

Newsletter

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von Balthasar on Theology and Holiness

The theological output of Father Hans Urs von Balthasar could be compared to what they call "megatons" in the field of nuclear weapons. He is distinguished not only for the number of books and articles he wrote, but also for their theological depth.

I am happy to be able to say that I knew him personally, attended meetings with him, shared meals and conversations with him. I was always impressed by his thoughtfulness, the attention with which he listened to others, his grasp of each situation, and the clarity and wisdom with which he expressed himself.

During one of the Roman Synods, either in 1977 or 1980, we had dinner together and had a long conversation about the topic of the Synod, the International Theological Commission (of which he was a member), and the magazine/movement which was close to his heart, Communio. At that time I was a member of the editorial board – it was in that capacity that I met him on several occasions. In fact, I visited him one afternoon in his home in Basle, Switzerland.

Why do I mention these mundane facts? Well, I have always admired the work of von Balthasar from the time of my first encounter with him in his book called Prayer. Over the years I have read many of his articles and some of his books, but in no sense do I lay claim to expert knowledge about his theology or his key ideas. Since I studied under Karl Rahner in Innsbruck, I am much more familiar with his system than I am with that of von Balthasar. But since they were both Jesuits, both great intellects, both prodigious workers, both productive scholars, I have naturally enjoyed comparing the similarities and differences between them. In the early years when they were students, it seems that they were in agreement on what theology should be and where it should go; later on they went in different directions. I believe the sharpest critique of Rahner I have ever read is in a little book by von Balthasar entitled, Cordula, which I read in German. There may be an English translation of it, but I have never seen it.

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In recent days I have been thinking about von Balthasar, who died last year shortly before he was to receive a Cardinal's red hat, because I have been reading the Fall 1989 issue of Communio (Vol. XVI, No. 3) which carries the title, "The Life and Work of Hans Urs von Balthasar".

The issue contains nine articles. The first one by Peter Henrici, S.J., of the Gregorian University, presents a short sketch of von Balthasar's life: childhood, youth, entrance into the Jesuits and departure, his association with Adrienne von Speyr, and his final years. There we learn that he was an accomplished musician who, at one time, considered becoming a professional musician; that was before he decided to become a Jesuit. A detail I liked was that he gave away his stereo set because he knew all of Mozart by heart; in order to enjoy the music he did not have to turn on the stereo, he just sat back went through the score by memory! Perhaps we need more theologians like that. In any event, his musical talent helps to explain his interest in the arts and his concentration on the idea of beauty -- a key idea in his main theological work, Herrlichkeit (The Glory of the Lord, in English, Ignatius Press).

The following articles deal with various aspects of his theology: theology and holiness, exegesis and contemplation, the glory of the Lord, listening to the Fathers of the Church, Mary in her Fiat as the "prototype" of the theologian, Jesus Christ -- the form and norm of man, and being interpreted as love. The author of the last article shows that von Balthasar considered being and love to be co-extensive or "convertible" in scholastic terminology.

I would like to recommend this special number of Communio to all the members of the Fellowship, and that for a number of reasons. First of all, because von Balthasar strove to accomplish unity and peace in the Church through the Communio "movement" which is broader than the magazine itself. It is not easy to get intellectuals to work together on a common project. He put a great deal of effort into the founding of the first Communio magazine in German and its subsequent development into twelve international editions. It seems to me that we of the Fellowship are trying in our own way to do the same thing here in the United States.

Secondly, von Balthasar is a very stimulating theologian to read. He is thoroughly grounded in Scripture, especially St. John, and in the Fathers of the Church. I believe it was in the 1970's that Henri de Lubac, S.J., said that von Balthasar was the most learned man in Europe. In his pre-Vatican II writings he is said to have anticipated most of the main themes of the Council. There is hardly a question in contemporary theology that von Balthasar has not dealt with -- usually in a very profound manner.

Finally, von Balthasar strove to overcome the separation between theology and holiness that has been plaguing Catholic theology since the Middle Ages. This theme runs through the whole volume. There is an excellent article on the subject by the Italian dogmatic theologian, Antonio Sicari, O.C.D., who is also the Director of the Italian edition of Communio. von Balthasar laments the baneful separation between dogmatic theology and spirituality or mysticism. He stresses that the early theologians were saints, pastors, and often martyrs: Irenaeus, Cyprian, Maximus the Confessor, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory, Jerome, Augustine, Albert, Bonaventure, Aquinas, and so forth.

The center of his theology is Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity. Jesus is the Revelation of the Father, the Word, the Voice of God. He is the true or sole "Theologian" because He speaks the final word about God (theo-logos). Faith in Jesus Christ, total response to Him and existential experience of Him go before all reflection or "theologizing" on the part of the would-be scholar. That is why the saints play such a large role in the theology of von Balthasar. They are theologians par excellence because they grasped God and were grasped by Him. They did not separate their faith into one compartment and their theologizing into another.

I am just scratching the surface of an immense mountain of treasure. If you are concerned, as I am, for more holiness in the pursuit of theology, then I suggest you read this issue of Communio from cover to cover. I make bold to predict that you will not be disappointed.

Kenneth Baker, S.J.
Homiletic & Pastoral Review

Early Christians and Marriage

This book (1) is a little expensive but well worth it for historians, theologians and others interested in the mind of early Christian writers and spiritual leaders, and in tracing early Christian struggles to decide where the body, sex and procreation fitted into the life of the Christian "New Man". It took considerable philosophical, moral, social and devotional pondering and opinion-forging among the leaders of the first Christian communities to establish an efficacious place for marriage and sex in their redeemed lives. This was not because they were full of strange passions or rigid concepts; nor because the subject was impenetrable. It was simpler than that. They just didn't know what to think and had to figure it out. This involved a few awkward starts and strong views some of which were unproductive long term.

Professor Brown, formerly of the University of California, Berkeley and now Rollins Professor of History at Princeton, a fine and mellow scholar and no mean stylist, has made a nice contribution to this subject. He exposes the drift of early Christian philosophies of life with balanced and careful judgment.

What emerges is a people with open minds, nicely innocent of 19th and 20th century views of sex as hyper-significant, and not encumbered by the moral angularity of Calvin's principles. They called on their own assumptions of Christ's plan as they fended off the polarized pressures of the day: an ubiquitous degeneracy and an ascetical practice as classical citizenship idealized it. And while normal people tried to discern the proper direction of Christianity in these matters they were harangued by spiritual guides often pressing on them extraordinary theses. Some of these guides were doing their honest best; others were shrill and myopic, the match of today's anti-fur fanatics.

Who of us living in a pagan culture today cannot empathize with the first generations of sane Christian family city folk wondering what they should do about their own practice, their children's marriages, compromising service to the pagan state and even about the carnivals

which everyone enjoyed. These mixed subjects touched on the newly underlined "personal-factor" morals without dismissing the ancient public posture of morality and virtue that meant much to Romans and their imitators. Interesting, the brutality and the ritual that suggested apostasy at the carnivals were distinctly more disturbing to early Christians than decorative nudity.

At first no Roman social practice alarmed Christians as much as the whole demanding pattern of Roman life that allowed alignment with the state and its code to outrank personal morals. That priority was truly alien to Christian thought and living. Puzzlement about marriage and attempts to discover the Christian dimension of marriage were parts of that larger concern.

One of Professor Brown's first interesting observations is that whereas the Christian of the first two centuries was normal sexually, and thought in terms of having children to God's and Rome's glory, some of his colleagues also approved of sexual abstinence in middle age. He also often approved of virginity as an exceptional state. In this he was not seriously different, on the surface, from pagan ideals and practice -- even though the sources of the two mindsets were different. The duty of pagans to the City to have children was a true social mandate. This was the common mind on marriage and important. But with that, self-indulgence and dependence on feminine favors were considered a dangerous weakening of manhood and of its needed character and powers. Clement of Alexandria (150 to 215 A.D.) in whom we discover a generally sensible defender of marriage against extremist views, noted that:

The human ideal of continence, I mean that which is set forth by the Greek philosophers, teaches one to resist passion, so as not to be made subservient to it and to train the instinct to pursue rational goals.

(1) The Body and Society by Peter Brown, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988, (price elegantly omitted but the cost is \$45.00)

But...our (Christian) ideal is not to experience desire at all. (2)

Professor Brown makes two nice points about this.

We must not, he suggests, accept the views and practice of philosophers, theologians and rhetoricians as those of the ordinary householder. With care and precision he discerns some signs of general early Christian practice. They tend to be conservative of known social practice and not, in their majority, racing to conform to the latest views of radical spiritual philosophers from Syria and Alexandria.

With few exceptions, Christians wrestling with these questions maintained a gyroscopic balance fixed on the pursuit of spiritual goals; and considered the matters of body and sex of second importance, and important chiefly in the service of spiritual progress. "Singleness of heart", conforming to God's will, was the heart of pursued personal Christian integrity thereby creating a polarity with the Imperial sense of integrity which centered largely on reliable social posture and public deportment. The two integrities shared a common base of public propriety but Christian integrity ran to a personal warmth of relationship and concern for others that was rare among pagans whose ethic often ended with the powerful demands of an honest and demanding public role and its derivative personal requirements. Each shared a regard for personal asceticism and they adumbrated each other's regard for dignified comportment. But it was the concept of personal charity, mandated by God, that put the two popular practices on different psychological paths.

What we see among some Christians of the Empire as a specific stepping away from sex especially after procreational duties were fulfilled, relates to an older classical view of women and sex. (Brace yourselves, ladies.) Pagan integrity — and not many challenged the thought — was a male virtue almost exclusively. In both classic pagan and purist Jewish circles like those of the Essenes, women were the causes, par excellence, of duplicitous behavior, of lack of integrity. To that degree they were to be avoided by those seeking perfection.

Hence, male exclusiveness in all the affairs of state in the Roman world. Surely this was not universal or even popular practice, but equally surely it was an underlying prejudice accepted as normative among those who counted and many others.

Worse to come. It was a classical truism that the hope of glory and honor, of discernible strength in every city-state and in the Empire itself depended not on a corporate fact, but was largely measured by the strong virtuous public posture of the individual men who led the city-state. Part of that assumption was that any undue amount of intercourse not strictly required to fulfill a man's obligation to populate the state, might easily lead to womanish ways in a man. Needless to say, being a real ladies' man or enjoying the company of ladies unduly, was almost literally the kiss of death to a man's public posture, a clear threat even to his masculine manners, physical stature, strong voice, et cetera. Men of important position took that advice seriously. No doubt many cheated. It would be wrong to assume that Christians shared uncritically either that goal or the reasoning behind it. But we would go too far to say that they wholly or swiftly abandoned such accepted wisdom and failed to be cautious of ignoring it entirely.

Among some vocal Christians and writers, the body itself was more the problem than sex. Sex was downgraded to some degree among the anti-body philosophers because it made more bodies and enlarged, so to speak, the dominion of physicality when we should be enlarging spirituality chiefly. It is wrong to ridicule such thinking. These good people were uncertain of just what the spirit and asceticism were demanding of them. The Encratites, for instance, considered that the ideal of life existed in Adam and Eve in their state of innocence; and they thought it possible to help Christians to return to something like that state. Anyone who wanted to pursue that goal had to become as much as possible "non-animal". An early Encratite, Titian, considered original sin to be a sexual act not because he was prurient (not a Roman failing) but because erotic sex created our flawed, falsely directly society. It was a Christian duty then to try to reverse that

(2) The Body and Society, Peter Brown, 1988, p. 31

mistake by suspending sex and terminating that misdirected society. Happily those views horrified most pagans, Jews and Christians equally.

Mani, of course, in his Dualism created a satisfying principle for the advocates of short-circuiting the sexually permissive society, and still haunts those who fail to resolve the problem of evil.

When, finally, virginity became a more reasonable ideal and was more clearly designed for a minority of witnesses, it had several practical even pragmatic sides to it. The early Christian center of guidance for the spiritual life was neither priest nor bishop but learned guides more akin to rabbis than to any later Christian leaders. Virginity or middle-age continence among the guides allowed them not only to witness to their faith and classical manhood but to continue instructing women with respectability. Very early in Christian society thoughtful women of any means had also capitalized on their position as Roman matrons and escalated themselves neatly as serious Christian guides. Neither guides nor students, men or women, thought celibacy too great a sacrifice to continue their search for deeper Christian truth and for enlarging the circle of their discussions. For a woman it offered a different and nice opportunity, namely a career open-to-talent wherein she was recognized as an official person in the Christian community, an educated virgin or celibate matron dedicated to the Church. As such, they participated in many aspects of church life officially and were popularly accepted as major influences in Christian society.

Professor Brown's treatment of the first desert fathers is enlightening. He points out that their fiercest struggles were more about food and less about sex whose demands were somewhat diminished as fasting elevated the monks' focus to a new supra-corporeal level. (A later distracting interest in miraculous matters exaggerated their temptations.) Curiously, the desert monk had to work hard a good bit of the day for the little food he needed. But again, the larger motions of life among these cenobites centered on singleness of heart for which abstinences from food and sex were only means and paths, and important only in the service of spiritual goals. There is little evidence of a dislike or fear of sex. This is not easy for latter day Calvinist-influenced people to comprehend.

Professor Brown makes it clear that Syrian Christian spirituality and not Roman led the way for a strong anti-corporeal asceticism thereby setting up an early polarity in that regard with the Western Roman Christian. Alexandria, we know, tried to mediate but also extended the life of Syrian views.

Professor Brown draws from his sources a very important dimension regarding marriage among Imperial Christian men. Here Professor Brown makes Roman regard for life-long or middle-age celibacy, and postponed marriage, and even for the desert, a little more understandable for us. Remembering that these men could not shake (nor did they wish to shake) the common view of their duties as citizens we recognize that a young Roman man did not assume his full role as a citizen of Rome until he founded his own family. Before that he had not yet accepted the powerful personal obligations incumbent upon a citizen as pillar and defender of the state, nor had he accepted his role in the commune, his participation in the rites and prerogatives of an officer of Roman society, or his share and contribution to the sacred union of the citizen and the state. All this descended upon him fully only when he married. When his children arrived he became a true, organic and privileged element in the city, a full cooperater of the Emperor and a pious man in his divinely commissioned duties. That rich entangling relationship – the stuff of life for a pagan Roman – drew a Christian far closer to the pagan society than he may have wished to be. Certainly too close for spiritual comfort and for ease of conscience. Indeed, the grain of incense to the Emperor may not have been a real liturgical act of worship; it was the titular, emblematic symbol of a citizen's unqualified participation in the whole pagan Roman society. With this in mind, we understand that a Roman Christian man of any position, thought twice about entering fully into that pagan state by founding a family. At least it gave him pause. This was a consideration quite independent of any thought about virginity as a charism or being unmanned by self-indulgence.

No one of these cautions nor all of them together prevented most Christians from marrying but they did create a powerful obligato to ascetical thought.

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St. Thomas: Not Guilty

Students of St. Thomas are regularly irked by the suggestion of dissident moral theologians that there are bases in Thomas for positions which depart dramatically from traditional moral wisdom. Thus, so-called proportionalism or moderate teleology, which derives the moral assessment of any deed from its proportion or disproportion to the end aimed at, is said to be nothing more than what Thomas meant when he said that it is the end that dat speciem in moralibus. Father Mullady's book addresses this attempt on the part of dissident moral theology to find cover in texts of Thomas. There have been critiques aplenty of proportionalism, needless to say, notably those emanating from the Grisez-Finnis-Boyle-May school; there have been Thomistic critiques such as that of Pinckaers and Belmans. But Professor Brian Mullady has written the first sustained effort in English – a sort of English, alas – to appraise the moral theology of Charles Curran, Richard McCormick, Joseph Fuchs, Louis Janssens, Peter Knauer, etc. in the light of their claim that they are, at bottom, faithful followers of St. Thomas Aquinas. (1) In the course of doing this, Mullady has important and interesting things to say about the teaching of Thomas itself.

Mullady's presentation of the school that he calls - adopting the description of one of its adherents, Richard McCormick, "moderate teleology" - is noteworthy for finding the original inspiration for this sustained and polycephalous effort in Karl Rahner's "On the Question of a Formal Existential Ethics" (Theological Investigations, II, 217-234). Rahner's suggestion of a gap between precept and personal application, with the latter the locus where the agent is guided by the Holy Spirit perhaps to violate the precept - could be seen as the seed of another tendency, namely, that of making conscience the supreme, unquestioned, perhaps infallible, guide of action. Father Mullady rightly sees that it is also the source of the concept of human action that characterizes moderate teleology. In a first chapter, he traces this spoor in Louis Janssens,

Peter Knauer, Bruno Schueller, and Richard McCormick, with frequent reference to other and lesser lights. But the heart of the book consists of the chapters devoted to a careful analysis of St. Thomas, the focus on Questions 6-21 of Summa theologiae I&IIae, laying stress on the division marked at Question 18.

Of the many merits and enlightening aspects of Father Mullady's book I will draw attention here to his discussion of ontic or premoral evil. Whatever one might make of the description of the moral task as man's effort to put a flawed world to his purposes, the suggestion of moderate teleology that the disorder in, say, contraceptive sex is not yet moral evil, but takes on whatever moral value it has from its proportion to the end for the sake of which it is done, is a crucial claim. Things can go well or ill in the natural world without the involvement of moral good or evil. Reproductive activity may fail to reproduce, for example. A miscarriage can abort the child. Such appraisals of activities are premoral. There is no need in appraising sexual congress in this way to ask whether the man and woman are married. But, of course, described and appraised in this way, these activities are not human acts. Furthermore, to speak of human acts as species naturae is to speak abstractly of them. As they occur, they will occur within human acts, moral acts. Sexual intercourse as voluntarily engaged in by a man and woman is a moral act, and it will be disordered if they are not husband and wife. So regarded, voluntarily to engage in sexual intercourse on the part of the unmarried, is called the proximate end, the object of the act. It is the steady view of St. Thomas Aquinas that the moral act, so described, can have moral goodness or badness independent of any further end the agents may have in view. The gallant adulterer may act to save the maid from a deranged rapist and claim that bedding her is the best protection he can offer. Would the act then cease to be adulterous? Moderate teleologists ask that we take into account the whole scene

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(1) The Meaning of the Term "Moral" in St. Thomas Aquinas, by Brian Thomas Mullady, O.P., originally published by Studi Tomistici 27, Pontificia Accademia di S. Tommaso, Vatican City, 1986; currently published by The Pope John Center, 186 Forbes Road, Braintree, MA 02184.

What is the Theological Status of National Episcopal Conferences?

Surrounding the debates on the United States bishops' pastoral letters on nuclear arms and peace was the reasonable question of what authority the letter had. This question led immediately to the theological question of the doctrinal authority of episcopal conferences as such. National or regional conferences of bishops were authorized in principle by Vatican II (L.G. 23; C.D. 36-38); the Constitution on the Liturgy assigned many functions to them even before their exact nature had been settled. The new Code of Canon Law spells out their nature and competence on the basis of the decisions of the Vatican Council (cc. 117-159).

After the rather weak reception of Humanae Vitae in 1968 by many episcopal conferences, Pope Paul VI called the first Extraordinary Roman Synod in 1969 to discuss the matter. The Synod made no significant contributions to what was already in the documents of Vatican II. The question came up again in the 1985 Extraordinary Synod, which marked the 20th anniversary of the closing of the Council. Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, then President of the NCCB, asked that the Vatican carry out a study of the teaching authority of bishops' conferences.

In January 1988 the Vatican published a first draft or "working paper" on the matter and sent it to all the bishops. Father Thomas Reese, S.J. has published a collection of ten essays by prominent American theologians and scholars. It is intended as a response to the Instrumentum Laboris or working draft. The book is divided into three parts: historical, analytical, and theological studies. (1)

There is much useful information in this volume on the following subjects: the role and authority of local councils and synods in the early Church; how conflict is resolved and consensus achieved in the NCCB/USCC; episcopal conferences in the 1983 Code of Canon Law; an analysis of the Roman working draft; the doctrinal authority of bishops' conferences; bishops' conferences as an expression of communio.

Potential readers of this book should note at the outset that every essay in this collection is aimed at proving the thesis that episcopal conferences do have doctrinal authority (munus magisterii), and that the conferences have "theological status" in the Church in the sense that they are implicitly contained in divine revelation. What stimulated most of these articles, according to Father Reese (Preface, p. vii), was the strong statement of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger that the conferences lack doctrinal authority.

The Cardinal's view is clearly stated in The Ratzinger Report, p. 59: "We must not forget that the episcopal conferences have no theological basis; they do not belong to the indispensable structure of the Church as Christ willed it; they have only a practical, concrete function." So the main thrust of Reese's book is to refute Ratzinger's thesis. Ratzinger is quoted again and again by several of the writers. Arguments are marshalled from the notion of communio, from the idea of collegiality, from the history of the Church, and from Canon Law to try to prove that Ratzinger is wrong. It is not at all apparent to me that they have succeeded.

An author or editor is free to do what he wishes with a book if he can get it printed. This volume, even though it might appear at first sight to be an objective or balanced treatment of the subject, is not that at all. Not one article of the ten takes a position in defense of the main points of the Roman Working Draft. In sum, it offers a sharp critique of the Roman position.

It was the Americans who pushed for this Roman document; now they do not like what they have been given. I find it humorous that Father Joseph Komonchak, who wrote both the Introduction and an article on the Roman document, wants the whole matter dropped for now. The discussion is not going his way so the issues "cannot be resolved at the present time",

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(1)Episcopal Conferences: Historical, Canonical and Theological Studies, edited by Thomas J. Reese, S.J., Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C. 20057, 1989, xii + 296 pp., HB \$19.95.

Spirituality and Women A Conference

In February, 1989 in Yonkers, New York a conference was conducted on "Spirituality and Women", sponsored by the Center for Spiritual Development.

More than two hundred women were present. A handful of men attended. One of them, amusingly, because "when the revolution comes, I want to know some people".

One thing is certain: many women are starving spiritually and reaching for whatever happens to come their way.

Another thing that struck me is that the speakers were well-intentioned women, convinced that their sex had been severely discriminated against in the course of the history of the Church, and that, thanks to modern research, new avenues were now finally opening to them. They have sincerely convinced themselves that it is their mission to spread the "good news", and transmit the joyful message of "liberation" to an oppressed majority. They were all soft-spoken, articulate, and in no way fanatics, like Valerie Solanas, the foundress of SCUM (Society to Crush up Men). I am convinced that these women have a prayer-life, and feel themselves to be deeply spiritual.

What they do not seem to realize, however, is that they are prey to the zeitgeist, strongly influenced by contemporary secular sciences like sociology and psychology, which present a lop-sided picture of the Church and of Church doctrine.

What saddened me most, however, was the lack of "sensus spiritualis". I do not recall that the Blessed Virgin - the model of women - was mentioned, and if she was (I might have missed it), she certainly did not receive any real attention.

What is to be done about this? In order to curb the onslaught of radical feminism (so dangerous in this country) it seems to me urgent and imperative that Catholic Centers of Spirituality should be under the direction of women who are aware of contemporary problems, and their supernatural solution, women who live "in their time; not from their time."

True, there are many women who may call themselves theologians, many quite validly, but the aim of Christian life is not to become theologians, but to become holy. "Haec est voluntas Dei: Santificatio Vestra." A Ph.D. in Theology is no passport to heaven. It is not talking which guarantees our eternal salvation, but receptivity to God's will. "Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum" is and should remain the motto of women (and of men).

The substance and circumstances of the conference may interest our readers.

Under the heading, "SPIRITUALITY AND WOMEN - THE CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT," Sister Janet Ruffing, S.M., Ph.D. (Professor at Fordham University, Graduate School) opened the conference and told us:

"Sense the pulse of your heartbeat, (either at the wrist or the neck). Picture yourself in the divine presence. Notice your feelings. What do you feel? Follow the dictates of your heart, not what you think you ought to do, but where your heart leads you." "What do you find there? What do you do? Do you find God? In what way? Return to your pulse beat once more: steadiness; comfort. Pulse: You, O God, are near us. Mend broken hearts."

There are two things which struck me in her lecture:

1. The obvious concentration on "feelings", and the constant invitation to observe oneself instead of being "object-centered".

2. It seems to me that the invitation "to follow the dictates of one's heart" can be misleading and dangerous. There are times when the heart is right; there are times when it is wrong. No guidelines were given to distinguish between the two possibilities.

Mary Ann Jordan, (Ph.D. psychologist in private practice) speaking on "WOMEN AND WORK", stood against abortion. She emphasized the importance of new structures,

which she viewed as "expressions of the justice of God". We will experience God's presence in our work. She remarked on the self: "There is a part of myself I am aware of; there is a part of myself I am not aware of; there are forces in me that are unconscious, (i.e., repressed feelings that have developed when I felt threatened). Sometimes our defenses do not work well; we feel overwhelmed, we feel anxiety, depression, etc. We must 'become ourselves'. We are called upon to know and love ourselves as God loves us. He loves us as sinners. Trusting in God who loves us; we can have the courage to face our own darkness."

Then she advised us to think for some ten minutes about "positive" and "negative" images that arise in our minds when facing various situations. Some people volunteered to share their images with others. Most of them down-to-earth analogies. One of them was definitely not very spiritual: a man mentioned that he had a negative image when there were three boxes of cereal on the breakfast table, and no milk!

My observations:

1. The expression "to become oneself" is ambiguous. What is the "self" that one should become? Kierkegaard has pointedly remarked that in man there are "a multiplicity of shadows, all of which resemble him and for the moment have an equal claim to be acquainted himself". How many people want to "be true to themselves", that is, follow blindly whatever inclination they happen to have?

2. I also think that the expression "God loves us AS SINNERS: can be very misleading. God loves sinners in spite of their sin.)

Dr. Sidney Callahan, Professor of Psychology at Mercy College, informed us that "life was a soap opera", and told us that the Christian past had not given her "models" that she could follow. The reason for this is that circumstances are changing so rapidly past models could not be helpful. Is there she asked, "no God for us?"

Then she turned her attention to love which she described as "activity".

Referring to C.S. Lewis, she mentioned that in Greek the word "love" is expressed by

four different concepts: agape, eros, philia, and storge. In Christianity, agape eliminated the other three. But God loves us in all of those ways, she said.

We were invited to write down for some ten minutes our own thoughts about love. Some people communicated their reflections.

Dr. Callahan then mentioned that it was the special gift of women to love. She noted that the more one gives, the more one receives. Basing her remarks on her experiences as a mother, she emphasized the danger of seeking love from others as a compensation, because "we do not believe in God's love for us", and also because "we do not love ourselves enough". She also mentioned the danger of trying to dominate others in the name of love. She proceeded to make valuable remarks on the relationship between suffering and love. She mentioned that St. Teresa of Avila rejoiced in the fact that she had "liberated herself from the love of creatures". But then she turned to Karl Rahner who is supposed to have said that there is no "competition between love of God and love of creatures".

My comments:

1. Granted that the scenery of our lives has changed radically, particularly in the course of the last forty years, it is difficult for me to understand why the essential virtues of the saints (such as their humility, charity, purity, etc.) cannot serve us as models. If Dr. Callahan has found no model that she can follow, is it not because she concentrates on the non-essential and overlooks the essential: the call to holiness?

2. If love is "an activity", then inferentially there is no love in heaven, when all "activities" cease. This is careless language.

3. The sentence "we do not love ourselves enough" is ambiguous. Dr. Callahan should have distinguished between "true self love" and "wrong self love" (of which there is plenty). I am convinced that in our society, "to love oneself" usually means to cater to all of one's wishes and desires. I am sure she did not mean this.

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FELLOWSHIP OF CATHOLIC SCHOLARS
THIRTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

September 21 - 23, 1990

THEME:

"TEACHING THE FAITH IN 1990:
SOME CENTRAL QUESTIONS"

HOST: MOST REVEREND ANTHONY J. BEVILACQUA

SUNDAY MASS, SEPTEMBER 23
CATHEDRAL OF SS. PETER AND PAUL - 10:00 A.M.

HOLIDAY INN CENTER CITY

1800 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THIRTEENTH CONVENTION
September 21 - 23 1990

**"TEACHING THE FAITH IN 1990:
SOME CENTRAL QUESTIONS"**

1. Catholic Doctrine in a World of Relativism. Teaching Creation, Christ, the Church and Eschatology in the Late 20th Century.
2. An Assessment of the Contemporary Teaching of Catholic Doctrine in the United States.
How should Magisterium Deal with Formal Public Dissent?
3. An Historical Perspective on Evangelization in the United States. Shifting Concentrations of Interest.
4. Theological Controversies and American Catholic Life.
 - a) To What Degree Does Pastoral Concern Require a Doctrinal Frame?
 - b) Critical Theological Issues that Touch the Magisterium and Contemporary Life.
5. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
 - a) Its Regular Practice.
 - b) Two Views of the Teaching Authority of the National Conference of Bishops.
6. How should the Catholic Church in the United States Incorporate the Goals of Pope John Paul II into the Institutions and Modalities of Evangelization in the 21st Century?
7. The State of Catholic Parish Life in the United States and Evangelization of the Truth.
 - a) A Sociologist's Point of View.
 - b) A Pastor's Point of View.
 - c) What is Effective Evangelization - Parish to University?

Editor's Notes:

1. We are corresponding now with the speakers we are enlisting for the program, and will publish their names in the next issue. In the meantime, we welcome you to write or call Msgr. Clark or Terry Archer (718-990-6394) if a subject especially interests you and you would care to propose one of the formal questions after the main talk.
2. Because of the currency and importance of the questions in this year's conference, and a preference expressed by many members, we have abandoned concurrent sessions, allowing you to hear and participate in every listed conference.

(continued from page 9 - "Spirituality...")

4. To say that Christianity has ousted "philia, eros, and storge" is a statement that deserves to be challenged, even though it is very fashionable to claim that up to Vatican II, the Church has denigrated "natural love". The fact that agape was given absolute priority certainly should not be interpreted to mean that all categories of "natural loves" were or should be eliminated. Moreover, the statement that "God loves us with all four kinds of loves" needs clarification, to say the least. The quality of God's love is so clearly perfect, transcendent, that it contains per eminentiam all the perfections of all types of natural loves, without being any of them. I fear that her formulation could easily be misunderstood.

5. To say that "there is no competition between love of God and love of creature" (a view that Rahner is supposed to have defended) also calls for clarification. To "prefer" a creature to God is, alas, a classical human temptation. St. Augustine has solved the dilemma in developing his concept of "amare in Deo", which should have been mentioned, to clarify possible misunderstandings.

Sister Bechtle, S.C., Ph.D., together with Kathleen O'Connor, Ph.D., of the Faculty of Maryknoll School of Theology, developed the theme, "THE GOD OF WOMEN". The talk was based on the questions "Who is God for me?" "What does this knowledge tell me about myself?" We were encouraged to "suspend the ways we have been taught", to "allow ourselves to discover who our God is". Also: "What is true for you?"

Once again, we were invited to be silent for twenty minutes, and meditate on the best way of answering the following questions:

1. My God is like.....
2. When I name God this way, it makes me feel.....about myself.

Once again, some people volunteered to share their feelings and answers with others. Several of them had a poetical tinge; one person said that "God was like my big sister". One man said; "To me, God is like a clown who laughs a lot, and triggers a lot of laughter". The answer was graciously received, like any other. I got up, and said that "there was only one God, the God

revealed in the Old and New Testament". Ms. O'Connor thanked me too, for she said, "being a Professor of Biblical Studies she was glad that the Bible was mentioned".

We were told that "we had been doing theology": our speakers were teaching us to "do theology", based on "what we know best: namely our own experiences". On this basis, we can take the words of tradition and place them in our own time.

The speakers continued:

"Women have been 'alienated' from their own experiences. Others (meaning men) have taught us who we were; how we should think, react, speak. We were not allowed to claim our experiences as our own."

Dr. O'Connor told us that "much of what she had been taught did not ring true in her own life". "Women have been banished from the sphere of theology; they were told that they were incapable of entering into this field. For this reason, female experiences have been completely left out, and theology became the prerogative of men. Now, women are "liberated to do theology".

The two speakers stressed the importance of language: e.g., to tell a girl that she is dumb and worthless, will make her dumb and worthless. To tell her that she is bright, talented and wonderful will encourage her to develop these qualities. Language is crucial: it helps us develop "the future of reality". It is crucial in our prayer life for "language controls our experiences". Up to now, language has been "male language". Women have been silenced: their voice has not been heard in the Church. And yet, the "voice of God comes out of my experiences". At one point, one of the two speakers referred to God as "her". Many women, they told us, have been so badly hurt that they have left the Church, and turned to Oriental religions which honor female divinities. Our speakers were in no way considering doing this: they want to remain Roman Catholics. But women should struggle to "liberate our image of God" to be "set free". "God is being liberated", one of the speakers told us. Women should feel themselves to be the "Giver of Life". Up to now, they have been "degraded".

(continued on page 20)

We publish an excerpt from the report of our colleagues in Ireland of their most recent meeting of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars in Dublin. We have included the names of the participants thinking that our readers may know many of them.

FELLOWSHIP OF CATHOLIC SCHOLARS
IRISH CHAPTER
SECRETARY: DR GERARD CASEY
TREASURER: DR BRENDAN PURCELL
DEPARTMENT OF LOGIC AND PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

REPORT ON THE SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN, 4TH NOVEMBER 1989

Present at the Meeting were the following Fellows: Fr Martin Drennan, Dr Mairtin O'Droma, Fr Maurice Curtin, Fr Tom Norris, Fr Patrick Bastable, Fr Maurice Hogan, Fr H.L. Leahy, OSA, Dr J. J. Barry, Fr J.C. Garvey, OFM, Dr Yvette Kunz-Ramsay, Dr Ivo O'Sullivan, Fr Michael Neary, Dr Noel Fitzpatrick, Fr Brendan Purcell, Dr Gerard Casey, Professor Regis Factor. Our guests were: Fr Thomas O'Loughlin, Miss Noreen O'Carroll, Fr Charles Connolly, Dr Joseph McCarroll and Dr David Doyle. Apologies: Dr Donncha O hAodha, Professor Cornelius O'Leary, Fr Vincent Twomey, Dr Dom Colbert.

The meeting began with a prayer, followed by a paper and discussion. The paper, entitled "The Personal Touch: The Philosophical Anthropology of John Paul II" was delivered by Dr Gerard Casey and the session was chaired by Dr Brendan Purcell.

A mass for the fellows was concelebrated by Frs Leahy, Norris, O'Loughlin and Purcell. After mass, a convivial and extended lunch was held at the Montrose Hotel.

As after death the judgement, so after lunch, the business meeting. The reports of the Secretary and Treasurer were read and approved. Agreement was reached that a

committee should be formed to assist the Secretary and Treasurer. It was also agreed that it would be desirable to have the committee members located in the areas in which the Fellowship principally subsists. The following Fellows were elected to the Committee: Fr J.C. Garvey (Galway), Dr Mairtin O'Droma (Limerick), Fr Maurice Hogan (Maynooth). The Secretary was given permission to co-opt a committee from Belfast.

The A.G.M for 1990 will again take place on the first Saturday in November, which in 1990 will be November 3rd. It was agreed that it would be desirable to hold a second meeting during the year.

A discussion of the format and function of the meetings took place. It was agreed that while the Fellowship has as its primary function the development of a communal solidarity among Catholic scholars working in diverse areas, it should also, in view of its Statement of Purpose, be prepared to represent Catholic Scholarship on issues of sufficient importance.

The final paper, entitled "The Mystery of Woman and Her Vocation in the Church" was delivered by Fr Thomas Norris. A lively and lengthy discussion took place. The session was chaired by Dr Joseph McCarroll.

Book Reviews

Why You CAN Disagree and Remain a Faithful Catholic by Philip S. Kaufman. Foreword by Richard A. McCormick, S.J., Meyer-Stone, Bloomington, Indiana, 1989, paperback, \$9.95

This is a "theologically tricky" book, an intellectually indefensible book, and a pastorally harmful book.

Theologically tricky. Father McCormick introduces the notion "theologically tricky" in the first paragraph of his Foreword. He uses it to criticize Pope Paul VI: suggesting that it is not really honest to say what he says, and what most Catholics before 1968 agreed on, namely, that when the Holy Father firmly teaches that a moral position is disastrously wrong and therefore unacceptable, that those teaching in the Church may no longer say that the position permissible.

But McCormick exhibits theological trickiness of a high order throughout his remarks. First, he argues that "the Holy Spirit is sent packing" by those (apparently including in a special way the popes) who reject dissenting opinions of the kind this book defends. Then he (supporting Kaufman) dismisses as "immoral" the moral teaching of the popes that people have obligations to follow insistent Church teaching even if moralists like those we know now as dissenters deny there are such obligations.

Intellectually irresponsible. Bishops and scholars ought to read this book, not because it casts any helpful light on current moral debates, but because it reveals how tragic is the decay when radical dissent has run its course.

The defenses of dissent here are absurd. A key argument is this: Probabilism is a respected position in the Church. But probabilism insists that it is legitimate to follow an opinion favoring liberty if a number of good scholars and notable arguments defend it (even if more scholars and more impressive arguments favor the other side). Now some very popular moralists indeed hold that contraception is sometimes permissible, as is abortion, fornication, divorce after a valid and consummated sacramental marriage. Hence it is, according to the author, immoral to tell people that acts of this kind are always objectively wrong.

Clearly, if this argument is valid, the Roman Catholic Church has always been a wicked moral teacher. She has always taught "with authority" in just the way this book condemns. For this reason, among others, she has been hated by anti-Catholics over the centuries. And indeed this book collects often the tales and attitudes of those who have always hated the Church. The Church's position on divorce is attributed to her cruel insensitivity to human suffering (p. 115): that what the Church teaches might be true, and that the Church, like her Lord, feels that the sufferings of those who in a valid sacramental marriage may not remarry are guarding a commitment needed to protect personal love and to make life safe and tolerable for children, is not even considered in this book.

The book reeks of resentment, of hostility, of bitterness toward the bracing moral teachings of the Church. The history of slavery bespeaks some true, sad facts; but the book misses entirely the lesson of what it reports. It was not the thrust of Church teaching to go slow in condemning slavery: selected scholars and powerful worldly interests fought vigorously to defend it, as such interests fight now for divorce, contraception, and every anti-family position. Those who undermine magisterial authority, and the conviction that Christ remains faithful to His Church and its teaching, would hardly be able to establish even now that "good" slavery is really bad.

Kaufman fails to acknowledge that probabilist authors regularly pointed out that they were speaking only of disputes in matters freely debated in the Church. Once the teaching office in the Church had firmly judged that certain positions were intolerably wrong, scholars teaching in the Church were not permitted to uphold them as appropriate norms of conduct for Catholics. Kaufman makes the gratuitous assertion that this could be true only if the magisterium had never made an error. This is absurd. We can and do have good reasons for following guides that are not acting infallibly. We must heed our consciences, though they often err. Even worldly authorities must be obeyed when good order demands cooperation and one is far from sure that the authority is wrong. The record of the church as a moral guide, led by Christ and His Spirit, is a splendid one, despite the mockeries of this book. That we have the duty to accept this authority, which Canon Law

and popes have claimed, is far from refuted in this book: in fact the authentic position of the Church is really not stated at all.

The author fails to note that all respected probabilist authors agreed that firm judgments of the Church had to be accepted, that Vatican II itself teaches this (LG25), that current Canon Law requires it, and that Church moral teaching would dissolve if we ceased to believe, with the Fathers and saints, that there is a charism of truth attached to the teaching office of the Church.

Kaufman rashly insists that the Church has never solemnly defined any specific moral teachings! He should know better: and should have consulted Trent's solemn teachings on polygamy and divorce (DS 1802, 1805, 1807). His presentation of the infallible teaching of the ordinary magisterium in moral matters is extremely weak. His efforts to show that virtually never can one know that the ordinary magisterium has taught a point infallibly suggest that Kaufman either (a) has never read defenses of the Catholic position or (b) does not like "disseminating information", e.g., letting people know the honest position of his opponents, in their real force.

Pastorally harmful. Bishops, pastors, and scholars should read this book carefully. In reading it they should remember that many of our moral educators, even our priests, are educated by people schooled in this resentment, anger at the Church. This in a firm refusal to present fairly and decently the actual positions of the Church. Many are taught by confused and hostile people, educated in this thinking, urged to engage in kinds of acts that the Church of Christ teaches to be mortally sinful. Many may be in good faith; but invincible ignorance cannot be presumed for all. Clearly we have duties to speak clearly against the sort of confusion this book defends.

Ronald D. Lawler, O.F.M., Cap.

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Matrimonio e Famiglia nel Documenti del Magistero, Corso di Teologia Matrimoniale by Ramon Garcia de Haro, Edizioni Ares, Milan, 1989, 296 pp., paperback.

This book is the first of a series that have had their origin in courses given at the Pope John Paul II Institute on Marriage and the Family at the Lateran University. This study of magisterial teaching on marriage and the family,

with a special stress on the teaching of Vatican II on the family and of Church teaching since Vatican II, is the work of an outstanding theologian. It provides an excellent analysis of authentic Catholic teaching, with briefer treatments of Church teaching in earlier centuries and more detailed study of Pius XI's Casti Connubii, the creative work of Pius XII in this field, the forces that were creating the changed approaches of Vatican II, the work of Paul VI (with an especially fine study of Humanae Vitae), and a rich, detailed study of John Paul II's Familiaris Consortio. The work concludes with a study of the magisterial teaching of bishops of the world on these themes, with special attention to episcopal reactions to Humanae Vitae. This study reveals how consistent magisterial teaching has been the continuity between earlier teaching and Vatican II, and the faithfulness of subsequent Church teaching to the vision of that council. The work is a powerful presentation of the rich teaching of the Church in an area so foundationally important: a bracing teaching that in too many places is tragically assailed before it is even understood.

Ronald D. Lawler, O.F.M., Cap.

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The Numinous Universe by Daniel Liderbach, Paulist Press, Mahwah, N.J., 1989.

For some reason, works that attempt to reconcile – or, better, amalgamate – scientific insight and religious sensibility seem drawn ineluctably toward a personalist mysticism. The clarity and intellectual cohesiveness of both science and Christian theology become obscured by a personal vision that is ultimately intuitive, difficult to articulate, and baffling even to a reader familiar with both fields. Teilhard de Chardin's essays suffered from this dynamic. So, too, does The Numinous Universe.

The author attempts to show how modern research in theoretical physics leads to a fuller understanding of the Christian concept of the "kingdom of God" (the "Presence") in the whole of created order, not just – as Christians have always held – the community of believers.

From the scientific point of view, this concept is intriguing and insightful. Indeed, as Liderbach points out, physics has delved ever more into conceptions of the material universe that are baffling, even mysterious. The new

frontiers of understanding matter (just what is matter, anyway?) leave behind the confident positivist rejection of non-material being. Mystery, or something like it, lies on the outermost edges of physical research. Science seems to be returning to the state of mind whence it began so many centuries ago: a sense of awe.

The author does a creditable job of outlining the historical development of this research. He shows, moreover, how physics of the 20th century served to subvert the "scientific" basis of philosophical materialism. Well and good. Had he remained in this line of explanation, showing how modern physical theory could serve to support faith in non-material being, this work would have been most helpful to scientists and non-scientists alike.

Unfortunately, the thesis does not confine itself this way. The author proceeds to develop his own interpretation of the "kingdom of God" concept in a way that traditional Christian thinkers would find difficult to follow, much less concur with. References to the "kingdom" in the New Testament extend, through a kind of Kantian treatment, to encompass an indefinite "Presence" among mankind and all material being. This unique theological exegesis of Christ's teachings is neither clear in itself nor even clearly related to the scientific explication.

In the final analysis, the author seems to be presenting a personal intuitive vision that embraces a faith of some sort with a science verging on mystery. Perhaps necessarily, the book's central point is obscure.

James B. Stenson
New Rochelle, New York

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Evolution? by J.W.G. Johnson, Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration, Inc., Los Angeles, California, 1986.

The scientific question of the evolution of life-forms is an immensely complex problem. Even aside from its inherent difficulties (lack of definitional focus, scarcity of evidence, controversies over interpretation), it is further complicated by inter-connections with philosophy, religion, and even politics.

This book does nothing to clarify and un-complicate these problems. Evolution is a

jumbled mixture of scientific fact, unscientific commentary, religious suppositions, and non-sequitur leaps of argumentation. Like most works of its type, it lacks clear definition of the term "evolution" itself. It is by no means a scholarly, carefully reasoned study of the problem. On the contrary, any reader who wades into it will emerge even more confused than before.

To date, the most interesting and illuminating critique of evolutionary theories is Francis Hitching's The Neck of the Giraffe (1982).

James B. Stenson

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The Intimate Friendships of Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton by Sr. Marie Celeste, S.C., Alba House, 1989, 179 pp., Foreword, Introduction, End Notes, Bibliography, Index, paperback, \$12.95.

While hardly "one of the most intensely human studies of a saint ever written", as the publisher claims, this book is very useful in spreading the good word of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and promoting devotion to her. She is so important to the Church and the faithful in the United States that there cannot be enough books written about her. This reviewer must confess, however, to finding the book irritating because of style (the author has a habit of incorporating the saint's own words in the narrative without attribution). She has a curious habit of misplacing and mixing quotations (the saint wrote about growing "ten years in the spiritual life", not on her voyage home from Italy (p. 30) but many years before in connection with a mystical happening the author describes earlier (pp. 23-24) -- there are a number of such instances). She also allows too many inaccuracies which bespeak either whimsicality or carelessness. The most serious example of the latter may be a case of misinterpretation, but St. Elizabeth did not want at any time "to leave the charge of Sisters and devote herself exclusively to the care of her children"; nor did she "inform Bishop Carroll of her decision" (p. 15). She indeed told the Bishop that her children came first, and she could not assume any responsibility that interfered with their rights - which is a very different thing and a situation that never had to be faced. The Bishop expressed confidence in her leadership (p. 15),

not to prevent her from abandoning a great work begun, but to give her a vote of confidence when it was evident that Father John Baptist David wanted to replace her with a choice of his own.

The book is recommended, nevertheless, for its essential grasp of the saint's greatness, her talent for friendship, and the comfort her friends brought her.

Rev. Joseph I. Dirvin
St. John's University
Jamaica, New York

Acts to Gospels: A New Testament Path by John J. McDonnell, C.M., University Press of America, 243 pp., \$29.50.

This book offers a thorough examination of the Acts of the Apostles, an introduction to each gospel in turn and a discussion of the synoptic problem. Each chapter concludes with appropriate questions, and the book with eleven appendices and a glossary. Well done.

Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Text Books by Paul C. Vitz, Servant Publications, 142 pp., no price.

This little book does more than a tell a well known story; it provides the research data to pinpoint how the religious roots of our young are being torn up in the classrooms. The dominant theme of texts published by the country's most prestigious houses is that religion is not an important part of present day American life. A cartoon on page 19 satirizes the current problem: a fourth grader in the presence of his teacher explaining Thanksgiving as follows: "The Pilgrims came here seeking freedom of you know what. When they landed, they gave thanks to you know who. Because of them we can worship on Sunday you know where."

Catholicism and the Renewal of American Democracy by George Weigel, Paulist Press, 218 pp., \$11.95.

Jesuit Avery Dulles considers that this book gives "new actuality and concreteness to the political theology of John Courtney Murray". The manuscript has certainly been studied in advance by legal minds

such as William Ball and Henry Hyde, philosophers like Ralph McInerney, and journalists like Peter Steinfelds. The book in essence is a scholarly treatise in journalistic language of the emerging possibilities for the Church in the United States to be a positive, perhaps a dominant, force in shaping the future of American democracy. Eleven chapters are devoted to defining the Church Universal, describing the American socio-political thrust of Catholicism, and discussing the six arguments (often raised by bishops) for the Church's involvement in one political cause or another. George Weigel makes some very good points and is a good critic of Catholic extremists. However, the Courtney debate is far from over because the intra-Church conflict is much larger than a liberal-conservative confrontation. Some fundamental Catholic notions of the Church are involved as well as the Church's precise notions about the radically different role of clergy (as distinct from laity) in the reconstruction of social institutions, including cultural patterns.

A Church of the Baptized: Overcoming the Tension Between the Clergy and the Laity by Remi Parent, Paulist Press, 213 pp., \$12.95.

If you are angry because the Catholic laity has been living under the tutelage of priests, or think that the clergy have arrogated "to themselves an unjustifiable and an intolerable place in the Church", and further "deplore the narrowness of the present clerical structures", or consider that the recent Synod on the Laity (1987) was an exercise in "theological poverty", foreign to "the noble intentions of the Council", then this book by a French Canadian theologian is the one to buy.

Calmer persons may skip it with profit.

Chesterton Review - Available from St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7N OW6, \$30.00 per annum.

The Chesterton Review is one of Canada's emerging publications of substance and style. Father Ian Boyd, the editor, has recently published a special issue which features G.K. himself and George Bernanos. Little known Chesterton material on how to bring up children, what he thought of German Catholics; and of French Catholicism as symbolized by Bernanos, whom, he thought, was the most articulate spokesman of his time for central Christian civilization. A thorough review of Bernanos' views on the Spanish Civil War enlivens this quarterly issue almost 300 pages long.

Items of Interest

Advisory Board

The FCS Coetus on Canon Law is very pleased to announce that its Bishops' Advisory Board is now complete. In the first place we would like to express our appreciation to His Eminence John Joseph Cardinal Carberry (emeritus of St. Louis) for his kindness in serving as our Honorary President.

The Coetus Bishops' Advisory Board consists of Their Excellencies Anthony Bevilacqua (of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Edward Egan (of Bridgeport, Connecticut), Adam Maida (of Green Bay, Wisconsin), and John Myers (of Peoria, Illinois). Each of these prelates, despite the heavy demands of their offices, has graciously agreed to serve as an advisor to our Coetus as it investigates avenues for service to the Magisterium of the Church. To each of them the Coetus expresses its sincere gratitude. For a copy of the Coetus on Canon Law Newsletter, or for more information on the Coetus, please contact Edward Peters, Coetus Relator, P.O. Box 921, Marshall, VI 22115.

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The Couple to Couple League

John and Sheila Kippley, founders of The Couple to Couple League, are pursuing their apostolate with vigor while meeting the same resistance within the Church to Natural Family Planning that they encountered twenty-two years ago once Humanae Vitae was published. They take encouragement from the initiative of Peoria's Bishop John Myers who has a diocesan-wide parish centered program entitled "Christian Sexuality and Family Planning". But the following letter to the Kippleys from another area tells another side of the story:

"My husband and I have been practicing NFP first by trial and error due to lack of information, since we got married two years ago. Our pre-marriage course organized by the Catholic Youth Services in our diocese did not mention NFP at all. Human sexuality and reproduction were handled by a couple of sex therapists, with the overall idea of communication and enjoying sexual relations. When we asked about NFP, the members of our discussion groups started to laugh at us. We didn't feel embarrassed though. That was the right time and place to get information about NFP even without asking. The non-Catholic couple leading our group discussion could give us neither answers nor directions where to turn for information.

"We are sorry that the American Catholic Church sponsors pre-marriage courses like that. We were pleased, of course, to read in your previous issue about the dioceses that require an NFP course in their pre-marriage meetings. However, this is not enough. It should be required in every diocese without any doubt.

"Although it is only up to Our Lord to judge, it seems to us that the American Catholic Church could learn from you how to spread its teachings on human sexuality explicitly and unyieldingly. The Church should not fear criticism or dissent from those who do not want to live up to their faith in all its aspects."

Priests and laity who wish to undertake this vital but often underrated apostolate should write to the Kippleys at Couple to Couple League, 3621 Glenmore, P.O. Box 111184, Cincinnati, OH 45211-1184

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Pontifical John Paul II Institute

The John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in cooperation with the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America will be sponsoring a conference entitled: "Reason, Revelation and Christian Ethics".

The keynote address will be given by Archbishop Jan Schotte, Secretary General for the Synod of Bishops. Papers will be read by Georges Chantraine, S.J., Christoph von Schonborn, O.P., Carlo Caffarra, Servais Pinckaers, O.P., Francis Martin, John Finnis, Lorenzo Albacete, Kenneth Schmitz and William E. May. Responses will be given by J. Augustine DiNoia, O.P., Guy Bedouelle, O.P., Ralph McInerney, John Haas, Michael Waldstein, Martin Rhonheimer, Ronald Lawler, O.F.M. Cap., Jude Dougherty and Benedict Ashley, O.P.

The Conference, which begins Monday, March 19, and closes Wednesday, March 21, will meet in Caldwell Auditorium on the campus of the Catholic University of America. Masses will be celebrated daily in the Crypt Church of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception adjacent to the campus. The registration fee for the Conference is \$65.00 prior to March 1, 1990 and \$85.00 thereafter.

For more information please write John Paul II Institute, 487 Michigan Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017 or call 202-526-3799.

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Fellowship Member

Dick Goldkamp, a Fellowship member and retired journalist of the one-time St. Louis Globe-Democrat, has recently published a very nice summary of the critical issues confronting the hierarchy of the Church vis-a-vis what traditionally has been called Catholic higher education. Entitled The Pope, the Press, the Profs and the People (with an introduction by Paul Marx, O.S.B.), this 23 page booklet is available from Human Life International, 7845 East Airport Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20879.

(continued from page 5 - "Early Christians...")

We have spoken of these cautions in terms of Christian men considering marriage because they were the social determiners in their situation. A la mode the same thoughts filled the minds of Cecilia and Agnes when they were prepared to lay down their lives rather than turn themselves over to a Roman pagan man who could have mandated the end of their Christian practice.

Later ages liked to think they died rather than abandon a pledged virginity. Perhaps. But it seems easier to believe that the disobedience they permitted themselves and the torture and death they suffered, were more reasonable to protect their larger practice of religion and closeness to Christ than to protect a life of celibacy. We see these Roman thoughts reflected in the great Augustine who, other moral considerations aside, never thought that his unmarried liaison made any statement regarding

his relationship with the state or society. He knew that marriage would.

Professor Brown concludes very satisfyingly by pointing out that it was Augustine who, in his profound understanding of Scripture and Christian purposes, and in his great common and humane sense, led the main body of Christian thinking away from extreme views regarding marriage and asceticism and laid the groundwork for cooperating with God in a state in life that offers sacramental grace and requires a personal asceticism that grace sustains. But all that is better known than the earlier period that Professor Brown has so successfully reviewed.

Peter Wells, Ph.D.
Chicago

(continued from page 6 - "St. Thomas...")

and suggest that, when we do, our appraisal of the deed done must depend on its proportion to the end sought, meaning the remote end, the finis operantis. The moderate teleologist, in the example given, may question whether bedding the girl was proportionate to the end sought. I suspect he would say it is not and that the deed is morally flawed. But he would not thereby be admitting that sexual intercourse between the unmarried is objectively disordered. He always has to know more before he can say an act is good or bad.

IaIIae, q. 18, a. 4 provides a fourfold consideration of the goodness of human action -- as a natural occurrence, according to its object, circumstances and, fourthly, end -- and Father Mullady gives us an excellent analysis of this text and its implications. I do not mean to suggest that this book gives us only what we all knew all along. Far from it. It is rare that Father Mullady fails to cast new light on familiar texts. Accordingly, the book can be read with profit by seasoned Thomists as well as by those for whom the intricacies of Thomas' position may be unfamiliar.

The book ends with a series of critiques - of proportionate reason, fact/value, the morality of means, the proximate end or object of action, praeter intentionem - and concludes by showing beyond question that moderate teleology cannot be regarded as Thomistic. This book has so much merit that it is painful to have to say that its arguments and analyses are often marred by their linguistic expression. This seems partly due to the hazards of publishing an English book in Italy, but not entirely. I would urge Father Mullady to write a series of articles making the basic points of this book lest the magnitude of his achievement be lost. I fear that his foes would have all too much fun quoting from the present version. But, inelegantly expressed or not, this is one of the most important books in moral theology of the past decade.

Ralph McInerney
Michael P. Grace Professor of
Medieval Studies
University of Notre Dame

(continued from page 7 - "...Theological Status...")

he says (p. 204). The reason is that there is now no "scholarly consensus": "None of the articulations of the theological principles found in the instrumentum laboris enjoys the scholarly consensus necessary before an authoritative determination." (Ibid)

Father Komonchak's position is based on the (false) assumption that theologians form some kind of "para-magisterium" that must be consulted by the Pope before he can make a decision. The kind of "consensus" he is talking about is the kind that rules the content of this book. It is not at all universal or Catholic; it is narrow and ideologically controlled.

Episcopal Conferences deals with an important subject. It is a shame that it did not receive

a more balanced presentation. In spite of that I recommend the book to members of the Fellowship. Perhaps it will stimulate some scholarly work on our part. I would like to see a book of essays coming from the Fellowship that argues the other side of this issue, namely, the nature and powers of episcopal conferences, especially with reference to Cardinal Ratzinger's view that such conferences are not of divine right and that they do not enjoy the munus magisterii. It seems to me that the theology of *communio* and collegiality supports Ratzinger rather than Komonchak.

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(continued from page 13 - "Spirituality...")

My comments:

This talk left me deeply concerned for the following reasons:

1. It is almost complete subjectivism. One's feelings, one's experiences become norms in religious and spiritual life. Revelation - (God's manifestation to man - practically left out. Women were invited to turn to the well of their experiences, and were encouraged to adopt a radical subjectivism.

2. The remark "to me God is like a clown...", was deeply disturbing. No doubt, the man who made this remark thought that he was making a good point, and breaking away from the traditional pompous "solemnity" that people had previously adopted when speaking about God. The amazing thing is many

people's spiritual sensitivities are so eroded, that they do not register how blasphemous such remarks sound. How would the Moslems react if their Prophet (who is not God) were compared to a clown. Our society is losing its sense of the sacred. How would St. Ignatius of Loyola have responded to such a statement? How should we?

3. The two speakers used all the feminist rhetoric of the last thirty years. They seemed completely unaware of the fact that they were imprisoned in the narrow categories of modern sociology and psychology which (thank God) in spite of some valuable contributions, are obviously time-bound, often arbitrary and unscientific.

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