not in programs but in Jesus.

The future lies with those groups of religious who take seriously their sacred covenant with God, their consecration, and who live with their eyes fixed in hope and in love on him. Other religious groups will not survive; they are dying all around us. Father Arbuckle's book may help them to die with their illusions intact.

Let me end on a positive note. Father Arbuckle has a clever chapter on humor and the religious life. If you read the book, read Chapter Three first. You will need a sense of humor for the other chapters.

Robert Faricy, S.J.

Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., *Sacramental Theology: A General Introduction*, 52 pp., \$7.95

This past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America writes what the publisher calls "an excellent textbook for college-level classes, as well as seminary programs". According to the author (speaking generically) historical scholarship traces Baptism and the Eucharist to 27 A.D., reconciliation to 150, order and anointing to 200, "marriage" to 400, confirmation to 1000, marriage to 1150. Such dating represents only the historical data which undergirds, he says, today's renewal of the sacraments: "One sees, however, that the phrase in the definition of a sacrament, which have been so popular since the Council of Trent, namely that a sacrament is an external sign instituted by Christ to give grace, are challenged in no small degree by these historical 'findings' on each of the sacraments. If there is no historical evidence for a sacrament beyond a certain date, how can such a sacrament easily be considered as 'instituted by Christ'? (p. 6) Father Osborne is here to "perceive" the problem, not to solve it.

Chapter Seven of the book entitled "Official Church Teaching on the Sacraments" accurately reports the ordinary and extraordinary teaching of the Church on this matter, but never quite says any of it is true. One wonders where truth stands in this sentence: "It is one thing to say 'dogmatically' that there are seven sacraments; it is another thing to say 'historically' that there are seven sacraments. History, it seems, will not bear out a continuous teaching on this matter. Since this history of the sacraments is fairly new, an acceptable agreement between the dogmatic and the historical has, as yet, to be worked out in detail."

Understandably it has no Imprimatur.

Msgr. George A. Kelly  
St. John's University

Patrick J. Buchanan, *Right from the Beginning*, Little, Brown, 392 pp., \$18.95

Even those who do not like Mr. Buchanan's political preferences are likely to enjoy this light, well-written tale of a Catholic boy, one of nine, making it into the big league of

American politics. The reader will also find all he cares to know about Nixon, LBJ, Barry Goldwater, Joe McCarthy, Martin Luther King, and sundry other headline-making politicians.

George Will calls Mr. Buchanan "the pit bull of the American Right". He could have added "of the Catholic Church, too". The reader will find rich material about U.S. politics in this book, but he will also discover paragraphs like the following which tell another story.

The Buchanan family discovered their youngest daughter, Bay, was dying.

..."But, for my mother and father, acceptance of God's will did not rule out a final appeal to God's mercy. The nuns and priests at Blessed Sacrament were asked to make Novenas, as were the Jesuits at Gonzaga. My mother's friend Betty Beatty went to a group promoting the canonization of American-born Cornelia Connelly, founder of the Sisters of the Society of the Holy

Child Jesus. They began an around-the-clock vigil for Bay's recovery.

"Around Christmas and her eleventh birthday, Bay was "going downhill fast", and the doctors wanted to operate, though one surgeon suggested it was pointless...

But when the final X-rays were taken, the surgeon could not even see the cancer.

"There is no other plausible explanation for it", my father told me more than once, "except a miracle".

"A decade later, Bay went to Rosemont, to be taught by the Sisters of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, the order founded by Cornelia Connelly; two decades later, in 1981, my parents were standing nearby when she was sworn in as the youngest Treasurer in the history of the United States."

Msgr. George A. Kell,  
St. John's University

#### (Bishops' June Meeting continued)

session, Cardinal Bernardin defended *Many Faces* as "theologically sound", and blamed the uproar about it on "misinterpretation". He recommended that the body of bishops write a new AIDS statement in "dialogue with Cardinal Ratzinger". The previous statement would stand, not as an episcopal document but merely as a statement of the Administration Board. Cardinal Law seconded his motion, and it passed unanimously.

Archbishop May, by contrast, seemed chastened when he told reporters, "I think we learned something, that we will proceed much more cautiously as far as consultation with *all* the bishops in general session, even on statements. But it had become expected that the Administrative Board would do that...It was a judgement call, but it happened, and we're sorry it happened." In procedural matters, USCC officials can be expected to walk more softly in the immediate future.

#### Achievements

By Monday afternoon, at the closing press conference, Archbishop May appeared to have accepted the finality of the EWTN vote, and forgotten that there had ever been a question about its validity. Listing the meeting's achievements, he described the EWTN agreement as an important step for evangelization and an appropriate expression of admiration for Mother Angelica's extraordinary achievements. He said he trusted that the kind of collaboration between EWTN and CTNA that had produced the "remarkable" coverage of the Pope's 1987 visit "will be the hallmark of our future efforts".

Donna M. Steichen  
St. Cloud, Minnesota

#### Easier on the Eyes

The Fellowship Newsletter has been printed in color - a different color for each volume to help librarians and others looking for a desired volume. We have decided that some colors place a strain on scholarly eyes so we have decided to have color on the front and back pages and an easier standard print shade throughout the newsletter. We hope you will find it agreeable.

The Editor

## BRIEF REVIEWS

*Mother Angelica's Answers, Not Promises*, Harper and Row, 274 pp. \$13.95

Just what you would expect from this remarkable founder of the *Eternal Word Television Network*. She is the best answer we have to Jimmy Swaggert. Her new book takes up all the problems that bug intellectuals about Catholic faith - belief itself, suffering, lust, guilt, angels, purgatory, hell, and more. You will love her answers and her last word: "See you in Heaven (I hope)". The co-author is Christine Allison.

Jeremiah Newman, *Return to the Sacred: A Socio-Religious Analysis*, Lumen Christi Press, 141 pp., no price.

Bishop Newman of Limerick is one of Ireland's best-known Catholic sociologists. Once the president of Maynooth, he has more than a dozen books to his credit dealing with the Church and its secular role. The value of this book is the array of sociological literature he has amassed, and the summary of important secular views, dealing with the privatization of religion in modern secularized cultures. Bishop Newman states the question this way: "As far as Christianity is concerned, we ought to be under no doubt that religion should be integrated with life, that the Church should be brought to where the people congregate in pursuit of everyday affairs. Why should the market-place be cut off from them, as so many of our Church buildings have unfortunately become?" (p. 125) A short review cannot do justice to his proposals but he shrewdly points to the family as a good starting point for reintegration of religion in society. Citing Margaret Mead (1955), he points out that the effect of change on the family depends on "what has been there to begin with". We have been letting our Catholic family shift for itself and, in the U.S., we could use a crusade on behalf of freedom of religion.

Terry L. Miethe (ed) *Gary Habernas and Anthony Flew:: Did Jesus Rise From the Dead? The Resurrection Debate* (Harper and Row, 190 pp., \$14.95

Gerald O'Collins, *Jesus Risen*, Paulist Press, 233 pp., \$16.95

Father O'Collins, a Jesuit at the Gregorian in Rome, puts together an up-to-date summary of all the reasons Christians have, and should have, for their faith in Jesus' Resurrection. His "Five Tests" in Chapter Five of a nine-chapter book are comprehensive and persuasive. Like many contemporary theologians, he strives to make the Resurrection as much of a reality for moderns as it was for the early witnesses.

In some respects the Miethe book is more engaging. It is a knock-down-drag-out contestation through argumenation between a believer (Habernas) and an atheist (Flew). The first three parts are pure debate with affirmations, negations, and rebuttals of rebuttals. Part Three engages three outside theologians - Pannenberg, Hartshorne, Packer - in what, up to that moment, was a one-on-one fight. Those who wish to know the *pros* and the *cons* on this subject will find them all here - and civilly presented.

Oscar L. Arnal, *Priests in Working Class Blue*, Paulist Press, 239 pp., \$11.95

Those priests still young enough to remember the beginning of the French worker-priest movement in 1943 will find this account a fascinating recapitulation of the dreams priests and bishops had in creating this radical experiment, and then its fall from grace with Rome's condemnation in 1954. The French Church, still reeling from the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, had lost its influence over its working class and by sending

priest into factories to work for a living, rather than be a class apart, the hope was that somehow the trend could be reversed. Well, in that respect it failed in part because the experimenters became more workers than priests. But it was a good try and a harbinger of the difficulties raised later about liberation priests in Latin America. What is interesting, however, is the attitude of the French hierarchy. In 1954 they carried out Rome's instructions to the letter. By 1966 they were rejecting Rome's warnings about post-Vatican II "urgent doctrinal problems".

POPE JOHN PAUL II: *A Pastoral Visit to the United States*, Ignatius Press, 224 pp., \$19.95

This is the official volume commemorating the Pope's historic visit to the United States in the Fall of 1987. This beautifully bound coffee-table edition includes the text of all the major addresses and homilies of the Pope with introduction and commentary by the National Catholic News Service. It is strikingly illustrated with over 100 full color photographs that will provide memorable pictures of the Pope's visits to eight major cities from California to Florida to Michigan.

This will be at once a substantial historic record and a beautiful keepsake for all those who treasure memories of the Pope's presence in our country. The messages from his official talks are timely and timeless, containing his usual profound and incisive thoughts that will be worth reading and re-reading.

An ideal gift book as well.

Albert J.M. Nevins, *American Martyrs from 1542*, Our Sunday Visitor, 180 pp., \$6.95

Did you know that there are 146 recognized martyrs for the Faith in U.S. Church history, many of them enjoying the possibility of canonization? Father Nevins' book is an overdue recognition of those who died for the Faith in a country whose martyrs are often considered only those who die in defense of the country.

Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Gracias! A Latin-American Journal*, Harper and Row, 188 pp., \$7.95

This book is published as a tract on spirituality. It is a sympathetic treatment of the Liberation movement in Bolivia and Peru by a priest who knows the difference between Christianity and Communism, and between life committed to the service of Christ and the activity of Christians dedicated to political revolution. In journal form it makes interesting reading.

Josemaria Escriva, *Furrow*, Scepter Press, New Rochelle, 380 pp., \$12.95

This newly published book by the founder of *Opus Dei* displays qualities that should shine in the life of all Christians: sincerity, loyalty, friendship, joy, purity, a sense of responsibility. He sketches in outline the life and work of a Christian in themes especially timely in light of the Synod on the Laity.

Oliver Treanor, *Mother of the Redeemer, Mother of the Redeemed*, Christian Classics, 84 pp., \$6.95

Bishop John Magee of Cloyne, one time Secretary to John Paul II, in his Foreword, praises the author, a priest of Down and Connor, for tracing so well "the role of Mary in the plan of salvation as understood in Sacred Scripture and in the Fathers". Father Treanor's four chapters are jewels of theology.

Matthew F. Murphy, *Betraying Bishops; How the Pastoral Letter on War and Peace is Being Taught*, Ethics and Public Policy Center, 124 pp., no price

It is the thesis of this book that, after all the complex theological and political discussions that went into honing the U.S. Bishops' 1983 Pastoral on War and Peace, the message with its fine distinctions (which bishops early on were warned would lead to confusion) between Catholic truth and prudential judgments, is being misrepresented. He blames the Bishops'

own Administrative Board, the USCC, members of the NCEA and diocesan agencies. Among the distortions he singles out is the effort made to equate the Catholic just war theory with pacifism as an acceptable option for a State, in spite of the Bishops' clear teaching that there is no such equality in the Catholic tradition.

John Cardinal O'Connor, a member of the original committee, writes the Foreword. While he disagrees with some of Murphy's practical judgments he, too, is aware of distortions. A good book, well written.

Mary Ann Glendon, *Abortion and Divorce in Western Law*, Harvard University Press, 197 pp., \$25.00

Dr. Glendon of Harvard Law School documents in startling fashion how far our national law has gone in the direction of individual choice vs. family stability, in comparison with its European counterpart. Her general conclusion (p. 112): "Today, abortion is subject to less regulation in the United States than in any country in the Western World. So far as divorce is concerned, the United States is not unique in having made marriage terminal virtually at the will of either party. But the country is set apart by its relative lack of concern with assuring either public or, until very recently, private responsibility for the problems of dependency associated with changing patterns of family behavior". There is little concern in authority figures or private citizens for social responsibility or the common good.

There are only three chapters and three appendices here but the comparative surveys of twenty countries are well worth the price of the book. Her final conclusion about our day (p. 141): "The political importance of families - so obvious and central to Plato, Rousseau, and Tocqueville - is almost always ignored."

Lucien Richard, O.M.I., *Is There a Christian Ethic?*, Paulist Press, 139 pp., \$7.95

A small book written by a Weston professor, dependent largely on the thinking of Richard McCormick, Joseph Fuchs, Edward

Schillebeeckx, etc. The last line of the book reads: "The distinctiveness of Christian ethics can only be the consequence of an on-going incarnation. As such it will clearly be historical and open-ended. It is not yet clear what we are to become."!

Robert A. Krieg, *Story-Shaped Christology: The Role of Narratives in Identifying Jesus Christ*, Paulist Press, 169 pp., \$8.95

Father Krieg, a Holy Cross priest who teaches theology at Notre Dame, seeks to answer the question: "Who is Jesus Christ today?" He thinks story-telling - from the gospels through the lives of the Saints - will provide some good, if not final, answers. The historical Jesus still fascinates. This short book is heavy on psychology and mythology. While conceding that a biography of Jesus is not "currently" possible, he is enamored of Walter Kasper's *Jesus The Christ*. It is not clear, however, what image of Christ dominates the thinking of Father Krieg.

Robin Gill (Ed.), *Theology and Sociology: A Reader*, Paulist Press, 424 pp., \$14.95

Books like this are handy references for the student who wants to understand how social science has affected theology. It is understandable that this would easily occur among Protestant divines with their strong emphasis on private judgment. But the Catholic Church, too, has seen her traditional wisdom challenged by human experience as the latter is understood by sociologists. Here are twenty-eight contributions analyzing from the vantage point of their respective disciplines the implications of sociology for biblical and theological studies and for religious practice. All the well-known observers are here from Max Weber and Emile Durkheim to Gregory Baum and Edward Schillebeeckx.

Frederick J. Cwiekowski, *The Beginnings of the Church*, Paulist Press, 222 pp., \$9.95

This Sulpician priest writes a clear exposition of what historical-critical scholars see as the "provable" items in the first years of

Christianity. The standard convictions of Catholics about their Church's foundations, even by Christ's specific intention, are seen as "pre-critical" (pp. 5-7) and, he tells us, whereas now we know from the "biblical evidence" that there is no support for the idea that "Jesus in his ministry set up a new community with its own internal structures and its own identity distinct from other Jews" (p. 59). The same "Copernican revolution" through criticism has led Catholics to look no longer at the universal Church and its center; nor see the local church as their portion of the whole. Rather, they are increasingly coming to see the local Church as their primary experience of the Church (p. 20).

The groundwork for massive change in Church structures is laid. Raymond Brown writes the Foreword. The limits on the value of biblical criticism set by Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger are not mentioned.

John Shelby Spong, *Living in Sin: A Bishop Re-thinks Human Sexuality*, Harper & Row, 256 pp., \$15.95

This Episcopal Bishop of Newark proposes a "new" sexual morality, based not on marriage but on commitment, vulnerability, and reality. Widows and widowers, the divorced, homosexuals, singles are invited to participate. It should surprise no one that the Episcopal Church is being rocked by these issues, not least by this new official booklet which calls for the recognition of immoral sexual intercourse and does so as the work of a "staff bureaucracy daily wagging the dog".

Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus - A New Vision*, Harper & Row, 216 pp., \$16.95

This frequent contributor to *The Christian Century* and an Oregon State professor of religious studies, thinks Christian history has it all wrong. God's divinely begotten Son did not die on the cross for our sins. He sought to transform His social world. He was a charismatic, but different from others of His kind. He was deeply involved with the socio-political life of His people. The fundamental message of Jesus is "compassion", "inclusiveness", and "peace".

Hans Kung and Leonard Swidler, *The Church in Anguish: Has the Vatican Betrayed Vatican II?*, Harper & Row, 324 pp., \$16.95

The reader who wishes to know how the "successful" Council has led to an "unsuccessful" Church can find here the gory story in twenty-six chapters. Among the most revealing clues are the following chapter headings or sub-headings: "Wojtyla's Polish Roots", "Cardinal Ratzinger, Pope Wojtyla, and Fear at the Vatican"; "Defaming the Historico-Critical Method", "Moral Doctrine at the Cost of Morality?"; "The Curran Case"; "U.S. Women Religious and The Saturnian Complex", etc. All the expected authors are here: Ronald Modras, Hans Kung, Robert McAfee, Robert Brown, Leonard Swidler, Leonardo Boff, Bernard Haring, David Tracy, Charles E. Curran, Rosemary Radford Reuther, Andrew Greeley, Richard McBrien and a host of corresponding Germans. Together they bemoan Rome's recent critical attention to the teaching of Scripture, the new catechetics, and relativism in moral theology - fields which these authors thought they had settled and which they were using to change the Church to fit a Protestant mold. The more surprising thing is that they had these areas of Catholic thought all to themselves for so long.

Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, Harper & Row, 799 pp., \$16.95

This paperback edition of a 1986 work, which has been compared to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, contains a mass of detail on the cults of pagans at the time of Christianity's origin and the early Church. The notes alone cover one hundred pages. The thirteen chapters are packed with names, dates, evaluations and reevaluations, interesting observations about martyrs, sinners, Constantine and a chapter on "Bishops and Authority". Fox recognizes that he deals with indirect evidence: "Generalizations are therefore precarious, easier to refute than confirm". Yet he makes his own choices which often substitute his interpretation for one in possession. We find no Catholic perceptions in the book, the word "Catholic" never appearing, nor any recognition of a "pope", even though by the time Constantine died (337 A.D.) the word

"Catholic" was at least two hundred years old and there had been thirty-four popes. Still it is a book a scholar of early Christianity should have on his shelf.

George M. Lansa, *New Testament Light*, Harper & Row, 378 pp., \$12.95

These are meditations on four hundred passages of the New Testament, book by book, author by author. George M. Lansa, who has translated the Bible and has written over twenty books illuminating what he calls "the original meaning" of Scripture, draws heavily on etymology and he rejoices in the readings given in the Eastern Churches. A useful work.

Herman Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories: Studies in the Synoptic Gospels*, Harper & Row, 310 pp., \$16.95

Father Hendrickx, who is a New Testament professor in the Philippines, provides a highly technical exegesis of eight miracle stories. He stands in the critical tradition but says that "it is useful and necessary to question the critical doubt. It is all too easy to get rid of ancient texts on the simple ground that they tell us incredible things. One should try to explain why the texts are what they are, why miracle stories are presented the way they are" (p. 31). The eight stories include the cure of the leper, the paralytic, and the stilling of the storm.

James V. Schall, S.J., *Another Sort of Learning*, Ignatius Press, 299 pp.

This is a book about why we should read, what we should read, books we should keep. It is also a book about how to acquire an education without necessarily going to college; but in college, too. Several sections are titled: "Books You Will Never Be Assigned" and "Schall's Unlikely List of Books to Keep Sane By". Leo Straus and Christopher Dawson are in one category, Chesterton's *Orthodoxy* and Hilaire Belloc's *The Path to Rome* are in the other. Those who know Father Schall will agree his taste for learning is genuinely catholic and Catholic.

Karl Keating, *Catholicism and Fundamentalism*, Ignatius Press, 360 pp., \$12.95

One of a growing number of books of "Catholic Answers", defending Catholicism from fundamentalism and explaining why fundamentalism has been successful in converting Romans.

Henry DeLubac, *Letters of Etienne Gilson to Henri DeLubac: With a Commentary by Henry DeLubac*, Ignatius Press, 247 pp., \$11.95

A first rate re-cap of the great philosophical and theological debates that fired Catholic intellectual life for the first half of this century.

Christian Simonnet, *Theodore Venard: A Martyr of Vietnam*, Ignatius Press, 177 pp., \$8.95

This biography of a young French missionary to Vietnam, who was martyred in Vietnam in 1861 and became a model for early Maryknollers, fills a void long suffered. He was the favorite male saint of the Little Flower.

K.D. Whitehead, *Catholic Colleges and Federal Funding*, Ignatius Press, 115 pp., No price

The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education has challenged the myth that Federal Funding means the loss of identity for Catholic colleges. The impelling facts are two: (1) the argument that government funding and Catholic identity are mutually exclusive is false, and (2) regardless of "controversy" the mind of the Church must be spoken with unmistakable clarity. The book is compelling. What remains to be done is an analysis of how state Blaine Amendments (two-thirds of our states have them), which are more restrictive than the U.S. Constitution, unduly limit the freedom of religious people; and deny to Church-sponsored schools, higher and lower, what is permissible under the First Amendment.

<b>BOOKS RECEIVED</b>
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**IGNATIUS PRESS**

Joseph P. Martino, *A Fighting Chance: The Moral Use of Nuclear Weapons*, 282 pp., \$15.95

Jacqueline Kasun, *The War Against Population: The Economics and Ideology of Population Control*, 225 pp., \$14.95

**HARPER & ROW**

Cardinal Jean Marie Lustiger, *The Mass*, 79 pp., \$4.95

Ake Hultkrantz, *Native Religions of North America*, 144 pp., \$7.95

Richard H. Bell (Ed) *The Grammar of the Heart*, 259 pp., \$24.99

Norman Cousins (Ed), *The Republic of Reason: The Personal Philosophies of the Founding Fathers*, 463 pp., \$10.95

Segundo Galilea, *The Way of Living Faith*, 166 pp., \$14.95 This book is subtitled "A Spirituality of Liberation".

Howard Schwartz, *Lilith's Cave: Jewish Tales of the Supernatural*, 294 pp., \$22.50

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**(Our President's Message Continued)**

justify any kind of deed, because it was consequentialistic and utilitarian and rejected the very notion of intrinsically evil acts. I began to realize how truly courageous and prophetic Pope Paul VI had been, and how providential it was that he had been given the strength to resist the terrible pressures brought upon him to repudiate this priceless teaching of the Church, one rooted in a respect for our God-given power to give life and for the integral beauty of the marital act, which is meant to be life-giving and love-giving.

I have, since my repentance over my cowardly act of 1968, done what I could to make known the truth of the Church's teaching on contraception. I am particularly grateful for the

beautiful teaching of our present Holy Father on the "nuptial significance" of the body and for his efforts to show that the Church's teaching is rooted in the truth and in God's revelation. I am sure, too, that the strength of my wife, her faith, her true love, and her goodness helped finally to bring me to my senses. My prayer is that men and women today can see how contraception dishonors their bodies, poisons marriage, and brings other evils into the world. The slogan of the advocates of contraception is that no unwanted child ought ever to be born. The truth proclaimed in the name of Christ by *Humanae Vitae* is that no person ought to be unwanted, and that if we are to have a society in which all persons are wanted, we can have it only if people choose to be chaste.