



Fellowship of Catholic Scholars NEWSLETTER

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Editorial: A Tale of Two Statements

By Kenneth Baker, S.J., President

The past two years have been the time for groups of Catholic scholars and theologians to "go public," i.e., to publish statements about the present state of the Church 25 years after the conclusion of Vatican II. Perhaps the most dramatic and shocking one was that published by 163 German-speaking theologians in 1989; it is popularly referred to as "The Cologne Declaration" (see *Origins*, March 2, 1989, Vol. 18, No. 38, pp. 633-634). It has many harsh things to say about the Vatican and especially about the current occupant of the Chair of Peter, Pope John Paul II. But at least the Europeans had the courage to put their names on their Declaration. That is more than can be said for the Americans.

There follows now a tale of two other statements.

When it comes to sharp criticism of the Pope and the Roman Curia, the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) is right on the heels of the Germans. Having labored over their statement for many months, they finally brought forth the eighth version for publication on December 8, 1990 – the 25th anniversary of the close of the Council. For their effort they received a rather short and, I might add, favorable notice in the *New York Times*. That is the newspaper, you may recall, about which the recent convert, Richard John Neuhaus, commented, "For the *Times* the only good Catholic is a bad Catholic."

The Statement makes many charges against the Pope and his associates; in particular against Cardinal Ratzinger. I enjoy the attacks on Ratzinger because they show off their authors as narrow-minded ideologues, whining, carping and searching for one distinction that will make the Cardinal look like he is the big bully on the block. A friend on mine says, and I think rightly, that the dissenters resent Ratzinger because he is smarter than they are.

The CTSA Statement criticizes the Pope on four counts: 1) he is not following the teaching of Vatican II on episcopal collegiality (#18); 2) he violates the rights of theologians and publishes documents "without adequate consultation with experts" (#21); 3) he does not grant women the same roles in the Church that they have "in our society" (#29) and he does all he can to oppose the ordination of women as priests (#33-34); 4) he is not following the Council's wishes in the area of ecumenism (#39-43).

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With regard to point #2, it should be noted that this comes from scholars who have, for all practical purposes, secured a monopoly for themselves as advisers to the National Council of Catholic Bishops (NCCB). There is little, if any, openness on the part of the CTSA when it comes to inviting theological experts to assist the bishops in preparing their documents. For more information on this ask Fr. James V. Schall, S.J., or Professors Germain Grisez and William May.

It would take more space than I have here to show the bias, one-sidedness, and ideological blindness of this pathetic statement from a once-great body of Catholic scholars. As I read it I was reminded of some of Martin Luther's barbs against the Pope and the Roman Curia. I see very little love for the Church in the Statement, but much conceit, self-importance and tendentious scholarship. Don't just take my word for it: Read it yourself and discuss it with a friend.

More than two months before the CTSA document appeared, the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars published its own statement called, "Vatican II: Promise and Reality." If you have not yet read it, I urge you to do so. (Of course, you will not find it in *Origins*, since those who control it espouse the same views as the CTSA; please write to our office for a copy.) Our Statement presents a low-key, factual account of the current strengths and weaknesses in the Catholic Church in the United States. It is respectful of the Pope and the Magisterium without being fawning; it points out many serious problems that the Pope and bishops should address, without condemning anyone. It also offers a few suggestions about what should be done to restore unity of faith and discipline in the Catholic Church.

As members of the Fellowship, we have reason to be proud of this document. It stands in sharp contrast to both the tone and the content of the other two statements – that of Cologne and that of the CTSA. Here you will find no petty carping about the violation of the rights of theologians, about the Vatican's dealings with local bishops, about the treatment of women, about the betrayal of ecumenism, about the appointment of bishops.

Recently I re-read the "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" which was published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in May 1990 and signed by Cardinal Ratzinger. I think it is the best presentation I have ever read of the proper relationship between the Magisterium and the *Catholic* theologian. I would like to stress the word "Catholic" here.

If you compare the Fellowship Statement with that of the CTSA you will find that the former is thoroughly Catholic; it is fully in conformity with the Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian. I do not think the same can be said of the CTSA Statement. It offers several examples of dissent; it implies a denial of the primatial authority of the Pope in summoning "synods of local churches" (see endnote #19); in the same endnote #19 there is a subtle assumption that the Church is a democracy because the CDF published a document "apparently ... without consultation with diocesan bishops." I ask the authors of the CTSA Statement: Where does Vatican II, or any other Council for that matter, decree that the Pope must consult with the bishops before he can legitimately publish a document on doctrine and morals? It is good that he do so, and generally he does, but he is not violating the rights of bishops if he does not.

It is saddening to read the CTSA Statement, "Do Not Extinguish the Spirit." The charge is, of course, that our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, is doing exactly that – *extinguishing the Holy Spirit* through his "unenlightened" and reactionary governance of the Church. That is a serious charge coming from scholars who call themselves "Catholic theologians." It is sad.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The CTSA Statement of Complaint received front page treatment by the Bishop's Documentary Service *Origins* on December 27, 1990]

In Case You Missed It

Catholic News Service, the publication arm of the U.S.C.C., issued a series of news stories that made the rounds of the Diocesan newspapers at Christmas time.

- ✧ Notable was John Cardinal O'Connor's warning, given in Rome, where he was celebrating the 45th Anniversary of his priestly ordination, that the Church in the United States risks losing its authority if it does not stem dissent from Church teaching on abortion. While he acknowledged other dissent, he asserted that if Catholics feel they can disagree with the Church's position on abortion, the way is open for "the questioning of any Church teaching." "The entire credibility and authority of the faith is at stake," he said. He admonished that Bishops should show how serious they are about the immorality of abortion by making it clearly known that canon law allows them to impose various penalties on Catholics who disregard Church teaching.
- ✧ Almost simultaneously, Bishop Matthew Clark of Rochester, addressing a National Symposium sponsored by the U.S. Bishops Committee on Women in Society, praised Saginaw's Bishop Kenneth Untener's earlier remarks to the U.S. hierarchy about

the rejection by laity of the Church's teaching on birth control, and Milwaukee's Archbishop Rembert Weakland's initiation of dialogue over abortion with pro-choice Catholics. The Rochester Bishop himself told his audience that he hoped the Pope, or his successor, would "fully and carefully hear the wisdom of the people" on five areas of Catholic doctrine or discipline: birth control, abortion, priestly celibacy, women's priestly ordination, and input from the local Church in selecting its bishop.

- ✧ Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco gave the CTSA's criticism of the Holy See and the Pope a mixed review, criticizing theologians for their failure to criticize "some of the better known proponents of erroneous and tendentious views," while he supported further dialogue between these theologians and Rome. Archbishop Lipscomb of Mobile, Chairman of NCCB's Doctrinal Committee, thought the theologians had chosen the wrong method to air their concerns, but felt that "relations between Bishops and theologians in North America are generally good" and that "many people would agree with at least some of the observations the statement contains."

Bishop John J. Myers' Pastoral On Eucharist

A Pastoral Letter to the people of Peoria has been issued in which the Bishop takes up the meaning of Vatican II renewal, the Mass as sacrifice, the priesthood of the faithful and the hierarchical priesthood, conditions for worthy reception, and an announcement of a Eucharistic Congress in 1982. Copies of this solid theological document are available from the Diocesan Chancery, 609 N.E. Madison, P.O. Box 1406, Peoria, Illinois 61655.

Friend of the Fellowship

Bishop Enrique San Pedro, S.J.

R.I.P.

Sister Eileen MacDonald IHM, for many years Dean of Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, later Assistant Director of Religious Education in the Diocese of Wichita, went to God last December 11th. Pray for her.

“When Dissent Gets Tenure”

by Msgr. William B. Smith, Dunwoodie Seminary

On May 24, 1990, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued an Instruction, “On the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian.”¹ Part B-IV (nn. 32-41) of that Instruction is entitled: “The Problem of Dissent.”

While that doctrinal instruction is welcomed by all believing Catholics for its clear, clarifying and authentic Catholic teaching, the “problem of dissent” remains a problem because, I submit, dissent has gotten ‘tenure’ in this country.

My use of the word *tenure* here is not limited strictly to academic positions and academic position-taking. It also includes some other teachers in the Church. A particularly focused example of such dissenting teaching can be found published from time to time apparently with ecclesiastical approval. One piece of popular dissenting literature, an issue of *Catholic Update* (October 1983), will serve as a paradigm for structured dissent – a four page paper at odds with Church teaching on sexual morality which, it is said, is distributed or included by some dioceses in their Pre-Cana programs. More of this in detail below.

Simply choosing an example of sexual morality may seem to some a tired choice – long debated, rarely resolved. However, that is one point about tenured dissent: it always reflects the same core problems; it almost always involves sexual morality. It is a dissent that will not quit; a dissent that often calls for “listening sessions,” but will not itself listen to nor conform clearly to authentic Church teaching in this area.

Tenured dissent is not, in my judgement, a mere abstraction but continues to form and inform erroneous consciences. This is a serious pastoral problem of formation (deformation) that has consequences for *all* authentic Church teaching. The duly registered and copyrighted tools of tenured dissent – selective citation, inaccurate, at times dishonest, scholarship; carloads of conscience buzz words – can undermine and prevent the normative statement and normative practice of the Faith in any area.

To illustrate that the dissenting *Catholic Update* is not a *hapax logoumenon* in contemporary Catholic discussion, perhaps three recent examples will provide a barometric reading of the kinds of storms and dissents on the Catholic weather map.

1) *A NOVEL WANT AD IN AMERICA*. Readers of *America* magazine are familiar with the “Notices” that often appear on the fourth or fifth last page of that magazine.

However, truly new ground, in the help-wanted category, was broken in the September 15, 1990 issue of *America* with the publication of “L’Affaire Curran II,” co-authored by R.A. McCormick and R.P. McBrien.² The McCormick-McBrien duo is probably the pinnacle of tenured dissent in this country. While Fr. McCormick is the doyen of dissenting American moralists, Fr. McBrien has become the media nasty about most things Catholic. (He also serves as part-time cheerleader and coach for I-am-personally-opposed-but-Catholic governors).

The McC-McB “L’Affaire Curran II” is a special kind of want ad in that it specifically challenges “a prestigious Catholic university like Notre Dame, Boston College or Georgetown to offer him (Rev. Charles E. Curran) a tenured professorship in theology.”³ It seems not to matter that the Prefect of the Doctrinal Congregation, with the approval of the Pope, has determined that Fr. Curran can “no longer be considered suitable nor eligible to exercise the function of a professor of Catholic theology.”⁴ A civil-secular Court seems to have a better grasp of the problem,⁵ than does the dissenting duo. Indeed, if press reports are to be believed, the officials of Auburn University⁶ saw some kind of problem within three months that eluded other officials at The Catholic University for seventeen years, which problem still eludes Frs. McC and McB.

McCormick and McBrien have raised tenured dissent to a new art form – this “solution” to the Curran dissent is to grant him a tenured professorship at some Catholic university – any unwelcome messages from Rome notwithstanding, or, in spite of!

2) *IN THE SPIRIT OF CATCHING UP WITH COLOGNE*. Apparently a majority of American theologians⁷ has come up with their own cologne – *eau de dissident* whose non-secret formula is spelled out in an 11 page statement of dissent, “Do Not Extinguish the Spirit.” A number of actions of the Holy See are “not compatible with the teaching of Vatican II” (#18, p. 4). Here we have a new level of theological dyslexia – it is the dissenters, not the pastors of the Church, who will

determine and validate the authentic teaching of a General Council and the correct practice of the Faith.

All the duly registered trademarks of tenured dissent are here: the appointment of bishops; the visitation of dioceses; the time of First Penance; and larger sections on the Magisterium, Women and Ecumenism. Some footnotes (Nos. 12, 19 and 20) are not only anti-papal but insulting to the Holy Father. The section, "Women in the Church" (Nos. 27-36), is not just a feminist overdose but borders on misandry as the extremes of that emphasis do more and more.

Not too long ago, a past president of the N.C.C.B. addressed the C.T.S.A. assuring them that his experience with theological groups has been one of cooperation and concord and the only fear to fear in the Church was "too many anxious, warning voices . . . usually these charges are as sweeping as they are indistinct."⁸ I suggest that his Excellency read "Do Not Extinguish the Spirit" carefully – those voices are indeed sweeping but no one will call them indistinct.

Dissent, once tenured on a campus or in a newsweekly, seems to make strange bed-*persons*, the angry left is becoming identical with the angry right – the issues are the same, the conclusions are different, but both the dissenting left and the integralist right seem to insist that they *alone* have the Rosetta stone for correctly interpreting the teaching and the practice of the Church. Neither might like it entirely, but I am not sure both would disagree entirely with a woman deacon administering the Anointing of the Sick provided she did in it Latin.

3) THE MOST RECENT MEETING OF THE U.S. BISHOP'S CONFERENCE (NOVEMBER 1990). At least one bishop there rose to question whether the Bishops had adequate "structures and procedures" to listen to the *sensus fidelium* on the issue of the immorality of artificial birth control.⁹ In the usual call for listening sessions, the same bishop tells us: "This *sensus fidelium* is more than an opinion poll." Certainly it is; indeed, the true *sensus fidelium* has nothing at all to do with opinion polls. One need not take my word for that. When visiting the U.S.A. and speaking to the same Conference of Bishops, John Paul II was very precise on that very point;¹⁰ a similarly correct insight is easily available in Avery Dulles' commentary on *Lumen Gentium*.¹¹

More puzzling and problematic is this call for listening sessions, an apparent willingness to listen to everyone except the Pope who has so often and so specifi-

cally taught precisely on this matter:

- on the wrong notion of *sensus fidelium* relative to this subject area:
"To appeal to a faith of the Church in order to oppose the moral Magisterium of the Church is equivalent to denying the Catholic concept of Revelation."¹²
- that this teaching of the Church (on contraception) is not a matter of 'free discussion' among theologians and pastors:
"The Church's teaching on contraception does not belong to the category of matter open to free discussion among theologians."¹³
- lastly a very authoritative statement "On the Moral Norms of 'Humanae Vitae' and Their Pastoral Application."¹⁴ This last doctrinal explanation is not singular,¹⁵ yet all these formal doctrinal instructions and clarifications seem to play no effective part in straw polls within the Saginaw Diocesan Council.¹⁶ Listening sessions are proposed to question this teaching, apparently to establish credibility and unity. Is it at all credible, after 22 years of direct and indirect "questioning," that still another listening-questioning session will establish some kind of credibility here?

Are the questioners to be given some kind of lifetime? Is the credibility problem really with the Church's true teaching, or perhaps with certain teachers in the Church? Have we really had 22 years of persistent and consistent teaching of *Humanae Vitae*, plus lucid and extensive expositions of *Familiaris Consortio* (November 22, 1981)? Still another series of reflective instructions was presented by the present Pope through the second half of 1984 (July 11, 1984-November 28, 1984) published in book form,¹⁷ and again the comprehensive Instruction of the Doctrinal Congregation on "Bioethics" (February 22, 1987; *Donum Vitae*).¹⁸

Can any credible teacher or pastor in the Church say that there is true practical doubt about what the Church actually teaches as true Catholic teaching? Perhaps a few listening sessions are in order – not to question that teaching but to listen to it, for some to hear it perhaps for the first time.

The above are but three recent examples of static – well-publicized but periodic static – that prevents or postpones serious and attentive listening. What is not

periodic and sounds more like structural dissent is one piece of polished dissent that has worked its way into some marriage preparation programs almost to guarantee that the Church's true teaching, if it does get a hearing, will be considered simply one opinion among many – something to take into consideration wherever one might come out or down on contraception.

The Case of Catholic Update

I refer here to a particular edition of the St. Anthony Messenger Press's, *Catholic Update*, "Birth Control and the Conscientious Catholic," by Kenneth R. Overberg, S.J.¹⁹

This is not the deepest piece of theological dissent available on contraception, but it is in the most popular and convenient form. It is a perfect example of how to form an *erroneous* conscience. In four compact pages, it summarizes the points of dissent with the tools of dissent and is a concise example of the kind of dissent that will not quit. Any diocese or parish that uses it gives it undeserved tenure.

The main headings are the standard coordinates of contemporary dissent: Papal Teachings; Reactions; 3-D Conscience; Conscience and Authority; Contraception and the search for Truth; Making the Decision; Freedom and Responsibility. For purposes of citation, Fr. Overberg's *Catholic Update* will be cited by page and column; thus, p.1, c.2 = page 1, column 2.

First, Fr. Overberg misstates Papal Teaching on contraception. The author calmly asserts that "statements" such as *Humanae Vitae* "are not infallible" (p.1, c.1). While this might be true of the form of this or any encyclical, it effectively begs the question whether *Humanae Vitae* (hereafter = *HV*) teaches infallibly true teaching.

Indeed, the core teaching of *HV* (re the intrinsic evil of artificial contraception) is the solemn and formal teaching of *Casti Connubii* (1930), the formal teaching of *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), and of every Pope of this century or any other, while it is and has been the formal teaching of the universal hierarchy in union with the Pope – *semper, ubique, ab omnibus*.

If the author means that an encyclical letter, qua encyclical, is not an *ex cathedra* definition of faith or morals, this is true. But it also begs and finesses the question whether or not a given encyclical presents, represents or teaches again what is infallibly true teaching, i.e., infallible teaching on grounds *other than* the

singular exercise of extraordinary magisterial teaching.

The precise theological note of the teaching taught in *HV* is obviously not determined simply by mentioning its encyclical form. Serious and weighty theological efforts have been put forward to demonstrate the infallibility of this teaching by reason of the *ordinary* and *universal* magisterial teaching (to be held) on this matter.²⁰ Fr. Overberg seems to be unaware of these studies and shows a lack of seriousness by simply assuming and asserting as a conclusion what is indeed his own undemonstrated premise.

Next, under Papal Teachings, Fr. Overberg has a habit of over-personalizing the teaching of *HV*: "The Pope based this teaching on *his* understanding of sexual intercourse . . ." (p.1, c.5). I take for granted that the author does not claim some kind of privileged insight into the inner reasoning and personal understanding of Paul VI. What he does connote is that the teaching – that contraception is intrinsically evil – is somehow the personal opinion, private mind-set, perhaps fixation of Paul VI.

The latter is, of course, demonstrably false since the teaching about the intrinsic evil of contraception is the exact concept and verbatim teaching of Pope Pius XI in *Casti Connubii* and of every other Pope of this century.

The very core of Papal teaching, the author presents as: "Therefore, artificial contraception, . . . is evil because it involves a positive action against the possibility of life" (p.1, c.2). While it is philosophically awkward to define evil as against possibilities, the reason artificial contraception is evil is because it is a positive action against an *actual* human good (not just a possible good). The wrongfulness, according to *HV*, is the active *separation* (and thus the misplaced sovereignty of distortion) of the *actual* goods of *love* (unitive) and *life* (pro-creation) in human sexual intercourse. If the argument were against mere possibility of life, would not vows of celibacy be evil by the Overberg definition of evil?

"Reactions, reactions" (p.2, c.1) – a case of selective episcopal citation! To undermine the teaching of *HV*, or at least suggest that some hierarchies do not support the same teaching, Fr. Overberg cites one sentence of the German hierarchy and a composite (some invented) of the Scandanavian bishops.

Now, it is, of course, instructive that of the 45 to 50 national hierarchies that responded to *HV* in and after 1968, only 5 were partly ambiguous and the worst of all

was the Scandanavian one.²¹ For added perspective, the Scandanavian Conference was then four bishops and two vicars apostolic, thus six bishops out of 2,500. A serious reader might ask about the doctrinal significance, even the statistical significance, of the author's episcopal selectivity.

Next, and more seriously, one must question the author's honesty because the citation of the Scandanavian bishops is simply not accurate. The author quotes: "No one should be considered a bad Catholic because he is of such a dissenting opinion." (p.2, c.2)

Clearly, Fr. Overberg wants to make a case for "dissent," but he overdoes it here by doctoring the text to fit his preconceived plan. The Scandanavian bishops *never* mentioned the word *dissent* (or "*dissenting*"). What they did state was: "No one should, therefore, on account of such diverging opinions alone, be regarded as an inferior Catholic," to which they added that any who feel justified in not accepting nor applying Church teaching must be "answerable to God for his attitude and his acts."²² Thus, in inventing words that are not there, and, omitting a significant qualification of what is there, the author reveals a careless, perhaps even dishonest, scholarship.

Fr. Overberg's selective episcopal citation is followed by even more selective (but accurate) theological selectivity:

"However, following Vatican II, McCormick (along with many contemporary theologians) insisted that the basic criterion for the meaning of human actions is the total person and not just some aspect (i.e., the biological dimension) of the person." (p.2, c.2)

This assertion of Fr. Overberg is twice false. First, nowhere did Vatican II teach the 'total' person as the basic criterion of 'human actions.' And second, the Council's *ex professo* teaching on the judgment re contraception was an insistence of "objective standards":

"... these ("objective standards") based on the nature of the human person on his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love." (*Gaudium et Spes*, n.51)

To accuse or criticize Paul VI of mere 'biologism,' and, as somehow at odds with or not up-to-date with the Council, is both false and misleading. Indeed, it is precisely this teaching of the Council (*GS*, n.51) that is appealed to three times in *HV* and explained in *HV* – not the "total" person (undefined and unexplained)

but the *nature* of the human person and his acts which objective standards preserve both mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love. Furthermore, it should be obvious, even to the careless, that it was Paul VI, as Pope, who signed and confirmed this teaching of *Gaudium et Spes*.

Even so, Fr. Overberg continues: "So, in determining the morality of contraception, the *totality* of the marriage . . . not just the biological process." (p.2, c.w)

As above, another false appeal to Vatican II. This was precisely the reasoning of the Birth Control Commission which was both raised and pointedly rejected in *HV* – described by Paul VI as the so-called 'principle of totality' (*HV*, n.3), then answered and specifically rejected:

"Consequently, it is a serious error to think that a whole married life of otherwise normal relations can justify sexual intercourse which is deliberately contraceptive and so intrinsically wrong." (*HV*, n.14)

A second time the Pope appeals to a "correct" understanding of the principle of totality.²³

It is clear that Fr. Overberg follows Fr. McCormick and the expanded (revisionist) understanding of 'totality' first and widely expanded by Fr. Bernard Harig. But it is erroneous and dishonest to say or suggest, as Overberg does, "that *Humanae Vitae* did not sufficiently consider these developments in moral theology" (p.2, c.2). Quite the contrary, *HV* did consider these "developments" and specifically rejected them as an erroneous and mistaken understanding of "totality."

Now, having misstated true Papal teaching, selectively arranged unsupporting reactions, Fr. Overberg asks: What does one make of "respectful dissent?" (p.2, c.2) The author gratuitously assumes that there is such a thing as "respectful dissent" and that it is a legitimate Catholic position. This assumption is difficult to reconcile with Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*, n.25 and with Paul VI's *Paterna cum benevolentia* (December 8, 1974), but it is now simply impossible to reconcile with the CDF "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" (May 14, 1990) especially IV-B, nn.32-41.

The *Update* now begins something of a conscience scam starting with a 3-D Conscience (p.2, c.2).

The notion of a "3-D Conscience." This is taken from Timothy O'Connell's work, *Principles for a Catholic Morality*²⁴ as "a very helpful picture of conscience." It

should be pointed out that this book has no imprimatur in its first or second edition, and has been seriously criticized as erroneous, misleading and even novel to the point of meaninglessness.²⁵

The *Update* eventually identifies the act or decision of conscience as a "judgment" (p.3, c.1). This is what Catholic moral theology calls "antecedent conscience" – the decision or judgment of conscience that is directive of our prospective activity.

Since it is a judgment, that judgment is objectively either CORRECT or ERRONEOUS, while subjectively that judgment can be either CERTAIN or DOUBTFUL. This is the received terminology of Catholic moral theology, including all the mentions of "conscience" in the documents of Vatican Council II.²⁶

In place of and instead of this accepted theological vocabulary on "conscience," Fr. Overberg introduces and repeats a car-load of dynamic buzz words re conscience: "mature conscience"; "personal conscience." Nowhere are these terms defined; everywhere they lack precision. It is, at least in part, due to this novel and at times empty terminology, that the rest of the *Update* is so misleading and so helpful for forming an erroneous conscience.

"Following my conscience . . ." "I must follow my decision . . . *only after* I have done my best to search for truth concerning the question facing me." (p.3, c.1).

While it is true one can always act on a *certain* conscience, this *Update* makes no mention of the difficulty, even the possibility of a *certain* but *erroneous* conscience. Readers are led to believe that the "search for truth" somehow guarantees finding it, or perhaps, substitutes for it. Conscience, of course, does not invent truth, but only detects or discovers it.

A *correct* judgment of conscience is CORRECT precisely because it is in accord with God-made reality or God-revealed morality; i.e., it is in tune with what is objectively true and good. But, since it is a *judgment*, two possibilities are real – a *correct* judgment, or, an *erroneous* judgment. Since an *erroneous* judgment is nowhere mentioned in this *Update*, one is led to believe that there is no such thing, surely it is not worth mentioning. To mention a 'search for truth' with no mention at all of the outcome of that search is positively misleading.

Here begins the section on "Contraception and the Search for Truth." Apparently, Fr. Overberg is not convinced that the Catholic Church has and teaches the truth about contraception – otherwise this would

be a short search and a short section. "The challenge of mature decision-making demands simply that you *do your best.*" (p.3, c.1) This is simply empty, vacuous advice. "Do your best" means "be sincere!" Can we not assume that all parties to this discussion are "sincere." If "sincerity" is lacking that is a different problem, elsewhere called bad faith. However, sometimes the "best" I can do is morally the "worst" available. It is a purely formal category that tells us nothing about the objective *correctness* or *erroneousness* of your "best" shot.

Further, the best one can do at the time also tells us nothing about other or opposite alternatives; it gives no reasons, no criteria, no basis on which or by which one could learn why the "best" is *better* than alternate or even opposite action. There is no place here for objective morality – all rests on the sincerity of doing your "best;" a purely formal ethic compatible with Kantianism, but not with Catholicism.

Next, Fr. Overberg tells us that the official teaching of the Church on the immorality of contraception demands "special respect" (p.3, c.2). "Respect" has become the soft, duly registered trademark of "dissent." It seems to mean: take note; not necessarily take to heart. That the teaching of Vatican II, the Popes together with the universal episcopate demands only "special respect" must qualify as a record understatement.

Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*, n.25, teaches that such teaching requires the faithful "to accept their teaching and adhere to it with religious *assent* of soul."

Thus, such formal teaching requires not just "respect," nor only respectful attention, but acceptance and adherence; i.e., it is *normative* Catholic teaching and therefore *normative* for the *correct* formation of a *correct* Catholic conscience. "Special respect" is neither an adequate nor accurate description of normative Catholic moral teaching.²⁷

"*Coming to a conclusion about the use of contraception*" (p.3, c.2). It is precisely here that Fr. Overberg misleads the reader by leaving him/her up in the air. It appears whatever conclusion one comes to on contraception – provided it is your personal and mature conclusion – is the "right" conclusion for you. Thus, conscientious contraception is open to those who conclude that way; but not to those who conclude otherwise. This is none other than "situation ethics."

"Making the decision" . . . amid "conflicting values" (p.3, c.2). "recognizing that every value cannot be

achieved . . . the couple chooses the action which best expresses the meaning of Christian marriage." (p.3, c.2)

Somewhere along this *Update*, what the Church has taught and does teach as an "intrinsic evil" has become for Fr. Overberg some kind of a positive "value." It is then for the couple to choose the "action" which "best" expresses the meaning of Christian marriage.

But an "intrinsic evil" can *never* "best" express the meaning of Christian marriage without violating divine positive Revelation (cf. Rom. 3:8 – the end does not justify the means).

Thus, this section is built to mislead; it cannot help form a *correct* conscience, but only a *situational* conscience, tending to justify and call Catholic whatever concrete decision one comes to. Fr. Overberg's "call to decision" ratifies *whatever* decision *any* couple comes to, as long as, subjectively, it "best" expresses their perceived meaning of Christian marriage.

This is precisely the kind of "gradualness of law" repudiated by John Paul II:

" . . . cannot be identified with 'gradualness of law,' as if there were different degrees or forms of precept in God's law for different individuals and situations." (*Familiaris Consortio*, n.34)

Further, the point of comparison (meaning of Christian marriage) is the *wrong* comparison. Logically, one might compare the "meaning" of Christian marriage with other "meanings" of marriage; but the rightness or wrongness of artificial contraception must be judged on its own merits, *not* by comparing it with something else. That only confuses the subject by changing the subject.

The *Update* continues:

"sincerely feel . . . most responsible choice is . . . artificial contraception if the natural method is not possible because of physical or psychological reasons." (p.4, c.2)

Fr. Overberg does not provide readers with a list of which physical or psychological "reasons" make NFP impossible. If there are physical and psychological "reasons" which make an intrinsic evil morally acceptable and ethically choice-worthy, the theological world awaits its publication. Of course, both the author and Catholic readers should be in agreement with the teaching of Vatican II:

"But in their manner of acting, spouses should be aware that they cannot proceed arbitrarily" (GS, n.50) and,

"... the moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives. It must be determined by objective standards." (GS, n.51)

Next, while pointing out that the I.U.D. is an abortifacient, Fr. Overberg says this raises a "distinct issue" that requires "caution" (p.4, c.2).

In Catholic moral theology, an abortifacient requires *condemnation*, not just *caution*, in the formation of a *correct* Catholic conscience. Besides the health side effects that pills can have – as the author does mention – he does not mention that 3 of the 5 most commercially available contraceptive pills in this country can also have abortifacient effects. Amazingly, Fr. Overberg seems to be unaware of these facts, to which the answer cannot be still another "caution," for again such a choice cannot be acceptable part of the formation of a correct conscience.

The final exhortation is on "*Freedom and Responsibility*." The last column here (p.4, c.2) is a litany of false antitheses: mature conscience vs. "blind conscience;" following teaching or following law that "protects from personal responsibility;" "The process of making mature moral decisions and living in peace with" them (p.4, c.2). While this is fine for *correct* decisions of conscience, how, *re erroneous* decisions of conscience, is this advice any different from confirming someone in error?

This *Update* is not just erroneous and misleading, but worse. While pretending to be a contribution to the formation of conscience it is, rather, a contribution to and justification of an erroneous conscience. It is difficult to see how it received or maintains its ecclesiastical approval for publication. Difficult, also, to see how any Catholic pre-Cana program could include this in its instruction or distributions. Realistically, however, these are the difficulties one encounters when dissent gets tenure.

There is something about sexual morality in our time that does not like a "no," any "no." I take the Overberg article as a shining paradigm of dissent – not for its brilliance but for its prevalence, which can also be said sometimes of tenure, more prevalent than brilliant.

Msgr. Smith's Footnotes On Page 24.

The 1991 Fellowship Convention

DENVER, SEPTEMBER 27-29, 1991

The Most Reverend J. Francis Stafford, D.D.
Presiding

*General Theme:
The Cultural Response of the Catholic Church to American
Pluralistic Society*

How a Convention Comes to Be?

It gets its start usually with a simple suggestion. At the close of the 1990 Convention (September 20th) in the sacristy of Philadelphia's Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul, Archbishop Anthony Bevilacqua asked: "Why don't you take up next year the Church's public role in American society, including the civic right of bishops?" This sounded as good a beginning for discussion as any other, so a questionnaire was drafted accordingly, sent immediately to the Fellowship's Executive Board and to almost one hundred Fellowship specialists. Within a few weeks the responses indicated that while some thought the 1991 convention should continue dealing with the internal affairs of the Church, most respondents considered the Archbishop's theme a good one, and a subject hitherto ignored by the Fellowship, save once in Chicago (1982) where we explored the content and significance of the Church's social thought.

Almost every returned reply called for a convention all on its own. Still the significant points of view expressed were so varied that no single meeting could adequately satisfy the total demands. For example, the political implications for American society of a Catholic Christianity fully believing and regularly practicing was underscored by more than one respondent. Just imagine, they indicated, what 50,000,000 devout Catholics would mean civically to a nation – apart from any political activity by them or by their leaders. Was it not this indirect political power of a pious and ever-expanding Catholic community in the post-World War II period which sparked questions from the Paul Blanshards whether Catholics were beginning to take over the country and the Catholic church, and in their eyes, becoming a threat to our democratic institutions. Conversely, other Fellowship members asked why did we not recognize sooner the rising dominance of the

religion of secularism on the thinking of university personnel, government bodies, and a powerful media.

Recalling how politicians, even Catholics, recoiled at the idea of the Church disciplining members for their pro-abortion activity, some respondents wonder whether the time has come for an open-air discussion of the sanctions imposed on, even the excommunication of, truly religious believers and churches, in the name of a secularist American way. How much interference with religious freedom should religious citizens and churches tolerate from the secularist establishment? Some replies even denied there was a real pluralism left in the United States, culture seemingly moving toward a pervasive pragmatism, devoid of any transcendental meaning.

Other questions to surface during the survey were the following: In the present situation what are the rights and limits of the Catholic bishops in the public forum? What is the function and freedom of the Catholic laity? How critical is abortion as a symbol of the confrontation going between two radically opposing world views of the American tradition? Does the U.S. Constitution really demand a naked public square? When did freedom of religion begin to mean "freedom from" God, not "freedom to" worship him? Where are the Catholic apologists a la Chesterton and Belloc? What kind of rhetoric best suits the nation for a public debate on matters religious? Why is there no such thing as private morality? And so forth.

Two additional posers from the Fellowship troops caught the attention of those who read the results of the survey. First, the suggestion that the 1991 convention focus more on the therapeutic than on the analytic, viz. that we propose answers more than preoccupy ourselves with breaking the problem down to its complex components. The second was a question: Is the Church ready to play an effective but proper role in transforming the nation into less than a religiously naked public square? The latter poser, of course, returns us to the internal strength of the Church.

A recent editorial in *30 Days* (December 1990, p. 3),

analyzing the new freedoms in Poland, remarks how today the political culture of the West strives for heightened concentration of real power, toward an anonymous form of despotism, making the citizen a mere cog "conditioned by an uncontrolled mechanism of which he is less and less aware." Then the editorialist ponders the Church's power:

"In recent times, is it not true that we are witnessing an unprecedented factor in the history of Holy Mother Church? Is it not true that there is a pluralism on the basic tenets of Faith? Perhaps the most distressing examples are some Eucharistic prayers which Swiss bishops were the first to approve, which were also inserted in the most recent edition of the Italian language missal and which contain expressions more akin to heretical Protestantism than to the Catholic dogma of trans-substantiation? Is it not true that there is a striving towards total cultural uniformity? Divided in faith but standardized by the culture of the intellectuals."

In any case, the following is a summary of the direction which the 1991 Convention of the Fellowship will take. God help us all.

The full program, with times and speakers, will appear in the June *Newsletter*.

Program Subject Areas

1. *American Pluralism vs. American Individualism*

American society has always been a community composed of distinct and diverse communities. States, counties, and towns as formal political communities; more information communities such as political parties and groups organized around particular political causes; regions such as New England and the South, churches and other religious bodies, social classes, racial and ethnic groups, and a host of educational, cultural, and economic associations – these have been the *e pluribus* from which the American *unum* has been formed. This pluralism, however, has steadily grown and today raises more deeply divisive issues. This is particularly true of the issues that chiefly engage the attention of the Church, namely, moral issues. The state, particularly its courts, has responded by an increasing emphasis on individual rights. This primacy given to the individual and his claims, however, severely limits the freedom and independence of private institutions and creates a serious problem for the Church: how to respond to a society that is not only

pluralistic but in many ways radically individualistic, and growing more so.

2. *The Religious Establishment of the State: The Catholic Establishment of the Free Polity*

The controversy of the past forty years over the proper interpretation of the First Amendment's inhibition of an "establishment of religion" by the national and state governments, and the judicial resolution of that controversy to the detriment of the correlative "Free Exercise" clause of that Amendment, have so obscured the concrete interrelation of Roman Catholicism to the limited government of free societies that it is now very difficult for most Catholics, clerical or lay, to recognize the historical irreversibility both of that relation, and of the tradition of political freedom which it alone can account for and support.

In this talk we wish to cast some light upon the indispensability of Roman Catholic sacramental realism to the constitutive order of all free society. Our national commitment to such freedom is at bottom the product of that liturgy, whether as doctrinal tradition, as free consensus, or as free praxis. For the Catholic tradition underlies the customary usages out of which the Common Law arose; its moral law frames the consensus upon the public decencies of the only free polities the world has ever known; its characteristic political praxis is the commitment, recently commonplace, to the permanence of monogamous heterosexual marriage – the spontaneous social inhibition of an otherwise unlimited state authority – a covenant whose free order and ordered freedom have been constitutive of the one free social order the world has known, whose secularization is inevitably fatal to its freedom.

The doctrinal tradition is contested, the moral consensus weakened and the marital praxis ridiculed; this does not at all lessen their strategic importance. With their decline, we encounter also the decline of freedom, decency, and human dignity throughout the Western world, and the return to an uncovenanted and consequently pagan polity which freedom, decency and dignity are alike alien. History bears eloquent witness to the bitter fruits of this ancient despair, in our day renewed: one worth examining here.

3. *The Cultural Divide in American Politics*

This divide does not coincide with the division between Democrats and Republicans, nor does it coincide completely with the division between liberals and

conservatives. But it separates "Cultural conservatives" from "cultural liberals" on a growing number of social issues, and will furnish the political battlelines in the future. As Harvey Gantt's polltaker said after the 1990 Senate election in North Carolina: "People have to understand that the questions Helms raised in this election were not revisits to old cultural and racial issues. Instead, they raised some of the toughest battleground issues that will be fought out over the next few years." Since they are issues on which the Church has a position, they are worth explaining and discussing.

4. *How the Catholic Church Serves the Common Good*

When the bishops succeed in discerning the advantages and disadvantages of American liberal democracy in the spirit of de Tocqueville, there is every reason to be grateful. When they have the insight and courage to denounce evils such as abortion, euthanasia, suicide and collective selfishness, the nation can only benefit. It is usually easier to discern what is evil or not going well than to devise and propose concrete solutions to public problems. If the bishops happen to see an evil where none exists, intelligent opposition will either bring them to their senses or make their intervention irrelevant.

Catholics should wholeheartedly endorse the effective promotion of the common good by the leaders of the Catholic Church. The bishops are fulfilling their proper mission when they encourage the laity to take responsibility for public policy and other aspects of the common good. American culture needs the strong voice of the Catholic hierarchy in the public arena as well as the everyday activity of the Catholic laity whose faith works by love and does justice.

It almost goes without saying that whatever the Church does to address effectively its own internal problems will have a beneficial public impact. Some internal Church matters needing more thoughtful attention are as follows: the education of priests, catechesis, marriage and family life, liberal education in Catholic universities including the serious study of

authors who write about justice and the common good, and the teaching of virtue.

5. *Freedom of Religion, the American Constitution and the Catholic Church*

A brace of First Amendment issues – obviously, free exercise, free speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of petition. A whole other phase relates to evangelism and the roots of the religious duty to preach the gospel and the preach against the times.

6. *Kulturkampf and Catholic Appeasement: Keeping (and Losing) the Faith in a Pluralist State*

The notion of "pluralism" has a legitimate and useful value as a descriptive term in the sociology of belief and as the name of a doctrine or theory of entitlements. In addition, it is currently used as a codeword for a set of attitudes and convictions which are targeted against the Catholic Church's self-understanding of her mission and rightful prerogatives. How is pluralism used by government, academy and media to create "gag-rules" targeted specifically at Catholics? To what extent can the Church acquiesce to these rules without forfeiting her part in the task of the salvation of souls? What kinds of self-defense are necessary and prudent?

7. *The "Life Issues" in a Pluralistic Society: How to Meet Them*

A panel discussion among three involved scholars on the "Right to Life" on the North-American continent. Special attention will be given to the Canadian experience, reflected in the Royal Commission on new reproductive technologies, as compared with the American response from Democratic/Republican office holders. The entire gamut of controverted topics will be covered – contraceptive sterilization, abortion, distressed pregnancy, surplus embryos, in vitro fertilization, surrogacy, etc. – concluding with the proper response of the Church institutionally and through the personalist activism of its members.

14th Annual Convention Information

Friday to Sunday, September 27-29, 1991

The Warwick Hotel

1776 Grant Street

Denver, Colorado 80203

(303) 861-2000 Toll Free 1-800-525-2888

Miss Lisa Sneddon, Account Executive

1. The Warwick Hotel is a European-style hotel, part of an international chain with other Warwicks in Paris, Brussels, New York, Hong Kong, even Bali, with classic appointments.

Three blocks from the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and close to the business and shopping areas of Denver. Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral on Saturday, at 6:45 A.M. and on Sunday at 10:30 A.M. with Archbishop Stafford as Chief Concelebrant.

2. RATES: \$69.00 single or double occupancy daily. All rooms include double, queen or king size beds, dining room table with four chairs, wet bar, refrigerator and private balcony. Complimentary breakfast from 6:30 A.M.

One hundred rooms have been reserved on a first-come basis. To avoid being bumped to a neighboring hotel, make reservations early.

In arranging a double room, specify roommate. Fellowship office will pair singles seeking a partner to share cost. Contact Msgr. Kelly.

3. AIR TRANSPORTATION:

Mr. Mark Fitzwater
AJA Travel and Tour
1860 Blake - Suite 760
Denver, Colorado 80202
(303) 296-6946

Each Fellowship member assumes responsibility for his/her/their travel arrangements.

Mr. Fitzwater, having done work for various Catholic associations, has arranged with two major airlines for a fifty (50) percent discount on first-class and coach fares, and a five (5) percent discount on either carriers' lowest "special" fare available at the moment of reservation.

4. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION: From and to the airport, an Airporter Commuter Service every half hour at \$5.25 one way, \$9.00 round trip. Cab fare approximates \$11.00 with pooling permissible.

Hotel parking \$5.00 per day.

5. CONVENTION SCHEDULE: All sessions on hotel's second floor. At present there will be no split sessions. The seven general sessions will begin (at present writing) at 1:00 P.M. on Friday, September 27th, with other sessions planned for 4:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M.

On Friday supper will take place at will, 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.

On Saturday, the sessions are presently scheduled for 9:00 and 11:00 A.M., 2:00 and 4:00 P.M. The banquet is timed for 6:30. Scheduled breaks and social concourse will take place as usual.

The convention ends on Sunday with High Mass in the Cathedral at 10:30.

6. A TOUR OF THE DENVER AREA - which has many beautiful attractions - for Sunday afternoon, and for those prepared to delay departure, is presently under study.

Chastity, The Common Good, and True Worship

By Patrick Riley

When, a decade ago, I began to consider a book on the role of chastity in the common good, the idea met little enthusiasm. It was greeted as quaint, the venture itself quixotic. But since the book was to constitute a Ph.D. thesis, an academic exercise meant merely to earn a degree, my interlocutors were tolerant.

What changes ten short years can work! Nowadays the link between marital fidelity and the common good of civil society is obvious, painfully so. Of course the pain was there a decade and more ago, but most people wouldn't say *ouch*: there was too much pleasure in prospect, or too much pressure from the prevailing ethos.

Of course I'm painting with a broad brush. Professional philosophers saw the point immediately: Plato, after all, had conceived the common good as the aggregate virtue of the citizenry, while chastity, technically speaking, is a virtue; *ergo* . . . And Catholics of the old school leaped at the idea. Father Stanley Jaki immediately suggested the historical approach that the book has followed. The director of the thesis, who had held out against any switch from an earlier topic, said he liked this even better. The new dean of philosophy at the Angelicum, a man I had never met, volunteered to step into the breach left by the director's retirement, and over the course of years showed that he understood the links between chastity and the common good better than I did. My wife, perhaps most importantly, supported the enterprise from the outset.

But why such widespread resistance? At least two obstacles hinder us from linking chastity to the common good. One is that chastity governs behavior that by its nature is private. To link it to the public welfare requires imagination. That is where art enters in, but when the prevailing art is libertine and anomic, as it has been for the past quarter-century, society will recognize reality only once the mugging begins.

The second obstacle compounds the first. Chastity governs this very private behavior by tempering it, which explains why chastity has traditionally been classified under the heading of temperance. Now despite all the benefits that temperance bestows on society, it is not seen as a public virtue. Grateful nations don't erect statues to the temperate or the chaste; they favor the brave, sometimes the brilliant, and statesmen.

St. Thomas puts it plainly:

Justice . . . and fortitude concern the good of the multitude more greatly than does temperance, because justice concerns dealings [*communicationes*] with another, while fortitude concerns the perils of war, which are borne for the common safety. But temperance moderates only the desires and delights of things that pertain to the man himself (II-II, 141, 8).

It remains true however that the desires and delights moderated by that species of temperance we call chastity, designed as they are for the preservation of the race, have far deeper dimensions than the pleasures of the table. Poets rarely sing of eating and drinking, nor do philosophers much ponder them. The dramas of love, of lust, and indeed of chastity, are the stuff of great literature.

Moreover, because the activity governed by chastity is a "communication," a "dealing with another," it falls by definition under justice. Further, it implies a lifelong contract, also a subject of justice. Finally, it brings into being a new person, perfectly innocent, absolutely helpless, and utterly dependent on the two who conceived him; a more compelling subject of justice can scarcely be imagined.

The injustice of fornication is highlighted by St. Thomas when he asks whether that sin is mortal (II-II, 154, 2). His immediate response: "Without any doubt whatsoever." But his focus may surprise us: it is on the father.

"For it is *manifest*," he observes without nuance, "that a man's education requires not only the care of the mother, who nourishes him, but *far more* the care of the father, who instructs and defends him, and who causes him to advance in inner and outward goods" (emphasis supplied).

It is a sign of our times that we are rediscovering the meaning of a word scrupulously avoided by our mentors in the media: *bastard*.

Once we grasp the tragedy of bastardy, both for its victim and for society at large; once we grasp the inherent injustice of unchastity; once we grasp the role of chastity in preserving and protecting the family, and through the family the child, and through the child the nation; once, in a word, we perceive the unsunderable

union of chastity and the common good, then we are ready to understand that chastity is a motor force of history.

Chastity has actually shifted history from its axis – onto its proper axis. But in every case that I studied, it accomplished this feat not alone but in harness with true worship.

The first shift came at Mount Sinai, where chastity and true worship were central to the covenant that created the nation of Israel. Chastity and true worship were central not only to the *creation* of Israel, the foundational nation of western society; they were central also to the *preservation* of Israel, a phenomenon unique in history. Together they preserved the Jewish family, and through it the Jewish nation.

For surrounding Israel, and even infiltrating her, was an unchastity actually institutionalized, and tied to false worship. Only Israel's true worship and her institutionalized chastity, both decreed by the Decalogue, could combat and resist this deadly admixture of superstition and sexual abandon. In the centuries-long struggle of the prophets we see them wielding the double sword of worship and chastity. We see chastity and worship drawing one another upward in an ascending spiral, a double helix in continual upward motion. We see loyalty to God and loyalty to the family as the living core of the Covenant.

Now modern scholarship has discovered that the Covenant was cast in the form of a civil treaty, the so-called suzerainty treaty of the Hittites. No one, to my knowledge, has suggested that the provisions of this treaty with Yahweh were civil in form and function, but it seemed to me on examination that they were. For example, the most religious of all the commandments, the first, made Yahweh the ruler of Israel, and outlawed the treason of false worship. But what about commandments that outlaw inward dispositions, the coveting of another man's wife or his property? *De internis non judicat praetor*. Yet the Hebrew word for *covet* in the Ninth and Tenth Commandments can, according to modern archeology, denote plotting or taking actual steps to appropriate; hence these laws need not be read as dealing with inner dispositions, which are beyond the reach of civil law.

The clincher was that St. Thomas himself saw the full range of moral precepts not as deriving from the Ten Commandments but as attached to them (I-II, 100, 11). This explains how the Decalogue, even if civil law, could assume its traditional role as symbol of all

morality, a role it has played since at least the time of Jesus Christ.

No scholar, to repeat, has claimed or even suggested that the Decalogue was given to Israel as civil law. But the evidence is there. Now if the Decalogue was indeed civil law for Israel when it was a civil society, and has been religious law for Israel as a mystical society, it has proven itself in both capacities, for Israel is the most enduring society in history. The survival of convenantal Israel shows that loyalty to God and loyalty to the family are at the core of society.

Not that we need divine revelation to tell us that. We are dealing here not with a specifically Jewish notion, a Christian notion. To link the national welfare with religious and familial piety is also a pagan notion, a Roman notion, encapsulated in the traditional words, *In aris et focus est res publica*. Yet Rome, despite the efforts of Augustus, founder of the Empire, and a politician of genius, was unable to heal the wounds that unchastity had inflicted on the family and the body politic. That work of healing was left to the Catholic Church. It was to be the making of the West.

The Foundational society of the West was Israel, and in the history of Israel we find two crises, both of them decisive for the future of the world, and both arising from assaults on chastity and true worship.

First came the struggle of the prophets against the polytheism of Canaan, with its orgiastic rites; here modern archeology has confirmed the charges that the prophets brought against this superstition, including sacred prostitution and child-sacrifice.

Then came the briefer but no less decisive struggle of the Maccabees against the polytheism of Greece, with its worship of wisdom and its pervasive homosexuality. There is evidence in Holy Writ that the Hellenizers who tried to subvert the worship of Yahweh incorporated homosexuality into their strategy. To anyone who reads Plato and other Greek writers on the homosexuality of the gymnasia, the words of *I Maccabees* raise suspicions: "And they build a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the customs of the gentiles" (1:14). This intimation of sexual license is strengthened by the words that follow:

They covered over the mark of their circumcision and abandoned the holy Covenant. They joined themselves to the gentiles and sold themselves to wrongdoing.

All four clauses have sexual implications, and in this case homosexual implications. To sell oneself is to

prostitute oneself. "Wrongdoing" in the context of the Greek gymnasium implies homosexuality, especially since the Greek word used here for "joined themselves" is a special verb used to imply sexual congress. To abandon the Covenant, in this context, is to abandon the true worship and chaste life that it enjoined. Naturally, in so doing, the Hellenized Jews would repudiate the mark of circumcision as a symbol of obedience to God in the Covenant with Abraham, and to the laws ensuring purity of marriage.

The next crisis of chastity came with the waning of the Roman Republic. Augustus, as part of his design for a new and enduring *res publica*, attempted to restore that virtue. In this effort he was tireless; his laws were too ingenious and far-reaching to have lacked effect entirely. Not long after him, Christian belief entered the Empire. This tiny leaven rose and changed the shape of Western society, restoring chastity and the family where Augustus, for all his genius, had faltered. Its essence, of course, was true worship. Once again we see worship and chastity drawing one another upward in a mounting spiral, a twin helix constituting the core of civil society.

We see the Christian ethos building the foundations of civil liberty and at the same time, as a necessary preliminary of full civil liberty, abolishing the worst abuses of slavery, first by rebuilding family life among slaves. We see links between slavery and unchastity on the one hand, and civil liberty and chastity on the other. We also see something that is only too obvious in our own day: a linkage between unchastity and contempt for human life on the one hand, and chastity and respect for life on the other.

With the disintegration of Roman authority, a curtain falls over history in Europe. When it rises with the end of the Dark Ages, we see a Christian society in full blossom. We ought not idealize it, but it is a society radically different from every other society previously known to history. It is a *free* society, a society free of slavery. Not yet entirely free, but arriving there under the impetus of Christian principles. The slave had become the serf if not the yeoman. Abolition had been achieved gradually, but for a revolutionary reason: Christian doctrine on human dignity and the family.

Not only is slavery well on the way to vanishing, but divorce has been abolished. We see established the two uniquely characteristic institutions of Christian

society: freedom from slavery, and indissoluble marriage.

During this springtide of Western civilization we witness a fresh assault on chastity, institutionalized, insidious, and hideously perverted. It is the Albigensian heresy. The Albigenses, like the Gnostics of early Christian times, held there was not one God but two. The God of the Catholics was neither the universal father nor all powerful. He did not make Heaven and earth both, but only spiritual things. Material things were the responsibility of a second god, a god of darkness. All matter is evil, hence the body is evil, hence human generation is evil, and marriage and marital congress are literally no better than prostitution. Chaste marriage becomes a contradiction in terms.

The Albigensian onslaught on the family is one of the most critical episodes in history, yet very little understood even by those who write on it. The Church defended doctrine (an unforgivable sin) and the family (still less forgivable). She did it with all the vigor and rigor of an institution convinced of her own divine foundation, of her divine mission in society, and she did it through the Inquisition and a Crusade. For all these sins the modern secularized world will hold her guilty as long as it lasts – which may not be much longer. Although the greatest men of the age rallied to the defense of doctrine and of society – St. Bernard, St. Dominic, Innocent III, St. Francis – their achievement is little appreciated, the purpose of their activities unnoticed. St. Francis's love of nature and St. Anthony's sermon to the fishes are cases in point. Some relics of their work, such as the Christmas presepio and the Canticle of the Creatures, are admired and even loved, but their origins are forgotten even by educated Catholics. So too, I believe, is the public significance of the virtue and the worship these historic men spent their lives defending.

(Patrick Riley, Washington-based director of governmental affairs for the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, is former editor of the *National Catholic Register*, and former correspondent in London, Paris, and Rome for *Reuters*, *United Press International*, *CBA*, and the *National Catholic News Service*. The foregoing article is based on an exposition he gave in Rome November 30, to open his doctoral defense at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas.)

Around the Church in the 90's

◇ Mother Angelica, founder of the Eternal Word Television Network, has established herself in Europe, extending her communication services into the heart of what used to be called "The Eastern Bloc." Already the most successful Catholic Network in the United States, with a daily audience running into the tens of millions, EWTN also provides coverage in support of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications and The Vatican Radio. Having survived blasts from within her own Church for being too Catholic and too simplistic about Church teaching, Mother Angelica will undoubtedly find herself in trouble with European change-makers who have a different church in mind than the one proclaimed by John Paul II.

◇ Ronald P. McArthur, Ph.D., a founder of Thomas Aquinas College and its first president (1969), retired from the presidency on January 25, 1991. The college's board of governors has selected Dean Thomas E. Dillon, Ph.D., to succeed him.

During Dr. McArthur's years as president, the college's student body has grown from 33 students in 1971 to 196 in 1990. The school's integrated curriculum in science, liberal arts and Christian learning has become internationally known. In the last two years the college has undertaken a vigorous building program to accommodate the increasing numbers of undergraduates drawn to its demanding academic program. It is situated in Santa Paula, California 93060, (801) 525-4417.

◇ There is a newly organized Aquinas Press located in Marysville, Washington 98270 (7004 67th Place, N.E.), which plans to publish works on Marian and Dominican spirituality. One of its early successes is Robert Feeney's *Mother of the Americas*, the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe, from Church recognition of her appearance to Juan Diego in 1531 (near Mexico City) to the choice in 1974 by the U.S. hierarchy of an Allentown parish as the National Shrine center for Mary as Patroness of the Americas. \$7.50 postpaid.

◇ John and Sheila Kippley, founders of the Couple to Couple League, received the Outstanding Achieve-

ment Award for 1990 from the Wethersfield Institute. Parents of five children, the Kippleys, also charter members of the Fellowship, were recognized as among the Church's most widely known teachers of Natural Family Planning and outspoken defenders of *Humanae Vitae*.

◇ A nationwide survey conducted by the Wirthlin Group for the USCC shows that almost half of all Americans believe that there are fewer than 500,000 abortions annually. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a research group founded by Planned Parenthood, the actual number is more than three times that - 1.6 million annually or about 4,400 a day. The survey also found that most Americans greatly overestimate the percentage of abortions performed for rare "hard cases," such as danger to the mother's life or cases of rape or incest.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, less than one percent of women having abortions cite rape or incest as a reason for the abortion, and only seven percent claim any justification under the broad category of a "health problem."

Among the survey's other findings:

- A majority of Americans (fifty-six percent) believe abortions should be performed only to save the life of the mother or in cases of rape or incest.
- Sixty-seven percent favor a law "requiring parental consent for an abortion if the woman is under eighteen years of age"; thirty percent oppose such a law.
- Eighty-seven percent favor a law "requiring women to receive information about fetal development and alternatives to abortion before going ahead with the procedure"; eleven percent oppose such a law.
- Sixty percent find "very convincing" the statement that "every unborn child has a basic right to life." The same percentage finds very convincing the statement that "all human life, including that of the unborn, should be protected."

Helen Alvare, of the USCC concludes: "Most Americans endorse the basic principles and some of the current legislative goals of the pro-life move-

ment. This support for protection of the unborn can only grow as Americans realize how completely uncontrolled current abortion practice really is."

✧ The Report of the Catholic Theological Society of America "on the Profession of Faith and the Oath Fidelity," whose nature and direction was called into question by Professor John Haas in the December 1990 Newsletter, was subsequently recommended by CTSA as "an excellent resource for reference or classroom use." (Emphasis theirs)

✧ The Franciscan University of Steubenville has a fully developed University Press with well known books written by Fr. Michael Scanlon, Fr. Francis Martin, Fr. George Montague, and classics written by authors like Christopher Dawson; for the selections write Steubenville, Ohio 43952 or call 8-800-282-8283.

✧ Fr. Thomas J. O'Donnell, S.J., veteran of modern-day battles over medical ethics, has announced a Summer course on how Catholics should deal with that intellectual and pastoral arena, to be held at the Catholic Center in Waverly, Nebraska, from July 8th until July 26, 1991. Two classes will be held each day, each week covering canons of clinical research, surgery, prolongation of life, organ transplants, contraceptive sterilization, transsexual surgery, etc.

Institute participation will be limited to 50. The cost of the course open to religious (\$750) will include private room with bath and meals. Daily Mass and spiritual exercises are part of the program.

Fr. O'Donnell, formerly a professor of medical ethics at Georgetown's Medical School, is the author of two impressive volumes entitled "Medicine and Christian Morality."

✧ The Center of Thomistic Studies, the Graduate Department of Philosophy at the University of St. Thomas in Houston has issued its 1991 catalogue. Candidates for the M.A. and the Ph.D. may obtain details from President Joseph M. McFadden at 3812 Montrose Boulevard, Houston, TX 77006-

4696 or call (713) 522-7911. Begun in 1976 under the direction of Anton C. Pegis, The Center has been led by a succession of distinguished Catholic philosophers including Vernon Bourke, Ronald Lawler, and Leonard Kennedy.

✧ The Catholic Theological Society of America has published its evaluation of Vatican II twenty-five years later with an admonishment for Rome:

"Important curial documents, even on highly technical subjects, have been prepared without adequate consultation with experts. The impression is often given that consultation is only with persons who hold a single theology and that documents are then prepared by Vatican staff lacking competence for the task. The International Theological Commission has been absorbed into the Curia, and its membership no longer represents the range of legitimate theological opinion. The same narrowness of consultation is sometimes apparent in the designation of theological consultants for the Synod of Bishops."

- Discussion of new questions among theologians is cut off prematurely by doctrinal statements which are treated as definitive teaching.
- The hierarchy of truths acknowledged by the council (UR 11) is ignored when diverse church teachings are presented as carrying the same authority.
- The procedures of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith used in investigations of theologians' views fail to honor fundamental human rights and the safeguards regarded in our countries as absolutely necessary to protect these human rights.
- The "freedom of inquiry, thought, and expression" (GS 62) necessary for serious theological scholarship, as well as the legal and procedural traditions in our seminaries, colleges and universities which protect that freedom, have been called into question.

As a result, many possibilities for cooperation between the magisterium and theologians in keeping with the teaching of the council remain to be realized.

What Makes for a Good Pastor in Today's Church?

EDITOR'S NOTE: One of the little-appreciated facets of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars is the number of pastors who belong to it. Most of these possess graduate degrees and have held distinguished posts in Catholic higher education or in their dioceses. Two of the country's best theological minds, and successful pastors to boot, addressed our 1990 convention in Philadelphia. In recent years more and more leading Fellowship scholars have been meeting with small groups of pastors to discuss parish problems. Traditionally, pastors have looked askance at scholars. For all the latter's seeming role as men or women of ideas, few academics ever created, maintained, or reinvigorated a Catholic parish – where the people are. Pastors were right to this extent that we might have been saved a lot of trouble during and after Vatican II – on restructuring dioceses, reordering the liturgy, catechetics, and sacramental procedures (even on translations) had informed pastors acquired the influence given to bookmen almost overnight. And to the clarion voices for change they were able to generate against classic Catholic wisdom.

In any event, at a recent colloquium with Fellowship personnel, one professor challenged a pastor emeritus: "Why don't you put those thoughts to writing?" And the priest did. A shortened form of his letter is published below. Since he insists that the best pastors are only known in their own community, he wishes to keep it that way by remaining anonymous.

The first thing it takes to be a good pastor is to recognize his central role in bringing to an effective conclusion (to the extent any human being can do this) Christ's mission on earth.

I'm not thinking here only of his priesthood, although God knows this is the basis of the Church's worshipping and sacramental life, i.e., God's life among men. This priesthood which makes the Catholic Church unique is not the issue here.

The pastor, by definition, is a special priest, the Good Shepherd of the local church on whose shoulders alone rests the burden of bringing God's children to Christ and keeping them there. Other priests teach, sanctify and govern what is placed in their charge. But only the pastor rules the local communities of the Church. The buck of decision-making on things Catholic stops with a pastor alone. However, it is on this very point that we deal with a post-Vatican II rub. We no longer speak of anyone ruling, although someone always rules. Today those who hold no office at all often do the ruling, if only by saying no to law enforcement. Who under these circumstances can speak anymore of the Kingdom of God? By virtue of approved translators is it not now the reign of God instead? Yet, everyone knows that reigning is presiding, not ruling. (One of the great liturgical putdowns of our time has been the designation of the celebrant of the Eucharist as a presider. This was not done by accident, I might add.)

Think instead of Christ's imagery – the sheepfold, some members wandering, others lost, and "the Shepherd" – which is what "pastor" literally means –

responsible for their safekeeping, at least long enough to bring them into the fold. Shepherding, therefore, involves teaching, leading, directing, governing, correcting. And the role devolves on only one man – the shepherd/pastor.

One old-time pastor long ago told a young Chan-cery hot-shot (to keep him humble no doubt) that the three key people in the Church were the pastor in Rome, the pastor in the Cathedral, and the likes of himself, linked incorrigibly and indissolubly, because they bear the ultimate power and responsibility for making disciples of Christ. The old-pro was only saying that diocesan administrators, bishop and vicar general excluded, were service personnel, a step in status below the pastor. With the bishop he alone has ordinary jurisdiction in Church matters. In the right order of Catholic life any ecclesial structure, which claims rights or jurisdiction outside or against one or the other pastor is of its nature illegitimate.

Can there be a Peter against Christ? Or a Paul really against Peter? Or a pastor of any kind out of syncopation with John Paul II?

Notice what the pastor emeritus did not say, viz., that a pastor is more important or wiser or holier or abler than anyone else in the Church. Only that he, not the bureaucrat nor the professor, not the saint, is the "key" to the proper governance of the Church. The Pastor "is the boss." If Abraham Lincoln was correct insisting that a nation could not exist half-slave/half-free, the pastor rationally may assert that the Church body cannot have two heads any more than it can be half-Catholic and half-Protestant. (The Church of

England tried this and lost its constituency.) Pastors know they are surrounded by their betters. But they are the ones who hold the keys of the kingdom, not the betters.

Saying that a pastor is boss creates panic among recent status and academic elites who only think of pastors as autocrats of the rectory table or benighted monsignors who in their minds justify their particular separatism and snobbery. Still, the Church's human weakness is merely the other side of its virtue. The Church is more likely to become a competently organized living Body of Christ when it is governed by the *Alteri Christi* properly designated for the task, as the Apostles were, than by rump cabals of zealots, whose claim to authority is based not on office or fidelity to the message, but to a self-proclaimed superior knowledge/holiness/social privilege/or power – like the Scribes.

Yet, you ask, what about the pastor's knowledge or fitness? This is for the bishop who names him, to evaluate. Defacto, appointees or electees to office may end up as misfits. Some office-holders ought to be removed as discretely as possible. Even if they are looked upon by many as saints and learned, and by others as buffoons or scandalmongers. The failure of superiors always to do their job to perfection is no reflection on the quality of the overwhelming majority of the pastors who turned a scattered and tepid flock of the 19th Century into the ecclesiastical colossus that we admired from 1900 onward.

Our special problem in this post-Vatican II era is the erosion of that status and role which, by Catholic tradition and canon law, belongs to pastors. (See Canons 528-537 for the rights and duties of pastors.)

Granted that with Christ they are or should be suffering servants. But this does not mean that they do not have special status or authority as "Father" of God's people. No statement in the documents of Vatican II, no section of the New Code, no implementing decree issued by Rome after 1965, denigrates or dilutes a pastor's authority. Neither the recommendations concerning consultation, collaboration with other priests, the assistance of laity, about finance committees and parish councils, not even his obligation of obedience to pope and bishop. A pastor's authority can be taken from him only by higher authority following duly-prescribed administrative or judicial procedures.

To be a good pastor, therefore, a priest must know first who he is, must regularly exercise his preroga-

tives and responsibilities, and by pastoring demonstrate what he means to the parish community by Christ's intent.

A good pastor gives witness to his faith by teaching what the Church teaches and by implementing the decrees of the Holy See and his diocese. If he does this faithfully he will find himself in a lonely, often thankless, role.

He surely should know the teachings of the Church which bind in conscience both him and his people. If he is confused on this matter, he ought to have the Daughters of St. Paul send him their fine collection of the Constitutions, Exhortations and Addresses of John Paul II.

The policies of the Church, which are his to obey are contained in the relevant sections of the Code of Canon Law, in the Liturgical Books, and in the Pastoral Handbook of his diocese, if it has one. It would be well for him to keep up-to-date on the latest directives and decisions from Rome by subscribing to the NCCB's documentary service, *Origins*, although careful to give no mind to material in that publication which from time to time undercuts or explains away authentic ecclesial policy.

He should be faithful not only to the letter of these official documents, but to their intended sense, careful not to take advantage of a dissenting casuistry, common in our time, by which the mind of the magisterium, even the clear teaching of Christ, is reinterpreted to the point of meaninglessness. The conduct of the pastor is a more powerful teacher of obedience than anything he says. Non-conforming pastors usually inculcate the propriety of disobedience by their defiance in matters such as prescribed rubrics, altar girls, first confession, Eucharistic ministers, general absolution, parish councils, and so forth.

Among the priorities of a good pastor, the following seem worthy of mention:

1. *A beautiful liturgy every Sunday, and on Great Feasts, and with the careful administration of each and every sacrament.*

While we point to the reform of the Liturgy as the great accomplishment of Vatican II, the fact is that our parishioners worship God less and less, especially those who will comprise the Church of the 21st Century. The "beauty" I speak of here has more to do with making the Church's sacrificial and sacramental acts

awe-inspiring and reverential, than merely meaningful. The liturgy is drama, seeking not so much approval from an audience as externalizing our acknowledgement of dependence on God, and because He comes to us through the priests' ministry, through those Christ-instituted symbols of His living presence.

2. *The preaching must be instructive and must provide the proper basic response expected of Catholics in contemporary life situations.*

Preaching is being severely criticized today for its harmless, banal, and often dull moralizing. The pastor must give this matter special attention, even if it means bringing outside priests of talent in to enliven the message, especially about the need of Christians to worship God in the Eucharist every Sunday, and about being in the state of grace.

Since the secular world has chosen "sex" as the latest battleground for weaning away "the little ones" of Christ, the good pastor must confront these issues with conviction, clarity, and courage, leaving no doubt about their obligation to Christ's moral norms.

He must also encourage his poor to take up their own cause on behalf of family and faith, teach the prosperous to share their goods and their energy with less fortunate members of the parish.

3. *Know his people and love them in Christ's name for being his.*

The good pastor is best remembered because he seemed to know – or have married or baptized – everybody. And he came to know them by encountering them on Sunday morning outside Church, at coffee hours, at baptismal and wedding parties, at wakes and during rides to the cemetery, in the hospital when they were sick, having their babies, at bingos, outings and bazaars, and from all those pious exercises (novenas, missions, retreats) which bring closer to God those most likely to volunteer for all the causes dearest to the pastor's heart.

I don't know why we allowed regular parish visitations and the blessings of homes to fall into desuetude. These, especially when done by priests, helped create the U.S. Church. Granted, today with a shortage of priests the busy pastor is overwhelmed by details once handled by curates. It is unfortunate nonetheless that so many people now confess they do not know their pastor, even if they attend Church weekly. Without him knowing his people – and it may take five

years in a large parish, even for a personalist – it is hard to know what he contributed to their character formation or their community spirit.

Presuming he manages all this well, the chances are, if he is strong enough to adhere to Church teaching and law, the good shepherd may find himself with more enemies than his recent predecessors. Part of this is due to the prevalence of dissent among elites in every parish, partly because authority figures are no longer regarded as necessary, partly because we have helped undermine the role of "pastor" by dubious changes which denigrated the high status that belongs to that office.

Elites early on proposed that pastors be forced to retire anywhere from seventy to seventy-five years of age, that future pastors be given terms of office, that Personnel Boards take over the assignments of priests, and that evaluations of performance be conducted in a quasi-public manner by "a committee." Of themselves any one of these suggestions could have become helpful – providing the bishop himself remained in full charge and in personal contact with his pastors every step of the way. Providing, too, that *forcing* retirement or transfers against common sense or the wishes of a dedicated successful priest and overriding the love relationship people had with him did not become an absolute. Exceptionless norms based only on age or terms reduced the pastor to the level of ecclesiastical functionary; just another job, some said. And in many cases automatic transfers resulted in the bishop becoming a shadowy figure in the priest personnel process. Or the person to argue with when a strong-minded but good pastor concluded that the Church and he were badly served by these moves.

Nothing brings out the folly of certain novelties in Church administration than what West Coast priests call "the Mating Game." This occurs at various times of the year when the Personnel Board sends younger priests out on the road to look over a group of pastors, to see who is likely to feel comfortable with whom in a new parochial arrangement. The bishop looks like a by-stander to the process. As one pastor cagily remarked: "How can you tell a curate what to do in the parish when you have to negotiate the terms of his arrival. The whole sense of mission and enduring commitment is being undermined bit by bit."

Of course, the withering away of fatherhood – of father as an authority figure – has been going on in secular society for a long time. It is surprising to see it

happen in the Church. Bishops and Pope, fathers, too, cannot afford to permit the abasement of the pastorate because the Church's well-being depends on "good shepherds" up to their level. If enlightened sons on university campuses or in seminaries or in formation houses can throw off what they consider the yoke of fatherhood, it follows that other sons and Church mothers are free to establish an independent family, even though they pretend to seek "father's" blessing for breaking up the family.

The pastor today has lost a great deal of institutional support for being a faithful officer of the Church. The system has been fractured by divisions in teaching and practice. Our good shepherd praises the Pope and the Holy See to his congregation but the pastor next door tells people that Cardinal Ratzinger is a nut and ought to be confined. One preaches the Church's sexual morality but a contemporary West of town is known for advertising the view that the Church's nonos will change when John Paul II goes to God. Father Wright's course is contradicted in many places: he does not have altar girls, but a prominent prelate of the diocese has, and allows women to preach homilies besides; he insists on the truth of the Nicene Creed, but the local university chaplain excludes it from every Sunday mass; he holds Catholic politicians to account for their public misbehavior, even as an oft-quoted priest-activist is arrested for pederasty. And so forth.

The lightest cross for the good shepherd to bear is the label "conservative," an implication that he rejects the changes authorized by Vatican II. A heavier burden may be putdowns of his views by closet dissenters or fence-straddlers in the diocesan bureaucracy. He is excluded from influence in the course of diocesan action, perhaps is denied a suitable parochial associate or another pastorate when his term expires. This kind of harassment against good priests goes on more often than is generally known.

There are well-intentioned pastors, of course, who talk too much, who enjoy controversy as much as Richard McBrien or Charles Curran, and who unnecessarily embarrass their bishop. Closet Lefebvrites can be a particular nuisance. All such clerics are advised to remember that they are responsible before God only for their portion of God's people. They have every right to keep the bishop – and the Pope – informed about the facts of ecclesial life and to make recommendations, but they must know that in due time the Church's highest officers must give account of

their stewardship for their own level of ministry. Let the parish shepherd worry only about his final judgment.

4. *The good pastor should head up a well-run parish in the Catholic mold.*

In former days not all parishes were well run but they were reasonably Catholic. Today many parishes are well run but are ambiguously Catholic. I don't know why anyone thinks that Christ sent His apostles out to be failures as fishers of men. Why anything less should be expected of modern pastors than transforming big worldlings into little Christians. Getting parishioners – the saints, the tepids, the resisters, and the fallen-aways – to think like Christ living in His Church, and to have them act accordingly, is what shepherding is all about (Philippians 2:5). And after two millennia there is an established Catholic way of doing this.

Whether one inherits a solid parish of Churchgoers or a run-down parish in need of more than better plant management, good pastors have three things in common: (1) a clearly-defined purpose reflected in their sacramental, catechetical and social programs; (2) a dedicated hard working staff committed to the Church's creed, code, and cult; and (3) the ability to support and defend the parish community against debilitating forces whether they be civic, economic, or religious. At one time the general Catholic system was so good that parishes seemed to run themselves, although always and somewhere pastors were responsible for success or failure. At other times the individual pastor, like his bishop, may find himself having to start all over again, as John Paul II suggested at least once. The "enemy" may be lack of funds or a hostile civic environment or half-believing activists who would use Church institutions against the good shepherd. No matter what the social situation is, dealing with difficulty is an essential element of governance. In the ideal world the shepherd never leaves any doubt about where he leads the sheep, nor does he allow hirelings to mislead them. Nor rustlers to steal them.

Oh, he should be good at raising money and be careful about spending it; and if he is a great prayer or an idea man, more than an administrator, he must need find someone to mind the details of the parish store while he builds up the Body of Christ his way. To do this correctly he must, naturally, surround himself with people as committed to the magisterium and to the policies of the Church as he is, and he must

supervise the intentions and performance of everyone who shares his apostolate, down to those in charge of his lowest infrastructure. (People who count the money have been known to steal it.) The important parochial infrastructures include his priest staff, his parish council, his liturgical directors, his catechetical apparatus, his media, such as they may be, his public relations, and so forth. Christ said it plainly: "A kingdom torn by strife is headed for a downfall. A town or household split into factions cannot last for long – he who is not with me is against me." (Mt. 12:25,29.)

A pastor can be done in by the wrong curate, by the wrong school principal or CCD director, by the editor of his newsletter, even by the parish secretary. Like the servant in the Gospel, he can only serve one master (Lk. 16:13). What about freedom and development, you ask. Even Maria Montessori knew the answer to that – freedom in a prepared environment.

Christ specified the normal surroundings for his Church – disciples living according to his teachings (Lk. 10:16) and life to be lived by keeping his Commandments (Jn. 8:31, 32). Those were choices offered to anyone who would enter his sheepfold. Christ recognized that some would leave it or be abandoned to their own devices (Mk. 6:11), or be treated as outsiders (Mt. 18:17). Excommunication, after all, was a Jewish and an apostolic instrument, not an invention of the latter day Roman Curia (Jn. 9:34).

If it is clear how a pastor should organize and supervise a good parish, what happens if he walks into a bad parish? This is a more difficult task, at times one fraught with danger. Bringing a parish out of bankruptcy or the doldrums involves changing peoples' ways of thinking and their accustomed behavior. This is not an easy thing to do, especially if it requires belt-tightening. Another priest may be the chief resister, or a Chancery official who refuses the initial seed money for turning things around. Then, too, the pastor may be the wrong man for the reformer's role, too irascible, too timid, a priest incompetent in crisis. When the issue is the Catholicity of the parish the situation becomes more acute because leading parishioners on the wrong side may by virtue of earlier bad training be in good faith. Or they may have supporting friends in diocesan or media headquarters.

How does one re-Catholicize an ambiguous parish? Carefully, to say the least. To use the biblical metaphor, the pastor must treat the parish as a reluctant bride, embracing her slowly and with caution, but

embracing her nonetheless, lest there be enduring divorce, instead of the marriage of the parish bride to its head, the pastor.

If the good pastor has the cooperation and clear support of the diocese, he is fortunate. But even then he cannot be impetuous lest he initiate untimely conflict, something dissidents have become successful at doing, if only to intimate anyone threatening their hold on a church structure. He must also be discrete, avoiding a meaningless war of words, which changes little. He must assess the realities and slowly build his allies in the community, all the while creating the impression that in process is a church within the Catholic fold. Only when he has found competent staff, does he begin to make suitable appointments, quarantining the troublemakers if that is a better political judgment than replacement. In due course he must correct serious error or immorality wherever he finds it. At first privately, even if it involves a priest or a college president within his jurisdiction; and then publicly at the appropriate moment if this is what helps purify the parish climate. After all, public dissent, like well-known adultery, is public sin. And public sinners are the first ones to use sanctions against the saints. He must acquire skill at dealing with local media without being taken in or cowed by them. And he must manifest favor toward the friends of Church teaching and policies. He should also be compassionate with public sinners, at least if this means suffering with them during the trials of correction and reform. Compassion does not mean tolerating the evil of those who act wrongly in the Church's name.

We ask a lot of such a pastor. We surely would, without hesitation, if the issue was the threat of bankruptcy and only money was involved. Why not ask more when the spiritual welfare of Christian people and Christ's mission in the church is the overriding issue. These losses are not quantitatively measurable but are unconscionable because they are so large. The dilemma of our day is the freedom many pastors appropriate unto themselves to question the magisterium, to tolerate vast amounts of evil in the Church household, to complain about it and do nothing, to believe in peace at any price, to walk on two sides of the Church street, to speak with two voices, slyly supporting dissent and making life difficult for those who dissent from dissent, and pastors who leave behind them a church whose last state is worse than the first.

Certain cockle will always remain strangling the Church's good wheat until that day of judgment when God himself with sift one from the other. But in the meantime scandal, of which Christ had much to say, must be confronted. Moral disease, like its physical counterpart, spreads rapidly, while health, handed down by nature, cannot easily be transmitted by contact alone. Disease, especially of epidemic proportion, must be treated or dealt with surgically. It is an old Church problem, new to us in the United States because our parish life was so vibrant and our Churches filled with an abundance of pious worshippers. Long ago a great Pope Gregory I, facing an interfering Byzantine Emperor and a host of heretics in the late Sixth and early Seventh Century pointed his finger at what is a recurring ecclesiastical problem in a homily

the Church still uses in the Breviary (27 Ordinary Saturday):

"I speak of our absorption in external affairs;
We accept the duties of office
But by our actions we show that we are attentive to
other things.
We abandon the ministry of preaching and, in my
opinion, are called bishops to our detriment
For we retain the honorable office
But fail to practice the virtues proper to it.
Those who have been entrusted to us abandon God
And we are silent
They fall into sin
And we do not extend a hand or rebuke."
AMEN.

Msgr. Smith's Footnotes From Page 9.

1. for text, cf. *Origins* v.20, #8 (July 5, 1990) 117; 119-126.
2. R.A. McCormick, R.P. McBrien, "L'Affaire Curran II," *America* v.163, #6 (September 15, 1990) pp. 127-130; 132; 142-3.
3. *Ibid.* p. 142.
4. *Origins* v.16, #11 (August 28, 1986) p. 203.
5. Cf. Decision (February 28, 1989) in *Origins* v.18, #40 (March 16, 1989) pp. 664-672.
6. Cf. *N.Y. Times* (November 23, 1990) p.A, 22; (December 11, 1990) p.A, 25.
7. Of the 1,400 members of the Catholic Theological Society of America, it is reported that of the 544 members who responded, 431 endorsed 'Do Not Extinguish the Spirit,' cf. *N.Y. Times* (December 14, 1990) p.A, 23.
8. Cf. *Origins* v.19, #6 (June 22, 1989) 87-89, 188.
9. Cf. *Origins* v.20, #25 (November 29, 1990) p.404.
10. Cf. John Paul II (October 5, 1979; Chicago) in *The Message of Justice, Peace and Love* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1979) n.7, pp. 186-187.
11. Cf. W.M. Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II*, (NY: American Press, 1966) LG, n.12, ftnt.40 p. 29.
12. John Paul II (April 10, 1986) in *L'Osservatore Romano* (Eng. ed. #17/934) (April 28, 1986) p. 12.
13. John Paul II (June 5, 1987) in *L'Osservatore Romano* (Eng. ed. #27/995) (July 6, 1987) p.12.; re the same point for Pastors, (March 14, 1988) in *AAS* 80 (1988) 1323-5.
14. Cf. *Origins* v.18, #38 (March 2, 1988) pp. 629; 631-632.
15. For an authoritative instruction on the doctrinal authority of *Donum Vitae*, cf. *L'Osservatore Romano* (Dec. 24, 1988) pp.1 & 2.
16. Cf. *Origins* v.20, #25 (November 29, 1990) p. 405.
17. John Paul II, *Reflections on Humanae Vitae*, (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1984) 96pp.
18. CDF, *Donum Vitae* (February 22, 1987) in *AAS* 80 (1988) 70-102.
19. K.R. Overberg, (15 Years After *Humanae Vitae*) "Birth Control and the Conscientious Catholic" *Catholic Update* (Oct. 1983; UPD 103) 4pp.
20. Cf. e.g., J. Ford, G. Grisez, "Contraception and the Infallibility of the Ordinary Magisterium" in *Theological Studies* 39 (1978) 258-312; reprinted in *The Teaching of Humanae Vitae* (SF: Ignatius Press, 1988) pp. 117-219. Also cf. E.Lio, *Humanae Vitae E Infallibilita* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1986) 927pp.
21. Cf. J. Hogan (ed.), *Humanae Vitae and the Bishops* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972) 367pp.; Also, E. Hamel, 'Conferenciae episcopales et encyclica HV,' *Periodica* 58 (1969) 243-349.
22. J. Hogan, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
23. Cf. *Humanae Vitae* (July 25, 1968) n.17, footnote #21 citing P.Pius XII (1953) and (1956) for a correct understanding of totality.
24. T. O'Connell, *Principles for a Catholic Morality* (NY: Seabury, 1978) 2nd rev. ed (SF: Harper and Row, 1990).
25. Cf. W.B. Smith, 'The Meaning of Conscience' in W.E. May (ed.), *Principles of Catholic Moral Life* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981) pp. 361-382, esp. ftnts. 5, 29 and 37.
26. Cf. X. Ochoa, *Index Verborum cum documentis Concilii Vaticani Secundi* (Roma: Commentarium pro Religiosis, 1967) pp. 106-107.
27. The same concept and terminology of *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25 will be found and repeated in Canon 752 of the *Code of Canon Law* (1983); the CDF, 'Profession of Faith' (March 1, 1989) and the CDF, 'Instruction On the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian' (March 24, 1990).

Book Reviews

Keeping the Church Catholic with John Paul II

By Monsignor George A. Kelly
Doubleday New York 1990; 300 pages; \$21.95

As the 25th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council on December 8, 1965 approached, it was clear that the commemorative observances would be held with muted joy, in marked contrast to the extraordinary enthusiasm that greeted its opening on October 11, 1962. This is true because both the Council and its implementation, which are separable, will now be judged from sharply divergent perspectives that then seemed capable of relatively easy reconciliation.

Most observers agree that the Council was the most important event in the public life of the Church in this century, that its effect had been felt unevenly and that we are far from having seen its full impact. Still, some firm conclusions can be drawn. Does anyone really believe today that it has achieved its goal as expressed by John XXIII in his opening speech on October 11, 1962 or that the "Prophets of doom" he dismissed so confidently in that same speech did not have a strong, though surely not a compelling, case.

Its purpose was "to see that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine with special reference to the councils of Trent and Vatican I, was guarded zealously and taught more efficaciously." "In some cases that would require a careful reformulation to make it more comprehensible to contemporary man and a certain updating of Catholic doctrine and practice." That updating – his famous *aggiornamento* – was a restatement of the dictum of Pius XI that the Church must always be healthily modern.

The great turning point in the Council came on June 21, 1963 when Paul VI succeeded John XXIII. It had an immense influence on the Council and on the crucial early years of its implementation. The new Pope brought many gifts to his uniquely high and difficult office. Carefully trained, widely traveled, multilingual and known personally to a very large number of the universal episcopate, he had spent 30 years in close association with two notably demanding superiors, Pius XI and Pius XII, and then served eight and a half years as Archbishop of Milan, which is still the largest Archdiocese of Europe. Like Pius XII, he had

enjoyed this special favor of his predecessor and his election to the papacy was considered inevitable by many well informed observers. All portents indicated a calm sea and a prosperous voyage.

Unfortunately his gifts were accompanied by two personality traits, defects rather than faults. They were an exceptional reluctance to make up his mind or to break clearly and definitively with any person or group. He equated sanctions of any kind with violence, and clung instead to his favorite tool, dialogue.

At the same time he was anxious to make the Christian life as easy as possible and to reduce to the absolute minimum the demands that the Church makes on her children. He felt justified in doing this because of his firm conviction, expressed in his first encyclical "Ecclesium Suam" (1964), that "the modern Christian has attained a greater knowledge of his duties and a greater maturity and wisdom in choosing the means to fulfill them." Inspired by his misreading of the actual situation, which gave him false hopes of the ecumenical movement and the chances of peace between the Church and the World, Paul VI turned his attention to his predecessor's *aggiornamento* and began a series of sweeping reforms that effected every area of Catholic life.

All were intended to make life easier in some way and were made without any serious attempt to prepare the people. All involved substantial relaxation of discipline. The most conspicuous was the practical extinction of fast and abstinence in the Western Church, although the shell of Lent was preserved. How these changes, which would never have taken place without the prior consent of Rome, effected the Church in this country, which has always been so close to Rome, and how John Paul II has attempted to contain the damage is the thesis of Monsignor Kelly's lively and very informative book.

An earlier volume "Inside My Father's House," New York 1989 told of his early career in New York in the entourage of Cardinals Spellman and Cooke, but this one deals with the issues on a national scale.

It was a major misfortune for Paul VI that he had to deal with "the pill," and the sexual revolution. Many readers of this book will find the chapter on that topic the most interesting. The Pope's handling of it will stand as a classic example of how a major project can

be mishandled in form but not in content. The refusal to reaffirm the traditional doctrine expressed so well by Pius XI in *Casti Connubii*, the packing of the papal commission with people who were not moral theologians, the inexcusable delay in announcing a decision that in his own mind was never in doubt, and the absolute refusal to defend or enforce the encyclical to which he referred publically only once – on his 10th anniversary – just two weeks before his death – in an address to some pilgrims, makes sad reading.

In his first speech as Pope, John Paul II expressed his intention to restore Catholic discipline, which he soon found easier to say than to do. He also pledged himself to work with the Bishops and there he faced an unresolved dilemma. The average Bishop is a consensus man, which is often the reason he was chosen. How can he govern effectively if he is unable or unwilling to use authority? Is it reasonable to expect such a man to provide dynamic leadership at a time of crisis? The collapse of the Religious Communities on which they depend so heavily and on which the pope has so little visible effect raises serious questions about the future of our schools and institutions. What about the theologians who, for the first time in American history, are an open defiance of Rome and are so often protected by their superiors? What will be done about the major seminaries when they persist in admitting unsuitable candidates who should never be there and have no trouble finding bishops who are willing to ordain them?

In a country that suffers too much from religious illiteracy Monsignor Kelly recommends "back to the basics." The Church must be forthright in her primary task, evangelization, not the elimination of material poverty. In contemporary America if she does not teach the unchangeable moral law, especially when it is unknown or rejected, who will do so and why are so few who break it openly ever punished? Why are manifest incompetents kept in high places for so many years? The perennial temptation to worship the golden calf is always latent and often surfaces in different forms. In our time and place and certainly in some circles in Rome, it appears now as Image, closely linked with Relevance. Who will supply an antidote? These and other important questions will not be answered soon. We must hope that Monsignor Kelly is collecting notes for another volume. In the meantime, he has provided much food for thought and prayer.

Mmgr. Florence Cohalan

The Hour of Jesus: The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus According to John: Text and Spirit

By Ignace de la Potterie

New York: Alba House 1990 or Slough (England): St. Paul Publications, 1989, pp. 199, \$12.95 or £8.95.

The task of the Catholic theologian is to unveil the mysteries of our faith and to lead us, God's people, to praise their splendor and to experience their power. Often this is not realized. Devoid of the breath of the Holy Spirit, theology becomes a purely academic and sterile discipline done out of intellectual curiosity and solely for the sake of speculative knowledge. This type of theology produces little spiritual life and engenders meager love for God.

Fr. Ignace de la Potterie, a Belgian Jesuit who teaches scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, fully appreciates the true role of the Catholic theologian and practices it admirably. In his *The Hour of Jesus: The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus According to John: Text and Spirit* Fr. de la Potterie combines competent biblical scholarship with a presentation which deepens the reader's love of Jesus.

The words "Text" and "Spirit" in the subtitle (which are regrettably omitted from the American edition) are thus quite significant. Fr. de la Potterie wants not only to present the text in a scholarly manner, that is, what John says; but also to communicate the spirit, that is, the life and vitality contained within the text. Fr. de la Potterie understands, as did St. John, that truth, as it is from God, must always give life.

The Gospel of John itself was written from the above twofold perspective. Fr. de la Potterie holds that revelation is the principle theme in John. This revelation (the spirit) is mediated solely through the humanity (the text) of Jesus. "The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). What Jesus said and did as a man "become signs of a mystery, symbols of a higher reality. This is of the greatest importance as a principle of interpretation in reading the Fourth Gospel" (p. xii). Thus for John what Jesus historically said and did is the utmost importance, but their importance does not remain merely in the realm of history. The historical events of Jesus' life become signs of "an invisible reality which [they] reveal" (p. xii).

We can see now the significance of what scripture scholars call "Johannine irony." In the Gospel of John the appearance is often contrary to what is actually taking place. Jesus, for example, asked the Samaritan woman for a drink when actually she was the one who was truly thirsty and he was the one who could give her living water (see John 4). Or again, the Jews assumed they knew where Jesus was from and truly saw him for what he was, a blasphemer, when indeed they did not know where he was from – from heaven – and did not know who he was – God's Son (see John 9). For John the appearance is frequently antithetical to the spiritual significance, but if we truly perceive what is in fact happening historically, we will understand the deeper spiritual implication. The worldly reveals the heavenly. The historical manifests the eternal. This Johannine irony is of the utmost importance for Fr. de la Potterie as it demonstrates the importance of the factual and the historical as a true vehicle of divine revelation.

Fr. de la Potterie skillfully tells how John systematically portrays the truth of Jesus' glory in the midst of his passion. For example, Pilate had Jesus scourged. For John this is the central scene of Jesus' trial for in their mockery, the soldiers ironically declared the truth of who Jesus was. "And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in purple robe; they came up to him, saying 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and struck him with their hands" (John 19:2-3). Without knowing it these brutal men proclaimed the truth that would resound through out history and for all eternity. Jesus is the king over all, but not because he conquered in pride, arrogance and worldly power, but in a manner as we see him now – meek, lowly, and despised. Jesus' regalness is displayed in his humility, obedience and suffering. It is through these that he won his crown of glory.

Moreover, Pilate brought Jesus out and in contrast to the Synoptics he was still wearing his crown of thorns and dressed in his royal purple robe. Most likely in mockery Pilate declared: "Behold the man!" (John 19:5). Pilate wanted them to look at this pitiful specimen of a human being, without dignity or honor. Yet for John these words revealed profound truth. Firstly in and through this man, in and through this torn, bloody, racked flesh, the person of the eternal Son is revealed. Secondly, John seems to see in the emphasis "the man" an inference to the title Son of Man from the book of Daniel. Thus as the incarnate Son, because

of and not despite of his humiliation, he will receive from the Father an everlasting kingdom. Jesus is the Son of Man who is "given dominion and glory and kingdom, and all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him" (Daniel 7:14).

The Jews cried out for Jesus' crucifixion. After questioning Jesus' claim that he was the Son of God, Pilate once more brought him before the Jews. For Fr. de la Potterie how we translate the next verse, verse 13 of Chapter 19, is crucial to our understanding of this climactic scene before Pilate. This verse could be translated so that Pilate brought Jesus out and Pilate sat down on the seat of judgment. Or it could be rendered that Pilate sat Jesus down on the seat of judgment. Fr. de la Potterie argues that theologically this latter would seem the better translation (see pp. 82-86). Why emphasize that Pilate sat down? However, if it is Jesus who sat down on the judgment seat then Pilate's words take on deeper meaning. "Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He (Pilate) said to the Jews, 'Behold your King!' They cried out, 'Away with him, away with him, crucify him!'" (John 9:14).

Here we have a brutalized and condemned man sitting upon Pilate's imperial seat where judgments are made on behalf of the Roman Empire. Pilate, probably again in mockery to taunt the Jews, declared Jesus to be their King. Their response is one of utter rejection and the demand of crucifixion. Yet in this historical event, played out by real men and women, a divine truth is revealed that will come to completion on the cross. Jesus the most abject of men is truly the judge of the world. And the world will be condemned precisely because, like the riotous Jews, it has rejected Jesus. For John the one judged is truly the judge and those condemning are truly the condemned. Jesus, the beaten man, sits upon his throne of glory. As Fr. de la Potterie states; "He who on the historical level is the one condemned is on the theological level the judge; and those who pass sentence are really the condemned: the situation is completely reversed" (p. 85).

Fr. de la Potterie next proceeds to discuss the five distinct scenes of Golgotha: The inscription on the cross, the seamless robe, the spiritual motherhood of Mary, the thirst and death of Jesus and the blood and water. We cannot discuss each of the scenes here, but one point deserves mention. Fr. de la Potterie shows that the church, symbolized in Mary and John, is composed of those faithful people who stand beneath

the cross. It is the church who recognizes the crucified one as the King. Moreover, it is upon the Church that the blood of cleansing falls and that the water of new life is poured. It is upon the Church that Jesus "gave forth the spirit" (John 19:30). "The expression is ambiguous; it can mean both: "He gave forth the spirit" (he died) and "he gave forth the Spirit" (the Holy Spirit). The one implies the other. He gave forth the spirit and at the same moment he gave forth the Holy Spirit" (p. 121).

The little we have been able to present here will hopefully confirm that Fr. de la Potteries' book is one of the best on the Gospel of John. Not only will the reader obtain a better understanding of the Fourth Gospel, but more importantly he or she will, in union with church, glory in Jesus the crucified King. It is primarily for this reason that Fr. de la Potterie wrote this book.

"The Lord and I": Vignettes from the Life of a Parish Priest

By Monsignor Vincent Fecher
New York: Alba House, 1990.

It would be difficult to say a harsh word about Monsignor Fecher's book. Though we have never met, I think he's the kind of priest I would like to have as my associate or as my pastor.

Monsignor Fecher is concerned that our Catholic people are no longer learning that there is something special about being an ordained priest. All they hear about are problems about priests' identity and low morale and optional celibacy. In this book, one hears the other side about what it means to be a priest and co-worker of the Lord ("The Lord and I") in the last quarter of the twentieth century. This "other side" is developed through a collection of real-life stories with a common theme: "being a priest is a great life, and an interesting one—sometimes exciting, sometimes thrilling to the Master's proximity, and, always, a great deal of fun."

Monsignor Fecher's chapter on celibacy for priests is beautifully done. He points out that the basis for the choice is the Lord's invitation to "Follow me," even when that involves sacrifice and self-denial and the carrying of the cross. Some argue against clerical celibacy by extolling the beauty and grandeur of human love. This "Country Pastor" doesn't contradict them.

In fact, he would not be happy about a candidate for the priesthood who did not appreciate feminine beauty and did not feel attracted to it. One doesn't opt for celibacy because he is afraid of women, or put off by them! Rather, it is because he sees the work of a parish priest as so absorbing that he would have no time for a wife and for raising children. In addition, Monsignor Fecher has discovered that, for a priest, his parish becomes his family. Where a priest works in the same community for many years, and watches youngsters grow up, and shares experiences of joy and tragedy with parish families, he often becomes closer to them than to his own family.

Monsignor Fecher loves being a priest. If you want to share some of his joy, read this book by a priest who "wouldn't trade jobs with anyone else in the whole wide world."

Msgr. George P. Graham

Vocation for Mission: The Challenge of Religious Life Today

By Marcello Azevedo
S.J., New York: Paulist Press, 1988, pp. 188, \$10.95

Religious Life: Rebirth Through Conversion

ed. Gerald A. Arbuckle, S.M. and David L. Fleming,
S.J., New York: Alba House, 1990, pp. 142, \$9.95.

Azevedo's book is a revised and enlarged edition of his original 1977 work. It has almost become a classic and has been translated into numerous languages. Azevedo, with doctorates in philosophy, cultural anthropology, and theology, has written a rather complete account of the contemporary understanding and challenge of religious life. He shows his extensive knowledge of religious life on many different cultural levels. The strength of Azevedo's book is its clarity and its thoroughness. It is so intellectually serious that at times it seems to lack life and vitality. Certainly, to his credit, Azevedo does not wish to toss around religious clichés. Obviously too his book was written in a climate where religious often seem unsure of their identity and calling.

Religious Life: Rebirth Through Conversion arose out of two conference/workshops held in 1987 and 1988. Religious life is examined by various authors from different areas: history, theology, anthropology, spirituality and psychology. The editors have also attempted

to continue the workshop flavor of the talks by adding discussion questions and various tasks that individuals and groups can perform. Thus it is an "interdisciplinary workbook" as well.

While solid, clear and positive, the essays break no new ground. They bear all the marks of a thousand workshops on religious life given across the USA in the past 25 years.

This raises a question: Who today reads books on religious life? It is hard to imagine Mother Theresa's sisters reading these books, or a hundred like them, despite their merits. Nor can one envision the members of any other vibrant order or congregation reading them. Religious who know what they are about and where they are going have other more important things to read – like the Bible, the Fathers of the Church, and writings of the Saints. There may be a lesson here to be learned.

Thomas Weinandy, O.F.M. Cap.

What Are They Saying About Social Sin?

By Mark O'Keefe, O.S.B.

(Paulist Press, 188 pp., \$5.95).

There is a saying in business circles that every business – even a giant corporation – "is but the shadow of a man." So every such structure's identity is really the identity of an individual, and institutional corruption or greed or oppression is chargeable to individual men.

Contrariwise, this book cites many established theological voices as insisting that there is a "Social Sin" – a sin of structures independent of personal sin.

Not so, says the average man in the pew. Where there is such a flaw in an institution, he probably would say that the remedy is find the men, or women, responsible for it and reform them. Or, wherever possible, replace them. To do this we have the weapons of the boycott, the ballot box, the picket line, and pressure on the media.

This is not to say that this is not a good book of its kind. The author has gathered – obviously with diligent research – a great many theologians, sociologists, and philosophers, and he cites their belief in the existence of "Social Sin," and sometimes their remedies for it. His list includes Henriot, Gutierrez, Haering, Fuchs, Dyer, Schussler Fiorenza, Baum, Dyer, Kerans, Loneragan, Curran, Ruether, Schindler, Schoonenberg, Segundo, and many more. For balance, he also quotes

from Michael Novak and gives some lines from John Paul II, though he misses a most relevant one from *Reconciliation and Penance*.

But, given the fact that it is a collection of scholarly opinions, in general, making a case for the need to concentrate on eradicating "Social Sin" rather than stressing our individual sins, what is the hazard in it? Why, that the main THRUST of it is to turn us away from personal repentance to reforming all society. Thus the guilt is shifted from the person to the community – from US to a vague but oppressive THEM. So my own private greeds, or lusts, or selfishness need not make me feel guilty nor the need to repent as long as I am battling such social ills as poverty, homelessness, the environment, and world hunger.

O'Keefe also raised this reviewer's eyebrows with this statement: "Because of the obscurity of the historical roots of social sin, perhaps the roots of such problems are best grasped in terms of myth – much as the Bible presents the origin of sin and its social manifestation in mythic stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Lamech, the Flood."

I would like to finish with this quote: "Sin, in the proper sense, is always a personal act . . . This truth cannot be disregarded in order to place the blame for individual sins on external factors such as structures . . . Above all, this would deny the person's dignity and freedom which are manifested – even though in a negative and disastrous way – also in the responsibility for sin committed." Who said this? John Paul II in *Reconciliation and Penance*.

The man (or woman) in the pew is indeed in good company.

John J. Farrell

A Priest in Public Service: Francis J. Haas and the New Deal

By Thomas E. Blantz, C.S.C.

(University of Notre Dame Press, 380 pp.)

Msgr. John A. Ryan, one of the Church's and this century's best known champions of social justice, was known as "the Right Reverend New Dealer," a name bestowed on him in 1963 by his biographer, Francis Broderick. But Ryan's student and disciple, the late Bishop Haas of Grand Rapids, probably deserved that name more because he, better than his mentor, was highly involved with the politics and architects of the

New Deal. Prior to his elevation, Msgr. Haas served not only as a mediator for the National Labor Board under FDR (1933), but became the President's first chairman of the Fair Employment Practices Committee (1943), a distant forerunner of today's Civil Rights Commission. Indeed, it was commonly inferred (wrongly) that he was made a bishop in that latter year precisely to get him far removed from Washington politics.

Taking advantage of originally researched archival and published material in governmental and Church libraries, Father Blantz weaves an interesting story from Haas' modest beginnings in Racine, Wisconsin, of German-Irish parentage (1889), to his elder statesman years as advisor to Presidents and Cardinals on industrial and labor matters. With Ryan, he became the best interpreter of the meaning of both *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. He was not overjoyed to have his Washington apostolate interrupted by a recall to the Rectorship of the Milwaukee seminary (1935-37), but he did manage to become involved in Wisconsin's strikes. Appointment in 1937 as Dean of the School of Social Science of the Catholic University of America

brought him home. He did not teach much there, but his Sunday morning seminar was popular. At one of them he demonstrated a humorous side not generally noticeable; opining that closed shop unionists and priests had much in common, even though the latter were generally opposed to the closed shop. The two groups endured a long apprenticeship and paid a high initiation fee for permanent employment (the priest's price being celibacy), but once on the job neither had to work very hard. They had tenure.

Bishop Haas, like all of the Church's leading episcopal social actionists (Von Ketteler, Manning, Lucey) was a believing Catholic and he enforced Catholic norms in his diocese until his untimely death in 1953. Some friends thought he might not have had an easy time had he lived to see the effects of Vatican II, especially on priests and religious. Still, as Father Blantz makes clear, ardent New Dealer he might have been, but he was also "unsympathetic to changes in accepted Church doctrine." Bishop Haas would have fitted easily into the pontificate of John Paul II. Father Blantz has a good book here.

Items of Interest

- ✧ There is a new National Association of Scholars (NAS); an organization of professors, graduate students, and college administrators committed to rational discourse as the foundation of academic life in a free and democratic society. The NAS works to enrich the substance and strengthen the integrity of scholarship and teaching. Princeton, N.J. 08542, (609) 683-7878.

Its magazine *Academic Questions*, published quarterly, describes the editorial purpose as follows:

"American higher education has been profoundly compromised in the past two decades. Standards have been eroded, the curriculum has been debased, and research has been trivialized or distorted by ideology. Yet the established voices of the academy often speak in tones that are self-congratulatory rather than self-critical."

- ✧ Neil Parent, representative for the USCC's Education Department on matters catechetical from 1978 to 1990, has been appointed executive director of the National Conference of Diocesan Directors of

Religious Education. NCCD is called "the primary national organization of diocesan directors of religious education and their staffs for the purpose of promoting the ministry of catechesis in the United States." About 170 of the Catholic dioceses (all but eighteen) are members of the NCCD; which early on published a booklet entitled *The Relationship Between Evangelization and Catechesis*, whose introduction (p. 1) maintained that after Vatican II "we found out that the Catholic Church is not the sole possessor of truth."

- ✧ One little-known book center, where out-of-print editions as well as new titles, can be found is Lady of Victory Mission, R.R. 2, Box 25, Brookings, South Dakota 57006-9307, (605) 693-3983. No phone orders.
- ✧ The house in Rome called "Casa Balthasar," established with the backing of John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger, will prepare young men for the priesthood and religious life. Donations to this cause will be appreciated. Guadalupe Associates is the sponsor. Tax-free gifts may be mailed to 2515 McAllister Street, San Francisco, California 94118.

Books In Brief

EDITOR'S NOTE: Because of the large number of volumes brought to the attention of the Fellowship some, regretfully, can receive only a short notice.

Ignatius Press

Dorothy Sayers, *The Man Born to be King*, (338 pp., \$14.95).

The author of the popular Peter Wimsey mysteries, writing as a Christian theologian, provides a dramatic account of Christ's Life, faithful to the Gospel story.

Thomas Howard, C.S. Lewis: *Man of Letters*, (259 pp., \$11.95).

Considered one of the best books on C.S. Lewis.

Alvard De Silva (Ed), *Brave New Family*, (278 pp., \$11.95).

G.K. Chesterton on Men and Woman on Children and Sex, on Divorce and Family life. Beautifully edited with G.K., as expected, the provocative Catholic apologist.

Benedict J. Groeschel, D.F.R., *The Reform of Renewal*, (232 pp., \$11.95).

Any book on authentic Catholic renewal, endorsed by Mother Angelica, makes for necessary reading.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, (280 pp., \$14.95).

If you want the answer to the question, "What ever happened to Catholic apologetics?" here is your answer: Ratzinger meditating on the twelve articles of the Apostles Creed.

Bryce J. Christenson, *Utopia Against the Family*, (173 pp., \$11.95).

Christensen identifies the underlying causes of our national retreat from family life, exposing simultaneously the lies neath much of the "pro-family" rhetoric.

Isaac M. Kikawada and Artur Quinn, *Before Abraham Was*, (150 pp., \$11.95).

Two professors at the Univeristy of California reject modern biblical theories to argue that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are not a patchwork of different writers but one author's skillful accomplishment.

The Paulist Press

Mary E. Hines, *The Transformation of Dogma: An Introduction to Karl Rahner on Dogma*.

This professor at the Washington Theological Union explores here the writings of Karl Rahner about the right of dissent from Church dogma, a not impossible task considering some of the things he said later in life. The WTU is a coalition of seminaries for religious orders. In 1989 the Roman Congregation that deals with Religious had reason in part to remind WTU to develop "a more explicit recovery of the teaching of the magisterium" and "more emphasis on the priesthood in its pastoral formation." Dr. Hines was the representative who collated the returns for CTSA's recent criticism of the Holy See's governance of the Chruch.

Vernon Gregson (Ed), *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, (309 pp., \$12.95).

This is a well written summary of Lonergan's attempts to make classical theology relevant to modern thinkers. It will be appreciated by his disciples and provide fodder for his critics.

Jean-Marc Laporte, S.J., *Patience and Power: Grace for the World*, (297 pp., \$14.95).

This book is an attempt to make the Catholic notion of "grace" meaningful to the first world of the West as Segundo and Boff have retranslated its sense for the Third World of the South.

Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P., *Fundamentalism: A Catholic Perspective*, (103 pp., \$5.95).

The "Fundamentalism" issue continues to plague the Catholic academe, even a professor of theology from Notre Dame. This little book speaks favorably of change – and against a static Catholicism without explaining what happened to Church-going Catholics once theologians set themselves up as a second magisterium. Was it fundamentalism or something else?

Books In Brief – Individual Publishers

Matthew Habinger, O.S.B., *Papal Teaching on Private Property 1891-1981*, (University Press of America, 401 pp., no price)

A well-written and finely researched study of six popes and what each had to say on economics and the importance of the family.

Igino Giordani, *The Family: A Community of Love*, (New City Press, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11211, 96pp. \$6.95).

This book was a response to the reevaluation of the family made during Vatican II.

Anselm W. Romb, *Walk with the Lord*, (St. Paul Books, 182 pp., \$6.95).

These reflections on Advent and Christmas are

really liturgical meditations which laity, as well as clergy, will find enriching exercises.

Charles E. Rice, *No Exception: A Pro-Life Imperative*, (Tyholland Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, 130 pp., \$8.00)

Notre Dame's law professor traces legalized abortion and euthanasia to their origins, with practical recommendations for a turn-around.

Michael Gilchrist, *Catholicism into the '90's: What Can Be Done?* (Magenta Press, Scoresby, Victoria 3179, Australia, 182 pp., \$12.00 American).

A review of contemporary Catholic trouble – spots from *Down Under* by a well-known author friend of Bill Daly.

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Dissolving the Norms

"Any society with clear and strong moral standards breeds hypocrites. Unwilling or unable to live up to the socially approved norms, they pretend to do so for fear of public opprobrium. Hypocrisy is the tribute vice pays to virtue, but the hypocrites understandably resent having to pay it.

"They have two avenues of escape from their uncomfortable situation. One is to change their lives and begin to practice what society preaches. The other and easier course is to undermine society's standards. In a society such as ours, which is losing confidence in its right to make moral judgments, the easy way out has become a broad highway crowded with people seeking relief from all moral rules that are not of their own choosing."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above wisdom is only one sample drawn from Jesuit Francis Canavan's new sapiential book *Pins in the Liberal Balloon* published by Catholic Eye, where his sixty essays first appeared.)