

# Gaudium de Veritatis Splendore

Ralph McInerny

**O**ver a quarter of a century of confusion about Catholic moral teaching is swept away by Pope John Paul II's new encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*.

Can one claim to be a Catholic while rejecting the moral Magisterium of the Church? No.

Is human freedom to be measured by objective truth and God's will? Yes.

Can dissenting theologians or institutions retain the adjective Catholic? No.

Against a comprehensive vision of human destiny, culled from Scripture and Christian Tradition, the Holy Father discusses the moral life and the acts which make it up. The young man's question to Jesus, "What must I do to have eternal life?" (Mt. 19:16) provides the theme for a book length encyclical.

Since Vatican II, a series of specific encyclicals and instructions have been issued bearing on contraception, homosexuality, abortion, economic and social sins, the role within the Church of the theologian. *Veritatis Splendor* is the context within which all these documents can be seen as prompted by concern for the human person's eternal destiny.

The Holy Father instructs his fellow bishops to pass on whole and entire to the faithful the teaching of the Church and to insure that they are not confused by false teachers.

In conjunction with the Catechism of the Catholic Church—yet to appear in English—*Veritatis Splendor* provides the faithful with a new clarity about what it means to be a Catholic.

In this issue we have a resume of the encyclical, various statements about it, as well as sundry other items of interest. ☩

# Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 1

DECEMBER 1993

## CONTENTS

### EDITORIAL:

Gaudium de Veritatis Splendore ..... 1

### ARTICLES:

Comments on *Veritatis Splendor* ..... 2

### SPECIAL FEATURE:

The Choices that Kill More than Babies 16

Political Apostasy ..... 19

"BOTH A SERVANT AND FREE" ..... 20

### THE CATECHISM

The Catechism in English ..... 24

Managing the Mediation ..... 34

### DOCUMENTS

On Being a Catholic University ..... 42

FCS NEWS ..... 48

BOOK REVIEWS ..... 50

BOOKS RECEIVED ..... 54

# Comments on *Veritatis Splendor*

## Draft of Board of Directors of FCS Statement on the CCC

We welcome the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, for the following reasons:

1. It gives the Catholic people a solid, clear and reliable statement of the real teaching of the Catholic Church on faith, morals and Christian life today. As the Pope has said, it is intended for the whole Church. Let no one dare to censor it or keep it out of the hands of ordinary Catholics who have waited so long for its publication, here in the United States.
2. Its richness, its depth, its persuasiveness and its beauty will refresh and strengthen the faithful, correct and guide those who are drifting or have drifted from authentic Catholic teaching either in their own personal lives or in the exercise of their function as teachers on all levels within the Church.
3. We also welcome it as a marvelous source of sure guidance to all sincere seekers after truth. We encourage all who want to know what the Catholic Church teaches to obtain a copy for their personal study.
4. Therefore we are bound in conscience to warn Catholics of the United States against those few who would either attempt to keep this book from your hands or who would attempt to distort, misinterpret or water down the content of this official and lasting proclamation of the Catholic Faith.
5. We respectfully remind Catholic parents in our country that they have the right to expect that all their children's religious education texts, courses and other resources are strictly presented, either in conformity with or, if necessary, to be revised in the light of this authoritative and binding re-statement of our living Faith.

6. We regret that we must sound these warnings because of the various demonstrable attempts, over the recent years, to pre-empt the effectiveness and authentic interpretation of the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, providentially presented to us by all the Bishops of the Church in union with our beloved Holy Father, Pope John Paul II.

To you, our fathers in Christ, we say,  
"Thank You"!

Respectfully submitted to the FCS Board:

*Monsignors Peter J. Elliot  
and Michael J. Wrenn*  
September 26, 1993

## A Resume of the Encyclical Letter, *Splendor Veritatis*

### INTRODUCTION (nn. 1-5)

*Purpose of This Encyclical.*

[Nn. 4-5: "the Purpose of the Present Encyclical"]

The purpose of this encyclical is to defend basic Christian teachings: to recall very central Gospel teachings on the ways in which we are to "live and please God" (Thes. 4.1). Its "precise aim" is to defend certain fundamental moral truths that are now under attack within the Christian community itself, "even in Seminaries and in Faculties of Theology, with regard to questions of the greatest importance for the Church and for the life of faith" (n. 4).

No longer do we have "limited and occasional dissent", but overall and systematic calling into question of what faith has constantly taught about how we are to live in the light of Christ.

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* we find a solid exposition of the entire Catholic moral vision. But here we are defending that which is most basic of all: *the very fundamentals, the more basic truths*, on which all Christian moral life depends.

Today we find often that: The Church's constant teaching on natural law and the universality and permanent validity of its precepts is rejected. Most firm moral teachings of the Church are cast aside. The presence of Christ's authority in the teaching of the faith is denied: the Church, the Sacrament of his presence, in which he yet proclaims his Gospel, is said to be able to do no more than "exhort" and to "propose values", which have no real authority, so that each individual has the authority to reject the saving teaching of the Gospel, that was given to heal our lives.

But Christian faith has more to say of how we live in Christ than that. Christianity involves a way of living in love, in the light of Christ's example and teaching: and this basic moral way is fundamentally threatened. *This encyclical deals with fundamental and essential matters.* Hence it does two things: (a) it sets forth the most basic principles of Catholic moral teaching, which is based on Sacred Scripture and the living Apostolic tradition; (b) it casts light, drawn from the faith, on the presuppositions and the consequences of the dissent Catholic moral teaching has met today.

*Introduction: Christ and our lives.*  
[Nn. 1-4: "Jesus the True Light that Enlightens Everyone"]

**G**od calls us to be "children of light", and to become holy by "obedience to the truth." It is true that this obedience is not always easy: we live in a fallen and broken world, in which our "capacity to know truth" is darkened and our "will to submit to it" is weakened."

Yet our lot is not desperate. God plants in our very being a yearning for what is really true and good, and a longing to grasp the meaning of life.

---

**The Church knows  
she is teaching  
the way of life,  
the path to salvation,  
when she teaches  
the moral life  
that she has learned  
from Christ  
and his Holy Spirit.**

---

Far more: the answer to our deepest questions, our moral and religious ones in particular, is given by Jesus Christ himself.

The Church, "attentive to the new challenges of history and to mankind's effort to discover the meaning of life, offers to everyone the answer that comes from the truth about Jesus Christ and his Gospel" (n.2).

The Church's Pastors are close to the faithful in their efforts to live in Christ's ways. They "guide and accompany them by their authoritative teaching." "Speaking with love and mercy, the Church places herself at the service of every individual and of the whole world." (n. 3)

The Church knows she is teaching the way of life, the path to salvation, when she teaches the moral life that she has learned from Christ and his Holy Spirit.

**CHAPTER ONE: "TEACHER, WHAT GOOD MUST I DO...?" (nn. 6-27)**

**T**he teaching of this chapter is presented in an exposition of the conversation between Jesus and the rich young man in Matt. 19.16-21. The Holy Father points out: in the rich young man, we can recognize *every person* who comes to Christ and questions him about morality, and the meaning of life.

The Church assists us here, for the Church "wishes to serve this single end: that each person may be able to find Christ, in order that Christ may walk with each person the path of life." (Red. Hom., n.13).

The question of the young man, and of our hearts, reveals the connection perceived between the moral good and eternal life, the fulfillment of our own destiny.

"*People today need to turn to Christ once again in order to receive from him the answer to their questions about what is good and what is evil*" (n.8). If we wish

to understand our own hearts and hopes, we must, with all our unrest, uncertainty, and weakness draw near to Christ.

The young man came to Christ, because Christ is good, and the young man knows it. Christ points out to him the appropriateness of his question. One must draw near to God, who is entirely with us in Christ, to ask with utter confidence about what is really good. The moral question is a religious question.

What man is and what he must do is made most clear when God reveals himself. Those to whom God revealed himself in the Old Law knew his commandments were good, and that they should walk in them to please God. Far brighter is the light of Christ. There are other ways of approaching what is good; but they are flawed and imperfect. Christ heals the imperfections of our learning of what is truly good.

*If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.* God has answered the question of what is good (1) by planting in our hearts a hunger for what is good, a “law inscribed in his heart” (Rom. 2.15), a natural law. (2) He has taught us in the history of Israel, in the “ten words” of the commandments: in the gift of the decalogue. (3) He has taught us most of all in Christ, who fulfills and makes most accessible saving moral truth.

*Which ones?* Christ draws attention to the centrality of the Decalogue. He speaks of some of the commands on the “second tablet”, precepts that spell out the first requirements of the love of neighbor, and reveal the *singular dignity of the human person*. The commandments are negative in form, but they express with great force the ever urgent need to protect human life, the family, truthfulness, and people’s good name.

The commandments spell out the basic condition for love of neighbor. In this they are the first and necessary step toward freedom: for one’s heart must be free from crimes, from murder, adultery, theft, fraud, to begin to be free. The Christian life goes far beyond that: to the beatitudes, to the “something more” the heart longs for, to the perfection in love toward which every

person is called. But there can be no advancing toward perfection without keeping the commandments, in the sense in which faith has grasped these and proposed them to us.

Obviously Jesus is not saying that the “second tablet,” the precepts that make concrete basic presuppositions of loving the neighbor (“first, do no harm!”) is more important than loving God. But loving God and loving the neighbor are for us inseparable: to love God is not possible without keeping the commandments that guard the dignity of persons, and spell out basic duties toward them.

Jesus brings the commandments to fulfillment in his own teaching: they are, fully grasped, “a path involving a moral and spiritual journey towards perfection, at the heart of which is love.”

*If you want to be perfect.* The young man, though he can say that he has kept the commandments since his youth, knows that he is far from the goal of fulfillment he longs for. Before the person of Jesus, he knows the poverty of his life.

Jesus calls him toward that perfection whose foundations can be laid only by the reverence toward persons found in keeping the commandments. Commandments are open to the beatitudes, and lead toward them; beatitudes are not exactly the same thing, but there is no separation or opposition between commandments and beatitudes.

One who has kept all the commandments is ready to be called to the blessed fulfillment of the beatitudes: but the commandments are the first and indispensable condition for having eternal life.

Christ in this dialogue reveals also the *fundamental relationship between freedom and divine law*. Freedom and God’s law are not in opposition. We are called to freedom. But freedom is not liberation from those precepts that unfold the requirements of generous love. To be free from being what one must be to be a person of dignity and goodness of heart is not to be humanly free. We are pressed from within by the attraction of goodness to live as the Lord invites us; and we are pressed with within by our sinful inclinations toward selfishness and cruelty. St. Augustine notes:

"I dare to say that to the extent to which we serve God we are free, while to the extent that we follow the law of sin, we are still slaves." (n. 17)

Those who live by the flesh find obedience to God's law a burden. But he calls all to the perfection of love that makes such obedience light and easy.

*Come, follow me.* Every believer is called to follow Christ. Faith in *who Christ is* is basic here: we are to hold fast to the person of Jesus, and this is the root of the wisdom of accepting his teaching and accepting his commandments.

He wants us to follow him along the path of love: for love is the root of all the commandments. We are to seek love "as he loves us." The dynamism of morality is to be one of personal love.

*With God all things are possible.* There is sadness at the end of the dialogue with the rich young man: he went away sorrowful, for the charms of riches overwhelmed him. The apostles felt the pain of this: and of the difficulty of what Christ asked. For he does ask for difficult, if excellent and blessed, things. In the same chapter of Matthew, Jesus rejects any right to divorce, and the apostles cannot see how faithfulness to Christ's excellent precepts is possible for the frailty we experience.

Christ does not deny that what he teaches is *too difficult for our own strength*. We are capable of the moral life and the love he calls us to only by virtue of a gift received. It is wrong to say that we should find ways to make easier, and less demanding, the ways of Christ: for *he himself provides the way to live in tranquility the excellent precepts he teaches.* They are too heavy for us, but he does not abandon us. "The law was given that grace might be sought; and grace was given that the law might be fulfilled." (St. Augustine)

Central teachings about morality, grace, and salvation are caught in the moral disputes of our time: and faith has sure answers to these questions.

The importance of living in love, and being faithful to what love requires (which is unfolded in the saving precepts Christ teaches us) is constantly stressed in the New Testament. Still our moral life is a life lived by the power of God's grace, and the love he pours into our hearts, not by grim human resolve. St. Thomas goes so far as to point out that the New Law is not centrally rules, but the grace of the Holy Spirit, given through faith in Christ. And to those who seek to follow Christ faithfully, his love makes light and easy what otherwise would have been bitter and unsupportable (ST I-II, 106)

*Lo, I am with you always...* Christ is with people of all times, in his Church, in the teaching of those in whom he himself teaches, and with whom he is present until the end of the age (Mt 28,20). The Christian life has always been also a "Way," a path of living, a living in love that never does those sorts of deeds that are always hostile to what love requires; and seeks to live always in the spirit of Christ.

The New Testament is filled with the moral teaching the Church yet proclaims: it gives precise directives, and insists on avoiding definite kinds of behavior that love cannot approve. The apostles were vigilant over the right conduct of Christians. Those who "disregard the moral obligations to which they are called by the Gospel" are warned as would be those who distort the truths of faith (I Cor 5.9-13)

The Church, the Sacrament of Christ's presence to his people, must preserve the faith and the moral teaching Christ entrusted to the Apostles (Mt 28.19-20). This is evident from the constant and living Tradition whereby, as Vatican II

teaches, the Church hands on to every generation "all that she is and all that she believes." (DV 8) Who Christ is, and what the Church is, is central to Catholic faith. The Church is "the pillar and bulwark of the truth" because Christ never abandons her. It is fidelity to Jesus Christ which

---

**We are capable  
of the moral life  
and the love  
he calls us to only by  
virtue of a gift received.**

---

calls Catholics today to heed the moral vision of our salvation taught in his Church.

[Ronald Lawler, O.F.M.Cap.]

## CHAPTER TWO

*“Do Not Be Conformed to This World”* (Rom. 12:2)  
The Church and the Discernment of Certain Tendencies in Present-Day Moral Theology

This chapter, the longest of the encyclical, comprising some 84 of its 179 pages, (nn. 28-84) is also the most theoretical. After an introductory section (nn. 28-34), it has four major subdivisions: (1) Freedom and Law (nn. 35-53); (2) Conscience and Truth (nn. 54-64); (3) Fundamental Choice and Specific Kinds of Behavior (nn. 65-70); (4) The Moral Act (nn. 71-83).

### Introductory (nn. 28-34)

The essential biblical elements of moral action have emerged from the meditation on Jesus and the rich young man: (a) subordination of man and his activity to God; (b) the relationship between the moral good of human acts and eternal life; (c) Christian discipleship; and (d) the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Rooted in Scripture, the moral doctrine of the Church undergoes doctrinal development just as it does in the realm of the truths of faith.

Vatican II called for a renewal of moral theology that would link theoretical development to Scripture, communicate better, and appropriate culture. Unfortunately “certain interpretations of Christian morality which are not consistent with sound teaching” have arisen. These will be examined.

Vatican II emphasized the

dignity of man and his freedom. Modern thought, however, has sometimes exalted freedom to such an extent that it becomes an absolute, which would then become the source of values. Atheistic thought, which has lost the sense of the transcendent, takes this direction. Individual conscience is taken to be supreme. There has arisen, accordingly, a crisis of truth, an individualistic ethic which at its extreme is a denial of human nature.

Paradoxically, the same modern culture that exalts freedom, calls it into question. This is seen in the influence of the “behavioral sciences.”

Morality implies freedom, but what sort of freedom? Genuine freedom. “Conscience has rights because it has duties.” (Newman) Freedom cannot be divorced from the truth.

### 1. Freedom and Law (nn. 35-53)

The longest part of a long chapter. The power to decide what is good and what is evil belongs to God, not to man. Is this a restriction on human freedom? Does moral autonomy require that man have total sovereignty over good and evil? This false assumption has influenced even Catholic moral theology. But human reason is a measured measure.

Some, contrary to Catholic doctrine, oppose the ethical order of purely human origin and relevant only to this world, to the order of salvation. This would entail that Revelation has no moral content.

Man has dominion over the world as well as autonomy correctly understood. The things over which he has dominion have their own laws and values which he must respect. The autonomy of reason cannot mean that reason itself creates values and moral norms. Human practical reason participates in the divine wisdom. Man’s true autonomy means the acceptance of the moral law. The Pope recalls the classic Thomistic

**Modern thought,  
however, has some-  
times exalted freedom  
to such an extent  
that it becomes  
an absolute, which  
would then become  
the source of values.**

expression of natural law as the participation of human reason in eternal law.

Some aberrations. There is a tendency to take statistical studies of human behavior as normative.

Some see freedom as in opposition to material and biological nature, which must be altered and changed by freedom. Nature is regarded as mere raw material for man without a teleology of its own, or the natural is opposed to the freely constructed.

*Hence objections of naturalism and physicalism against the natural law.* This is even charged against the Magisterium, particularly in sexual ethics, by some moral theologians. They object that it is a naturalistic understanding of the sexual act which lies behind the condemnation of contraception, direct sterilization, homosexuality, etc. These condemnations, it is objected, fail to take into account man's rational and free being and the cultural conditioning of all moral norms. (n. 47)

What is the place of the body in questions of natural law? A freedom which claims to be absolute sees the body as extrinsic to the person, a datum, its inclinations referring to merely "physical" goods — this is the root of the charge of biologism or physicalism. Here is the corrective: "The person, including the body, is completely entrusted to himself, and it is in the unity of body and soul that the person is the subject of his own moral acts." (n. 48) "A doctrine which dissociates the moral act from the bodily dimensions of its exercise is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and Tradition." (n. 49) The person is a unity of body and soul.

A false understanding of freedom sees a conflict between freedom and universal and immutable moral laws. Because it is based on human nature, the natural law is universal, common to all. A logical point: this universality does not ignore the individuality of human beings (the universal is what is common to many singulars).

Positive and negative precepts. Positive precepts are universally binding and unchanging. They "are known by practical reason and are ap-

plied to particular acts through the judgment of conscience. The acting subject personally assimilates the truth contained in the law. The negative precepts of natural law are universally valid. "They oblige each and every individual, always and in every circumstance. It is a matter of prohibitions which forbid a given action *semper et pro semper*, without exception, because the choice of this kind of behavior is in no case compatible with the goodness of the will of the acting person, with his vocation to life with God and to communion with his neighbor." (n. 52) It is nonsense to invoke historicity to call into question the immutability of natural law. (n. 53)

## 2. Conscience and Truth (nn. 54-64)

**I**t is in his conscience that a man encounters the voice of God. *Multi dicunt: Quis ostendit nobis bona?* What's the answer? *Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine.* (Ps 4:6)

Opposed to this sane notion of a measured measure is a creative conception of conscience, which prefers to speak of decisions rather than judgments, invoking the false autonomy mentioned earlier. Hence the suggestion of a double status of moral truth. An abstract status and a concrete existential status: the latter permits exceptions to the general rule and enables one in good conscience to do that which is called intrinsically evil by moral law. This is often called a "pastoral" solution. This error poses a challenge "to the very identity of the moral conscience in relation to human freedom and God's law." (n. 56)

Man's dialogue with himself in conscience is also a dialogue with God, the author of the law. Conscience commands things on God's authority, not its own. (St. Bonaventure) The judgment of conscience is about whether or not human acts are in conformity with the law of God written on the heart. When we act wrongly we are condemned by our own conscience which "is the proximate norm of personal morality." The divine law is "the universal and objective norm of morality." The judgment of conscience does not establish the law,

but applies it. It is in the practical judgment of conscience that the link between freedom and truth is made manifest. The maturity of this judgment does not consist in liberation from objective truth. (n. 61)

Conscience can be erroneous; it is not an infallible judge. It must be correctly formed in the light of objective truth. It is thanks to virtue that there is a connaturality between man and the true good. The Church and Her Magisterium are of great help in the formation of conscience. "The Catholic Church is by the will of Christ the teacher of truth." Freedom of conscience is never freedom from the truth, but in the truth. (n. 64)

### **3. Fundamental Choice and Specific Kinds of Behavior (nn. 65-70)**

The Pope examines the theory that we can distinguish between a fundamental option and deliberate choices, with the former being the key to the moral life. Sometimes this amounts to a separation, with moral *good* and *evil* relegated to the transcendental dimension of fundamental option, and decisions called *right* or *wrong*. The latter are "inner-worldly". This is the realm of the "premoral" or "physical" goods: a technical evaluation of the proportion between them grounds the judgment that specific kinds of behavior are right or wrong. At the extreme, concrete behavior is regarded as a merely physical process, not as a human act. Thus the properly moral assessment of a person looks only to his fundamental option, prescinding in whole or part from his concrete behavior.

The Pope suggests, as the Magisterium has before, that the phrase "fundamental option" can be assigned an orthodox meaning — the first law of charity dictates that we love God with our whole mind, our whole soul and our whole heart — but the act of faith, as Paul warns (Gal 5:1) cannot be separated from the choice of particular acts. The fundamental option is revoked when man engages his freedom in conscious decisions to the contrary, with regard to morally grave matter.

The separation of fundamental option from

concrete decisions is another assault on the unity of man, body and soul. "Every choice always implies a reference by the deliberate will to the goods and evils indicated by the natural law as goods to be pursued and evils to be avoided." (n. 67) A man suffers perdition not only by being unfaithful to the fundamental option whereby he made a free commitment of self to God, but by every freely committed mortal sin.

Mortal sin? The Pope takes up the distinction between mortal and venial sins and affirms its permanent validity — another corrective of some current moral teaching.

### **4. The Moral Act (nn. 71-83)**

This part has, first, a critical phase, which examines certain inadequate theories (nn. 71-75), and then, second, the heart of the matter, the object of the moral act (nn. 76-83)

#### *Teleology and Teleologism*

The morality of acts is defined by the relationship of man's freedom with the authentic good. The act must connect with the true good, with man's last end, with God. "The rational ordering of the human act to the good in its truth and the voluntary pursuit of that good, known by reason, constitute morality." (n. 72) The moral life has an essentially teleological character.

Human activity cannot be judged morally good merely because (a) it is a means for attaining one or another of its goals, or (b) simply because the intention is good. "If the object of the concrete action is not in harmony with the true good of the person, the choice of that action makes our will and ourselves morally evil, thus putting us in conflict with our ultimate end, the supreme good, God himself." (n. 72) This presupposes that acts are in themselves capable of being ordered to the end.

There are three things to take into account in assessing the ordering of human acts to God — the *intention* of the acting subject, the *circumstances* (esp. the consequences), and the *object* itself of his

act. These are called the "sources of morality."

*Bad teleologism.* — a concern for the conformity of human acts with the ends pursued by the agent and with the values intended by him. The criteria for the moral evaluation of the act are "drawn from the weighing of the non-moral or pre-moral goods to be gained and the corresponding non-moral or pre-moral values to be respected." (n. 74) [Clearly this depends upon the earlier discussions of errors which obscure the union of soul and body in man.]

For some, action is right or wrong depending on its capability of producing a better state of affairs for all concerned, maximizing goods and minimizing evils. Catholics who take this path are anxious to distinguish it from utilitarianism and pragmatism (where acts are judged without any reference to man's true ultimate end) and this effort continues. (n. 74)

In this effort by Catholics to work out a rational or autonomous morality (one accessible to human reason as such, a laudable goal), false solutions have been proposed *due to an inadequate understanding of the object of moral action.*

\*Some authors do not take adequate account of the fact that the will is involved in the concrete choices which it makes: these choices however are a condition of its moral goodness and its being ordered to the person's ultimate end.

\*Others are inspired by a concept of freedom which prescinds from the actual conditions of its exercise, from its objective reference to the truth about the good, and from its determination through choices of concrete kinds of behavior.

On these views, free will is not morally subject to specific obligations nor shaped by its choices, while remaining responsible for its own acts and their consequences. Call them telologism, that is, consequentialism or proportionalism (melding various approaches and terminology).

Telologism draws the criteria of moral appraisal from a calculation of foreseeable consequences of a given choice.

Proportionalism, "by weighing the various

values and goods being sought, focuses rather on the proportion acknowledged between the good and bad effects of that choice, with a view to the 'greater good' or 'lesser evil' actually possible in a particular situation." (n. 75)

These theories deny that it is possible to formulate an absolute prohibition of a kind of action as being in conflict with the moral values indicated by reason and Revelation.

"The acting subject would indeed be responsible for attaining the values pursued, but in two ways: the values or goods involved in a human act would be, from one viewpoint, *of the moral order* (in relation to properly moral values, such as love of God and neighbor, justice, etc.) and, from another viewpoint, *of the pre-moral order*, (which some term non-moral, physical or ontic) (in relation to the advantages and disadvantages accruing both to the agent and to all other persons possibly involved, such as, for example, health, or its endangerment, physical integrity, life, death, loss of material goods, etc.)." (n. 750) [Once more we see the link between this criticism and the earlier insistence on the unity of the acting person, body and soul.] The upshot is that precepts are taken as operative norms which are always relative and open to exceptions. The further upshot is that deliberate consent to kinds of act declared illicit would not imply an objective moral evil.

#### *The Object of the Deliberate Act*

The theories referred to are not faithful to the Church's teaching since they condone behavior contrary to the commandments of the divine and natural law. But the Love of God and of one's neighbor cannot be separated from the observance of the commandments of the Covenant renewed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

The general criticism of the defective theories is that they take into account the intention and circumstances of the act but not its object — but all three enter into the moral appraisal of the human act. "The morality of the human act depends primarily and fundamentally on the 'object' rationally chosen by the deliberate will..." (n. 78)

and the reader is referred to St. Thomas ST IaIIae.18.6.

We are cautioned to see the object of the act within the perspective of the acting person: the object of the act of willing is a freely chosen kind of behavior. This is not merely a process or event of the physical order, to be assessed in premoral terms. It is the proximate end of a deliberate decision which determines (defines as this kind of act) the act of willing of the acting person. If the object is not good, good intention cannot make the act good. The intention does not make the object good, it presupposes that it can be ordered to God.

The criticized theories, being faulty, do not do away with intrinsically evil kinds of acts, every instance of which in any and all circumstances is proscribed. The new Catechism (n. 1761) and Vatican II teach that there are such intrinsically evil acts (*Gaudium et Spes*, 27) Contraceptive sex is an example (n. 82) Only on the basis of a correct understanding of human action and its moral appraisal can we speak of an objective moral order.

The chapter ends by noting again that the questions discussed involve the very question of man himself and of his truth, since morality flows from that truth.

*[Ralph McInerny]*

## CHAPTER THREE

*Lest the Cross of Christ be Emptied of its Power*  
(1 Cor 1:17)

### I. Freedom and Obedience

*Sec. 84:* “For Freedom Christ has set us free”  
(Gal 5:1)

The section asserts the fundamental relationship between truth, the good and freedom, and counsels that man is truly free only when he lives in accord with truth. It cites a passage from a papal

---

**It is the proximate end  
of a deliberate decision  
which determines  
(defines as this  
kind of act) the act  
of willing of the  
acting person.**

---

address to the International Congress of Moral Theology (10 April 1986) in which appears the sentence: “The saving power of the truth is contested, and freedom alone, uprooted from any objectivity, is left to decide by itself what is good and what is evil.”

*Sec. 85:* Here Christ is set up as the model of both truth and freedom, for he, Truth itself to which we are all drawn, freely made a total gift of himself in the crucifixion; obedience and freedom are not at odds.

*Sec. 85:* Man recognizes that his freedom is weak and limited, that it can lead him into rebellion. He needs Christ to make his freedom truly free (see above biblical citation).

*Sec. 87:* Freedom is acquired in love, in the gift of self. We find our freedom in our service of the Lord and our neighbor. We share in the *munus regale* of the Crucified Christ.

*Sec. 88.* The opposition of freedom and truth is the “consequence, manifestation, and consummation” of a “more serious and destructive dichotomy, that which separates faith from morality.” Too many live as if “God does not exist.” Faith is a “lived knowledge of Christ.”

*Sec. 89:* Love for Christ requires living by the commandments. We must be children of light and witnesses to the truth, even to the point of martyrdom.

### II. Martyrdom, the exaltation of the inviolable holiness of God’s law.

*Sec. 90:* Intrinsic moral norms protect the dignity of every man. Christian martyrdom disproves “teleological,” “consequentialist,” and “proportionalist” ethical theories.

*Sec. 91:* Susanna, John the Baptist, Stephen and the Apostle James are cited as biblical witness to the need for fidelity to the Holy Law of God; to them are added the early martyrs and numerous saints.

*Sec. 92:* Martyrdom is the exaltation of a person's perfect humanity; he becomes Christ-like.

*Sec. 93:* Many religious and sapiential traditions have held that there are moral values for which one must be prepared to give up one's life.

### **III. Universal and unchanging moral norms at the service of the person and of society.**

*Sec. 95:* The Church is often accused of being intransigent and uncompassionate in defending the validity of precepts prohibiting intrinsically evil acts. But the Church is simply teaching truths of which she is not the author. The Church must teach difficult truths but also be patient and rich in mercy.

*Sec. 96:* The Church teaches the norms for every man. "These norms in fact represent the unshakable foundation and solid guarantee of a just and peaceful human coexistence, and hence of genuine democracy, which can come into being and develop only on the basis of the equality of all its members, who possess common rights and duties. When it is a matter of the moral norms prohibiting intrinsic evil, there are no privileges or exceptions for anyone... Before the demands of morality we are all absolutely equal."

*Sec. 97:* Our common social life requires that we recognize that no circumstances or intentions permit us to violate the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person.

### **IV. The Renewal of Social and Political Life**

*Sec. 98:* Many nations have violated human rights; there is a long and difficult task ahead of restoring rights; people are beginning to see that the moral sense is "rooted and fulfilled in the religious sense."

*Sec. 99:* Only a foundation of morality in the truth of a transcendent God can combat totalitarianism. God is the source of human rights and to reject God is to open the way for violation of human rights.

*Sec. 100:* Several sections of the new Universal Catechism are cited which list acts against human

dignity such as business fraud, unjust wages, forgery, waste, slavery.

*Sec. 101:* Again an emphasis on fundamental human rights and the need for truthfulness among members of society, rights of the accused, etc. Not only does totalitarianism violate these but there is a risk "of an alliance between democracy and ethical relativism, which would remove any sure moral reference point from political and social life..."

### **IV. Grace and obedience to God's Law**

*Sec. 102:* God will give us the grace to conquer the moral difficulties that we might face.

*Sec. 103:* We are sinful but Christ's redeeming grace "has given us the possibility of realizing the entire truth of our being..."

*Sec. 104:* God is merciful towards man's weakness but it is wrong to make one's weakness the criterion of truth. Reference is made to the self-satisfied Pharisee.

*Sec. 105:* Summary of the preceding.

### **V. Morality and New Evangelization**

*Sec. 106-108:* There is a need for a new evangelization because of "dechristianization" which has led to a decline or obscuring of the moral sense.

### **VI. The Service of Moral Theologians**

*Sec. 109:* Theologians particularly share in *munus propheticum*; they need to be in communion with the Magisterium. *Sec. 110:* Moral theologians are to set forth the teachings of the Church to protect the faithful from errors.

*Sec. 111:* While the Church respects and makes use of the behavioral sciences, the Church always keeps in view what must be done to have eternal life.

*Sec. 112* (A very important section): "The moral theologian must therefore exercise careful discernment in the context of today's prevalently scientific and technical culture, exposed as it is to the dangers of relativism, pragmatism and positivism.

From the theological viewpoint, moral principles are not dependent upon the historical moment in which they were discovered. Moreover the fact that some believers act without following the teaching of the Magisterium, or erroneously consider as morally correct a kind of behavior declared by their pastors as contrary to the law of God, cannot be a valid argument for rejecting the truth of moral norms taught by the Church. The affirmation of moral principles is not within the competence of formal empirical methods." The Gospel must be the final determinant of what is true.

*Sec. 113:* Moral teaching is not the product of democratic procedures. "Dissent, in the form of carefully orchestrated protests and polemics carried on in the media, is opposed to the ecclesial communion and to a correct understanding of the hierarchical constitution of the People of God. Opposition to the teaching of the Church's Pastors cannot be seen as a legitimate expression of the diversity of the Spirit's gifts."

## VII. Our Own Responsibilities as Pastors

*Sec. 114:* The bishops are particularly responsible for assuring the faithfulness of moral teaching.

*Sec. 115:* (A very important section): "This is the first time, in fact, that the Magisterium of the Church has set forth in detail the fundamental elements of this teaching, and presented the principles for the pastoral discernment necessary in practical and cultural situations which are complex and even crucial." What has been done in this encyclical is very important: "Each of us can see the seriousness of what is involved, not only for individuals but also for the whole of society, with the reaffirmation of the universality and immutability of the moral commandments, particularly those which prohibit always and without exception intrinsically evil acts."

*Sec. 115:* Another plea to Bishops to be vigilant especially over Catholic institutions.

*Sec. 117:* Another restatement of the parable of the young man turning to Christ who is the Church.

Those who have questions of conscience should turn to the Church.

## Conclusion

*Mary Mother of Mercy*

*Sec. 118:* God is a God of mercy.

*Sec. 119:* Amidst all the complexity there is the simplicity of Christian morality, the simplicity of the Gospel: follow Christ.

*Sec. 120:* Mary is the model of the moral life: she made a free and perfect gift of herself to God.

[*Janet E. Smith*]

---

## Comments

by *Jude P. Dougherty*

October 5, 1993

In "Veritatis Splendor" John Paul II speaks from two chairs, as it were; one, the Chair of Peter, the other, the chair of moral philosophy at The Catholic University of Lublin where he once taught. As Pope he represents the entire Catholic ethical tradition, the perennial teachings of the Church on moral matters. But one detects in the encyclical the sophistication of a professional moral theorist. Although he possesses two doctoral degrees, one for a dissertation, *An Assessment of the Possibility of Building a Christian Ethic on Principles of the System of Max Scheler*, the present encyclical could earn him a third degree if submitted to most major universities.

He takes aim at the subjectivist tone in much contemporary moral theory. He rejects the philosophical determinism which would rob man of responsibility for his actions. In short, he knows whereof he speaks from personal acquaintance with the primary sources of the dominant Western moral outlook.

Those who seek specific judgments or guidelines on moral issues affecting the family, the community or the global economy will look in vain. "Veritatis Splendor" is more a metaethic than a moral handbook. It is timely in the sense that the Holy Father recognizes that deviant morality has to be confronted in its philosophical wellsprings and not simply in the town square.

Although addressed to bishops, the encyclical is apt to be regarded by scholars the world over as a basic moral text for the classical tradition, updated by an au courant observer.

---

## Statement on the Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*

by the faculty of the American section,  
John Paul II Institute for Studies on  
Marriage and Family:

The publication of the Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* is a moment of special significance for the whole Church. John Paul II derives his thought from a biblical, prophetic vision of reality which culminates in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. As the Pope himself observes, this is the first time that the Magisterium itself has set forth in detail the fundamental elements of Christian moral teaching.

The encyclical is also of special significance for people and communities who do not acknowledge the Catholic faith. This document recalls truths which until recently were firmly held by all Jews and Christians and by everyone aware that decent human relationships involve respecting persons as ends and never as mere means, and which are still held by many.

Briefly but profoundly the Encyclical recalls the essential characteristics of human freedom, conscience, and the values intrinsic to the dignity of human persons and the truth of their acts—fundamental goods such as human life and the communion of persons in marriage. Its reflections

center on its unambiguous reaffirmation that there are some kinds of human action which should never be chosen, whatever one's circumstances and further intentions.

That teaching is today widely questioned and denied, not only in regard to one or another moral issue but in regard to them all. The Encyclical's teaching is that such denials contradict a truth accessible to human reason and definitively confirmed by divine revelation, above all by the actions and precepts of Jesus Christ. There are kinds of choice, such as to kill an innocent or commit adultery, which are always radically incompatible with human dignity and with holiness.

As John Paul II also observes, there is here no question of imposing a philosophical or theological system; and like other decisive acts of magisterial judgment, his long-meditated Encyclical will itself be accompanied by theological reflection and interpretation. The document makes no claim to have described every theological opinion inconsistent with what Scripture and Tradition (including many martyrs) testify about intrinsically evil acts. Fruitful and faithful discernment about such opinions will proceed, not so much by scrutinizing details of the Encyclical's allusions to selected examples of them, but rather by inquiring whether a given philosophical, exegetical or theological thesis can really cohere with the Encyclical's teaching on intrinsically evil acts.

As members of the faculty of the American section of the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, we are among those addressed by the Encyclical's call to "clarify ever more fully the biblical foundations, the ethical significance and the anthropological concerns which underlie the moral doctrine and the vision of man set forth by the Church." This echoes the Institute's original mandate, which we pursue with full assent to the teaching "today being restated with the authority of the Successor of Peter."

For the Institute as for all the faithful, this notable document offers encouragement as we face "what is certainly a genuine crisis" in the Church and in the world. It is also, for everyone, an occa-

sion to deepen our understanding of what is implied in the dignity intrinsic to human persons and in the vocation to become followers of Christ and children in God's family.

William E. May

*Michael J. McGivney Professor of Moral Theology*

David L. Schindler

*Edouard Cardinal Gagnon Professor  
of Fundamental Philosophy*

Kenneth Schmitz

*Professor of Philosophy*

John M. Finnis

*Visiting Professor of Moral Philosophy and Law*

Monsignor Lorenzo M. Albacete

*Associate Professor of Theology*

Reverend Francis Martin

*Adjunct Professor of Sacred Scripture*

Margaret Harper McCarthy

*Assistant Professor of Theology*

Carl A. Anderson

*Dean*

## Statements on the Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*

by individual faculty members of  
the American Section, John Paul II Institute  
for Studies on Marriage and Family:

**A**ppropriately entitled The Splendor of the Truth, Pope John Paul II's new Encyclical is in essence a comprehensive and persuasive presentation of the perennial teaching of the Church about our moral life. Deeply biblical in his approach, John Paul II reminds us of our dignity as persons made in the image and likeness of God and called, in Christ, to shape our lives in accordance with the wise and loving plan of God for human existence.

He challenges us to love one another even as we have been and are loved by God in Christ—with a healing, redemptive love, one ready to

suffer evil rather than do evil, and he shows how utterly incompatible with Christian faith and hostile to human dignity are those superficial moral theories that deny moral absolutes and the inviolable rights of human persons.

John Paul II's intelligent and faith-filled account of our existence as moral beings reminds us of our vocation to share in Christ's redemptive work, to love, even as we have been and are loved by God in Christ. It can help all of us become fully the beings God wills us to be: his loyal and faithful children.

William E. May

*Michael J. McGivney Professor of Moral Theology*

**T**

he Encyclical speaks to the meaning of freedom today and directs it towards the good of every person in the truth of Christ and love of God. The natural law is the life-giving splendor of God shining in the heart and mind and will of his created image.

Kenneth L. Schmitz

*Professor of Philosophy*

**T**

he obligation to search for the meaning of life, to ask the ultimate moral-religious questions, is obscured in a culture dominated by consumerism and a liberal sense of freedom. *Veritatis Splendor* underscores the seriousness of this obligation. The Encyclical contains a profound, positive and comprehensive statement of the fundamental principles of a moral life centered in Jesus Christ. In an especially important feature, the Encyclical takes a position on issues debated today by ethicists and moral theologians, showing the presuppositions and consequences of views which end by detaching human freedom from its constitutive relationship to truth.

David L. Schindler

*Edouard Cardinal Gagnon Professor  
of Fundamental Philosophy  
Editor-in-Chief, Communio*

## Statement on the Encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*,

by Germain Grisez

Flynn Professor of Christian Ethics  
Mount Saint Mary's College  
Emmitsburg, Maryland

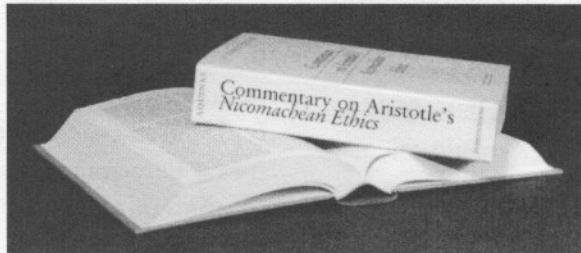
In his new encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II strongly reaffirms that certain kinds of acts are always wrong, for example, that it is always wrong to choose to kill an unborn baby or to engage in adultery. He flatly rejects the contrary opinion as "incompatible with revealed truth" (29). Using biblical material on the ten commandments to make his case, the Pope asserts that "Jesus himself reaffirms that these prohibitions allow no

exceptions" (52). Theologians who have been dissenting from Catholic moral teaching now have only three choices: to admit that they have been mistaken, to admit that they do not believe God's word, or to claim that the Pope is grossly misinterpreting the Bible. No doubt, most of them will make the third choice. That will greatly escalate the conflict which has been going on in the Catholic Church during the past thirty years. I predict that it also will lead John Paul II or, perhaps, his successor to teach in solemn form—that is, to declare ex cathedra—the following proposition or one very close to it: "It is a divinely revealed dogma of Catholic faith that certain specific and concrete kinds of action are always wrong, and that nothing whatsoever can justify making an exception to the precepts forbidding them."

Dumb Ox Books announces the publication of the initial title in its Aristotelian Commentary Series:

## *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*

by St. Thomas Aquinas



6" x 9", 704 pp., acid-free paper,  
sewn bindings for both clothbound  
and paperbound versions, heavy  
reinforced covers.

This book is meant to last.  
ISBN: 1-883357-50-0 cloth \$85.00  
ISBN: 1-883357-51-9 paper \$35.00

The standard Litzinger translation of Aquinas's *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, long out of print, is presented with the Aristotelian text given with accurate identification of Bekker numbers and an enhanced mode of referring to Aristotle in the commentary so that the work can function better as a commentary.

In addition, there is a foreword by Ralph McInerny.

Dumb Ox Books will be bringing out *all* of Thomas's commentaries on Aristotle. The commentary on *De Anima* will be published in February 1994, and the one on the *Metaphysics* will follow in June 1994.

Quodlibetal Features (Publisher of Dumb Ox Books)  
P.O. Box 495 Notre Dame, IN 46556 (800) 852-9962

Please send \_\_\_\_ copies of Aquinas's *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*  
 clothbound @ \$85.00 each;  paperbound @ \$35.00 each;

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please include \$2.50 for the first copy and \$1.00 for each copy thereafter for postage and handling.

check or money order (payable to Quodlibetal Features);  VISA;  MasterCard Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

# The Choices that Kill More than Babies

Msgr. George A. Kelly  
President Emeritus, Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

**P**ro-choice,” for the purpose of this article, means any exercise by Catholics of “individual freedom” against Catholic truth taught by the magisterium, or perpetrated against the public law of the Church, as this is interpreted by the Pope in union with his bishops.

Pro-choice of this kind, widely practiced today, is undermining the wholeness of the Catholic faith, the holiness of the faithful, and the unity of the Church itself.

“Pro-choice” is condemned by bishops when this euphemism is used to justify killing the unborn, but it has become the guiding principle for the management of most of the Church’s institutions in the United States. While the hierarchical Church, with its power of binding and loosing in Christ’s name, is the only Catholic Church there is, the power of the keys is rarely, or only selectively, used these days, whenever it is likely to bring strong negative reaction from “pro-choice” forces within the Church. Pro-choice is the lever which the Church’s centrifugal forces have used to dilute the influence of Church authority over the thinking and behavior of Catholics as Catholics. Having succeeded at this, its practitioners use the private force they have acquired to demean, discipline, or otherwise restrain, those who defend Catholic faith and morals as taught, and at times use force or the threat of force to frustrate or inhibit the hierarchy itself. Although human freedom is a precious gift when exercised responsibly, pro-choice as presently practiced, and institutionalized virtually everywhere in Catholic circles, strikes at the hierarchical nature of Catholicity itself, the only guarantor we have of authentic Christianity.

## THE WIDENING SPAN OF PRO-CHOICE

1. Within the universal Church “collegiality” has been translated to mean “pro-choice” for individual hierarchies to apply Roman norms or decrees, even those of Vatican II, sometimes in a fashion contradictory to their intent.
2. Within dioceses “shared responsibility” has come to mean pro-choice for individual priests, or even for the organized presbyterate, often used to stonewall a given bishop from doing what general law expects a bishop to implement or enforce.
3. In religious houses and novitiates, in spite of simple or solemn vows already taken, preferential option or selective obedience became the rule.
4. In seminaries the balance shifted from intensive training in the service of the hierarchy to self-understanding, psychological maturity, and individual decision-making of the trainees.
5. In dogmatic theology pro-choice is reflected in the quest not solely for plural study methods but for plural, often contradictory, interpretations of what is or is not “the Word of God.”
6. In moral theology absolute moral norms, those associated with the Ten Commandments, were replaced in many Catholic places by relativized moral determinations proposed by proportionalist or consequentialist scholars in Catholic classrooms and press.
7. In biblical studies, the common practice of choosing historical criticism as the most appropriate method for exegeting Scripture has created problems for the Church. This method, used exclusively, leaves many readers uncertain about what “revelation” means, who Christ really was, and whether He intended an institutionalized Church with a hierarchy having divinely-conferred authority over the assent and obedience of believers.
8. In the quest for liberating interpretations of the strictures in Canon Law (under the rubric “due process”), proper authority has, on the one hand, often been inhibited from correcting error or punishing contumacious violators of ecclesial trust; on

the other hand (using “psychic incompetency” as one example), it has helped to free Catholics from burdensome, and ostensibly valid, first marriages in order to contract a second before another priest; done in such numbers that even the Holy Father himself, more than once, has made mention of abuses of the annulment process in more than a few American Dioceses.

9. On the campuses of Catholic universities and colleges, the place where all the above infrastructures of the Church intersect, “academic freedom” and “institutional autonomy” have replaced the teaching authority of the Church as the chief determinants of what is truly Christian and Catholic.

10. Even when the issue is abortion, pro-abortion remains a viable public position for prominent Catholics, including some clerics and religious, for which advocacy they suffer little personal loss. Indeed, in spite of their views, some gain respectable positions or honors in academic and diocesan centers.

## THE INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT OF PRO-CHOICE

**S**peaking only of the Church in the United States, pro-choice within the above-listed institutions has resulted in the breakdown of one of the finest ecclesial systems ever constructed in the Catholic world. The downturn in the highest rates of religious observance in a modern democratic society, by a people who had few equals in their Catholic education, or in the Catholicity of their family life, has been startling. Unless one posits that Christ willed a messy and incompetent Church, this breakdown may be the greatest scandal of the post-Vatican II era.

The statistical declines are bad enough in themselves. But, since the Church depends in the

first instance on “the preaching of the Word,” that there are fewer and fewer people at Church on Sunday, or in our schools, fewer priests and religious, at least ones we can trust, bodes ill for the Church of the 21st century. The majority of baptized Catholics, then, will be more cultural than catechized. A debilitated Church will also have less influence on secular culture, or on the American State which, uninhibited by the lack of a powerful Catholic presence, will determine both the “faith” and “morals” of future generations of its citizenry.

But the sacramental life of the Church, most of all, beginning with the Mass, is what matters. Within this sacred precinct Christ still lives intimately with His faithful, and they come in contact with His true Church most visibly on a week-to-week basis. Without in any way diminishing the extraordinary virtues still displayed by those faithful, and by their pastors, often under trying circumstances, the secularization process signified by pro-choice has badly diminished the sacred aura surrounding the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the Sacrament of Matrimony, from which the Catholic community derives its worship and its people. In turn, pro-choice has affected badly the meaning and reception of other Sacraments, notably Baptism, Penance and the Eucharist, often received unworthily or not at all. Even the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Anointing of the Sick have lost some of the mystery which made them so important in other days, to the young and to the old. Closely associated with the

vulgarization of what once was considered eminently sacred is the widespread disrespect for bishops and priests found in widening circles. Not because of sexual aberrations (Catholics, except the misbegotten, have too much sense to lose their faith on that account), but because of the fighting among their pastoral leaders or with the Pope, and the abuses that they tolerate. The favor given “pro-choicers” in their own

---

**Unless one posits that  
Christ willed a messy  
and incompetent  
Church, this break-  
down may be the  
greatest scandal of the  
post-Vatican II era.**

---

bureaucracies is a poor substitute for the much-maligned "triumphalism" of their predecessors, who created the ecclesial giant, once called "the American Church."

If "hierarchy" means "holy rule," the Church's rule clearly is holy no longer among pro-choice Catholics. Hierarchy alone must take responsibility for this. Whatever else can be said on this subject, the policies adopted to deal with the "pro-choice" forces, which emanated from the Second Vatican Council, have failed. John Paul II has much to say in *Veritatis Splendor* about freedom, wrongfully defined. The emphasis in that encyclical is on assent and obedience, not on pro-choice for dissent or disobedience.

### THE WAY OUT?

A Church, which has survived the aftermath of the Councils of Nicea, Chalcedon, Constantinople, Trent, and Vatican I, remaining Catholic all the way, needs only to look into its own history to find answers to the dilemmas that have always followed institutionalized pro-choice

against Catholic faith and morals. Saints help, saintly scholars and bishops, too, but in God's Providence the popes and bishops called "great" are the ones who have led the Church from darkness into light. One thing is certain: dialogue is no substitute for good decisions, and sharing the intricacies of problem-solving is no excuse for delayed decisions. In *Veritatis Splendor* John Paul II suggests that the pastoral care of the faithful requires Catholic institutions to live up to their name, and if they fail to do so, bishops are to take away from them the name Catholic. St. Paul recognized the proper use of their authority when in New Testament times he told Timothy: "Law is good, provided that one uses it as law, with the understanding that law is meant not for a righteous person but for the lawless and unruly, the Godless and sinful, the unholy and profane." (1 Tim 1:8-9)

The God-fearing, law-abiding, and holy faithful are waiting for this protection of their faith from that Church authority which alone guarantees its truth. There is no reason why they should have to stand before the lions of our day—alone. ♫

## ATTENTION ALL FELLOWSHIP MEMBERS

Mark your calendars:

**The 1994 Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Annual Convention**  
will be held September 23-25, 1994  
at the Corpus Christi Marriott Bayfront,  
Corpus Christi, Texas



**The 1994 theme: Catholicity and the New Evangelization**

Program Director: Msgr. M. Francis Mannion

# Political Apostasy

Ralph McInerny

**S**enator Kennedy is the proud father of a bill protecting abortionists from the menacing predators of the Pro-Life Movement. He has successfully mastered any impulse to be horrified by what goes on inside the abattoirs. Like the Supreme Court in *Casey* he accepts the view that the basic human right is to do any damn thing you please. And not just in theory.

The senator and his family seem to be a penance imposed on the Catholic Church in the United States for the sin of upward mobility. Those of us old enough to have voted for Jack and to have campaigned for Bobby are daily assaulted with evidence that we were conned out of our shoes by the two of them. But Teddy is more than mortal man can bear.

Hindsight is a painful thing, except to a male deer, of course, and feeling rueful at past political convictions is pain in a minor key. Churchill may have been right that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others, but there are days when I think he was only half right. Do subjects feel responsible for their monarchs? It is the sense of collusion with those we put in office that gives term limits the allure of expiation.

I don't even like to think how many Catholics now sit in the House and Senate. If there were a third as many Jewish politicians, Israel would long ago have become the fifty-first state. By and large — thank God for such noble exceptions as Henry Hyde — our politicians are like Mario Cuomo, content to regard their religious beliefs as private aberrations that must not influence their public deeds. Is this the logical outcome of John Kennedy's famous speech to the Houston

Ministerial Association back in 1960? Not quite.

Kennedy told his Protestant critics that if there were ever a conflict between his presidential duties and his Catholic faith, he would resign. It is fair to think that he himself did not imagine any such conflict was possible. Cuomo Catholics feel they face such conflicts every day and of course it would never occur to them to resign from office rather than act contrary to their professed beliefs.

Many years ago, Eugene McCarthy, then a Congressman from Minnesota, wrote in *Commonweal* about the Catholic in politics. It was a magnificent, uplifting piece. It promised a very different kind of Catholic politician than we have, by and large, today. When Senator McCarthy gave the commencement speech at Notre Dame he visited with his former colleague John Oesterle, and I was fortunate enough to be there as the old friends chatted. When John Kennedy was mentioned, the urbane senator's voice took on an Irish edge. It occurred to me that he saw the Massachusetts millionaire as usurper of a role that had been meant for him. I have often thought how much better it would have been for the country, the Church, and Senator McCarthy, if it had been the man from Minnesota who became the first Catholic president.

Jack and Bobby Kennedy, with all their youthful charm, remain ageless in the news film of their time. Teddy has remained among us as the family portrait of Dorian Grey, with all his betrayals and practical apostacising written on his pudgy face. Eleanor Roosevelt once said of JFK that she wished he would show a little less profile and a little more courage. In the last of the line, the profile expands but anything like courage or principle fled the scene long ago.

Jack and Bobby Kennedy sent in United States Marshals and the National Guard to protect blacks seeking to attend the public schools. Teddy has proudly authored a bill which will criminalize the activity of those seeing to protect the unborn. Shame on him. ♦

# “Both a Servant and Free”

Fr. Brian Mullady, O.P. *Holy Apostles Seminary*

**T**his text is taken from the new encyclical of Pope John Paul II on the fundamental principles of Catholic morality, *Veritatis Splendor*.<sup>1</sup> To be both free and a servant is a very good summary of the traditional Catholic teaching on fundamental principles of morals. For centuries, Catholic moralists have been accustomed to make a distinction in discussing the morality of a human act. The first part of the distinction examines the presence of the will in an act. This makes the act free and sets human acts apart from the acts of all other beings. This consideration of the presence of the will in a given deed done by man even sets acts within the same man himself apart from those actions which simply happen to him. The second part of the distinction examines the presence of the intellect or reason in the act. The judgment based on the presence of reason in the act is the source of the traditional determination of good and evil in human acts. This judgment forms the basis for the commandments.

Traditional Catholic morals has always defended the idea that the commandments express acts which in themselves cannot be reconciled with the fulfillment of man's soul. They express this by saying that an act which is evil from its object cannot be used for a good motive. St. Thomas Aquinas expresses this tradition well in a primordial text taken from his *Summa Theologiae*,

**T**hus as the first goodness of a natural thing is perceived from its form, which gives it species, so the first goodness of a moral act is perceived from its convenient object. Thus it is called by some *ex genere*; for example,

to use one's own thing. And as there is a first evil in natural things if a thing generated does not attain its specified form, for example, if a man is not generated, but something in place of a man, so the first evil in moral actions is from the object, as to steal. Evil is said to be *ex genere*, taking genus in the sense of species, as when we speak of human genus, we mean by that the human species.<sup>2</sup>

This constant tradition is also echoed in the new Catechism of the Catholic Church when the catechism states the conditions for the analysis of the goodness or evil in human acts.

The morality of human acts depends on the object chosen; the end foreseen or the intention; the circumstances of the action. The object chosen is a good towards which the will is deliberately borne. It is the matter of a human action. The object chosen morally specifies the act of the will, according to which reason recognizes and judges itself as conformed or not to the true good. The objective rules of morality express the reasonable order of good and evil, witnessed by the conscience.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, this same constant tradition is affirmed by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. Reason attests that there are objects of the human act which are by their nature “incapable of being ordered” to God, because they radically contradict the good of the person made in his image. These are the acts which, in the Church's moral tradition, have been termed “intrinsically evil” (*intrinsece malum*): they are such *always and per se*, in other words, on account of their very object, and quite apart from the ulterior intentions of the one acting and the circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

The Pope uses the terms freedom and servant to summarize the relationship between freedom and truth. Man is free because he has a will. The judgment of this aspect of the human act involves the exercise of the will in the act. Man must submit himself to truth in every moral act. The judgment of this aspect is the basis for the specification of human acts as good or evil. This

aspect is made on the basis of the moral object and in this consideration, man is a servant of the moral law as taught to him by nature and revealed to him by God.

Given this cloud of witnesses to the moral tradition of the church, it is very strange that so many dissent from the common teaching that one can derive the moral goodness or evil from an object before one knows the circumstances and the intention. Many modern moralists reject this teaching. For example, in many places in his work, Richard McCormick, S.J. states ". an action cannot be judged apart from the circumstances and intention."<sup>5</sup> Many other moralists also hold to the idea that every act done by man is morally indifferent until the intention and the circumstances are considered. The act is a cadaver, which only receives life from the intention and the circumstances.

The key concept which is the basis for determining the truth of the moral act is that of proportionate reason. This key concept is known under many other different names by the modern moralists: commensurate reason (Knauer), Materia Apta or Ontic Evil (Louis Janssens), teleological norm (McCormick).<sup>6</sup> All the modern moralists introduce into their consideration of good and evil an anti-intellectualism which is not only alarming, but also false to human nature. Kant seems to be their remote source of inspiration. Kant did not think that morals could be judged on universal norms which found their basis in human nature. Each act had to be removed from the concern of any law which originated outside the acting subject.<sup>7</sup>

It is no wonder that there is a malaise in the moral consciousness of the Catholic if moralists in general think this way. Most seem confused as to the nature of moral demands on them. Questions of ethics and business which once seemed governed by absolute laws, now seem to be gov-

---

**Many other moralists  
also hold to the idea  
that every act done by  
man is morally  
indifferent until the  
intention and the  
circumstances are  
considered.**

---

erned only by recommendations. What is lacking in the contemporary moral scene which could lead to such a loss of moral sense?

The answer is Metaphysics. The new morality has a completely different Metaphysics or science of being at its source than traditional morals. Contemporary morals is not completely devoid of interest in the truth. The trouble is that the truth is hard for them to derive because their idea

of the universal, and laws are universals, considers the universal as an impoverished sense experience. "One pertinent and undeniable shortcoming in McCormick's sort of innovative teleology is that, in the absence of a classical or medieval metaphysics and anthropology, it is no mean task to discern and agree upon the precise relations of values in the hierarchy upon which the theory depends."<sup>8</sup>

What is the inspiration behind this change in the very basis for the judgment of truth in ethics? How did the philosophy of Kant enter into Catholic moral theology? I think the proximate cause can be attributed to Karl Rahner.

Rahner treats of moral theology in his classic article in *Theological Investigations*, "On the Question of a Formal Existential Ethics".<sup>9</sup> In this article Rahner first questions the fact that God's will could actually be realized in man through the Ten Commandments as absolutely binding universal principles which express human nature. "It would be absurd for a God-regulated, theological morality to think that God's binding will could only be directed to the human action in so far as the latter is simply a realization of the universal norm and of a universal nature."<sup>10</sup> This is because no universal can ever truly express all that is entailed in each individual being. Though for material nature, one may be able to express the whole truth with a universal, this can never be true for persons. The freedom enjoyed by an individual human person can never be boxed into a moral norm. Every moral norm is insufficient to express

what each one of us is in our individuality. This does not mean that the universal attempt is not true *on a certain level*. The universal norms which are present in the law are partly binding because they form a part of the situation which each individual must judge.

Put in a different way, one may ask if the norm which prohibits birth control is true. Rahner would say that it was true as a universal. When one is making a moral judgement about whether one should practice birth control in this particular act and situation with this particular person, this norm would certainly have to be taken into account as a value. But the actual action which I did with this person could not be considered birth control, even if I precluded birth by using an IUD or pill until I considered the reasons in the circumstances and in my intention which led me to practice birth control. Indeed, I must pray to the Holy Spirit and consult the action of the Spirit within me before I can make any necessary judgement as to whether this act is the kind of act forbidden by *Humanae Vitae*. In fact, this prayer may lead me to the judgement that it is not forbidden, but most life affirming. One of the principal proportionalists, Richard McCormick, goes so far as to say that in the celebrated moral dilemma of the mother or the child, not only is it permitted to abort a child in the womb, but abortion is “the only response available”.<sup>11</sup>

Karl Rahner uses his principles to posit the existence of two completely different sciences of moral. There is the science of the laws, termed by him “Material Essentialist Ethics”. This is the science of the universal laws which can only recommend. The other science is that of the “Formal Existentialist Ethics.”<sup>12</sup> The source for the formal existential ethics is the conscience which is enlivened by a “supernatural instinct”<sup>13</sup> of the Holy Spirit. The moral laws contained in the Ten Commandments can never be applied simply to cases in which one could judge that the commandments applied or not without some interior revelation of the Holy Spirit. There is something true in what Rahner has to say. It is true that our observance of

the moral law is not just a dull, inhuman bowing to a set of rules which drop from heaven with no relation to the personal God or to the human person. It is also true that there may be difficulty in knowing how these laws apply to individual conduct. After all, traditional morals affirms constantly that the individual must develop the virtue of Prudence precisely for the purpose of applying universal norms to individual conduct.

Still, this does not mean that the object of the act is just a moral cadaver or is morally indifferent until the intention and circumstances are considered. It only means that the human mind has difficulty in determining the object sometimes due to the uncertainty of our knowledge, not the uncertainty of the law.

With St. Thomas, one must make a two-fold distinction in the analysis of human acts. On the one hand, moral science considers an act as free. Is there a human agent present in the deed? This is determined by the will. The exterior or commanded acts of all the powers are like matter to form in this case. An act can only be considered a responsible human act if the will was actually present in it.

On the other hand, moral science considers an act as real or apparent good. Truth is the standard for this judgement. Does this act so join me to the things which I love so that my soul becomes ordered by this union? One who wills and loves becomes what he wills and loves *after the manner of what he wills and loves*. Does the manner in which I love this good really fulfill the highest powers of my soul? Does it conform to reason? Is this love right? Is it true? Does it conform to the law which expresses my nature? This second value judgement is always based on knowledge of the nature of the body-soul composite and how all the various beings which I encounter in this world can fulfill that body-soul composite. To suggest that there is a separate science of morals for individual consciences which can somehow contradict this science is nominalism. To suggest that the Holy Spirit could inspire someone to perform an act which contradicted the moral law on a frequent

basis makes no sense. Why would the Holy Spirit teach the author of Holy Scripture a moral law at all if he were to constantly contradict it?

In fact, the constant teaching of moralists following St. Thomas is that the specification of human acts is always judged according to "reason informed by the divine law either naturally, by doctrine or by infusion."<sup>14</sup> This reason must correspond to the actual being of man. There can be no divorce between the universal and particular. In this respect, the exterior act is matter. But the matter is not a simple cadaver. It is not like a piece of wood which could be used to construct any building or table or chair indiscriminately. It is rather matter like the matter of a duck or a horse or a man which cannot be used interchangeably, but is the perfect expression of the being which it expresses.

This matter refers to the term from which the action comes or the *terminus a quo* in the language of philosophy. This term from which the action originates are the powers of the soul which are the subjects of the virtues. In the case of temperance, these are sexual pleasures; in the case of courage, these are the emotions of fear of courage; in prudence, doubts about the good, and in justice, the necessities of this life. Yet, the matter from which these virtues are fashioned is to guide all of these powers according to reason.<sup>15</sup>

The moral object is the good as it relates to the powers of the soul. The powers of the soul must be the foundation on which the good or evil of these acts is judged. This foundation is expressed in the natural law, the revealed law and on occasion by direct inspiration from God.

The contemporary moralists hold that no act can be judged as good or evil until the intention and the circumstances are known. Traditional Catholic morals holds that *some* acts can be judged without these other things being known. Some moral objects simply cannot express the relation of God with the soul. Man is indeed free because by

## **Why would the Holy Spirit teach the author of Holy Scripture a moral law at all if he were to constantly contradict it?**

the will he can exercise lordship over his own acts. Yet, his freedom is not absolute. Man is the servant of the nature which he has been given by God. Only in discovering how to serve God through his nature expressed in the moral law either by nature or by grace or by revelation can man truly discover what it means to be free.

The Pope's recent encyclical has sought to recall these important truths to a society suffering increasingly from moral relativism. Sadly, contemporary moralists have only pleaded that they are not understood. Their reactions have varied from "long-lasting seizures of the brain"<sup>16</sup> to denying that proportionalists in any sense think what has been attributed to them. One says that "In brief, the encyclical repeatedly states of proportionalism that it attempts to justify morally wrong actions by a good intention. This, I regret to say, is a misrepresentation."<sup>17</sup> Yet proportionalists cannot be denying that the object is the basis for moral judgement in at least some cases because "they insist on looking at all dimensions of the act before saying it is morally wrong."<sup>18</sup>

In this, they seem to be begging the question. What is the difference between saying that an act in the universal or simply as an object cannot be judged without all the dimensions and saying it is a cadaver until circumstances and intention are considered? They are the same.

In the original sin and in every actual sin committed since that sin, man has echoed the great "Non serviam" (I will not serve) of Satan. All contemporary morals suffers from the tendency to empty service of its meaning. In exalting the private conscience over the moral law, they take the bite out of human servanthood. Man can only rediscover his freedom when he rediscovers his servant position and ceases to interpret away any of the universal laws which express his nature. ♫

1. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, n. 87.
2. "Et ideo sicut prima bonitas rei naturalis attenditur ex sua forma, quae dat speciem ei, ita et prima bonitas actus moralis attenditur ex obiecto convenienti; unde et a quibusdam vocatur *bonum ex genere*; puta, uti re sua. Et sicut in rebus naturalibus primum malum est, si res generata non consequitur formam specificam, puta si non generetur homo, sed aliquid loco hominis; ita primum malum in actionibus moralibus est quod est ex obiecto, sicut accipere aliena. Et dicitur malum ex genere pro specie accepto, eo modo loquendi quo dicimus humanum genus totam humanam speciem," Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 18, 2, corp.
3. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 1750 and 1751, my translation.
4. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, n. 80.
5. "Reflections on the Literature", In: *Readings in Moral Theology*: No. 1, Edited by Charles E. Curran and Richard McCormick, S.J., New York: Paulist Press, p. 299.
6. McCormick himself states, "This is the key notion in the writing of Schuller, Knauer, Janssens, Fuchs, Schlotz, Bockle, and, indeed, the entire tradition of Catholic moral theology." in "A Commentary on the Commentaries", In: *Doing Evil to Achieve Good*, Chicago, Loyola University Press, p. 231.
7. "Since I have robbed the will of all impulses which could come to it from obedience to any law, nothing remains to serve as a principle of the will except universal conformity of its action to law as such. That is, I should never act in such a way that I could not also will that my maxim should be a universal law." Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck, (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merril Company: 1969), p. 21.
8. Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Teleology, Utilitarianism, and Christian Ethics", In: *Theological Studies* 42 (1981), p. 671.
9. "On the Question of a Formal Existential Ethics", Karl Rahner, S.J. *Theological Investigations*, vol. II, translated by Karl H. Kruger (Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1963)
10. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
11. McCormick, "Commentary", p. 224.
12. Rahner, "Question", p. 228 and 228, note 3.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
14. ". . . rationi informatae lege divina, vel naturaliter, vel per doctrinam, vel per infusionem." Thomas Aquinas, *De Malo*, 2, 4 corp.
15. ". . . aliquid dicitur esse obiectum virtutum dupliciter. .Alio modo sicut materia circa quam operatur, ut ab ea in aliud tendens non enim temperantia intendit huiusmodi delectationibus inhaerere, sed istas delectationes compescendo, tendere in bonum rationis." Thomas Aquinas, *De Virtutibus Cardinalibus*, q. un., a. 4, ad
16. Bernhard Haring, "A distrust that wounds", In: *The London Tablet*, October, 23, 1993, p. 1378.
17. Richard McCormick, "Killing the Patient", In: *The London Tablet*, October 30, 1993, p. 1411.
18. *Ibid.*

# The Catechism in English: The Art (or Artifice?) of Translation

By K.D. Whitehead

## I.

Catholics in the United States are generally aware that the official translation into English of the Catechism of the Catholic Church has continued for many months as of now to be held up in Rome. The new Catechism received considerable publicity even while it was still in preparation—in this country in large part because of a widely perceived crisis in the teaching of the faith over virtually the past two decades, a crisis for which the Catechism, at long last, was finally supposed to provide the remedy. When the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, promulgated the officially approved version of the Catechism in French in December, 1992, it was expected that the English version would shortly be available. The continued non-appearance of an approved English translation nearly a year later has thus been more than just a little bit anti-climactic.

Why the hold-up? Evidently Rome found a number of things wrong with the translation of the Catechism submitted for its approval, and has thus presumably been in the process of revising and correcting the translation before approving it. At least I hope so. For I have had the opportunity to go over this English translation and compare it at numerous points with the French original approved by the Holy Father.

The experience has not been re-assuring. Msgr. Michael J. Wrenn and I have even prepared an article-length critique of the translation for

*Crisis* magazine, detailing some of things we found wrong with the translation, including mistranslations of words, phrases, and entire passages, additions to and omissions from the French version, and even renderings which sometimes appeared to misstate or distort what seemed to us important doctrinal points.

I do not intend to repeat here any of the criticisms already set forth in the article by Msgr. Wrenn and myself. Read the article in the November, 1993, *Crisis* magazine. Here I want to deal with a number of other important points concerning the translation of the Catechism, including especially some of the Criteria which the translator has stated he followed in making the translation; and also, very briefly, some of the Criteria our bishops are currently accepting concerning Church translations.

One important theme that runs through almost everything I will be saying here today—and which is of special interest to Women for Faith and Family—is the degree to which this translation of the Catechism is gravely flawed and marred—I believe even fatally so—by the use of so-called “inclusive language,” that is, language which self-consciously avoids using the words “man” or “men,” or the masculine pronouns, in a generic sense to mean such things as “everybody,” “the human race,” “men, women, and children,” “people in general,” and so on.

The English language, of course—like the French language from which the Catechism has been translated—does use the words “man” or “men” and the masculine pronouns in precisely such a generic way. English has been doing this virtually since Anglo-Saxon times more than a thousand years ago. Today, however, the ideological feminist movement has risen up to claim that women are not “included” when such generic language is used—hence a presumed new need to use language and expressions and locutions which specifically do “include” women.

Unfortunately, many have been persuaded by this feminist claim. Acceptance of the need for inclusive language is even supposed to indicate

special sensitivity to women’s concerns—as if the ideological feminists truly represented “women.” Attempts, some of them strenuous, are even being made in our culture to get this new inclusive language accepted as standard English usage. Most such attempts, however, have neither been very successful; nor have they enjoyed universal approval. Far from it: not rarely these attempts provoke ridicule; some even find them offensive.

For the fact largely remains true, in spite of intense feminist efforts and pressures, that hardly anybody at all really writes or speaks in the stilted, clumsy, and highly artificial way that consistent inclusive language would impose upon all of us. Inclusive language is *not* standard English usage. Even pro-feminists do not normally speak this way unless they are consciously thinking about it.

Nevertheless the fact that inclusive language is not really standard English did not prevent an unwise decision from being made that the Catechism of the Catholic Church should be translated into English using this inclusive language—just as plans have long since been underway to try to impose the same dubious and unnatural kind of language on the liturgy and worship of the Catholic Church in English.

What the decision to translate the Catechism using inclusive language has really entailed, however, is this: the stated aim of the translation itself, in the words of the editorial committee for the Catechism in English quoted by the translator himself, namely, “to convey the real meaning of the text in idiomatic English which does not in any way distort that meaning,” has proved to be *impossible of realization!* Yes. It has proved to be impossible of realization for the simple reason that inclusive language is *not* “idiomatic English”; nor is it possible to *avoid* distorting meanings when using inclusive language.

The text of the translation sadly provides literally hundreds of examples verifying both of these statements. Only a few selected ones of these examples can obviously be provided within the compass of this single presentation. Anyone interested in finding more of them can easily do so

by comparing the English translation with the original French text.

One benefit that may nevertheless stem from the fact that inclusive language has been drearily though unsuccessfully employed throughout all the 2865 individual numbered paragraphs of this translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is this: Rome, having seen the dismal results of this misbegotten ideological experiment, has now been given the opportunity to see in a very concrete way that inclusive language simply *won't work!* It won't work for the liturgy anymore than for the Catechism. Having now been obliged to hold up the translation of this Catechism, perhaps Rome will now also begin to see the necessity of taking another look at some of our recent Scripture translations into English and at some of the language being proposed for our new lectionaries and sacramentaries as well.

*Speremus.* Let us hope.

## II.

The main things that I want to address today concerning the English translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are some of the stated "Criteria" that were employed in the preparation of this translation. Examination of some of these Criteria will quickly enable us to identify more than one probable reason why it is that the translation has been held up in Rome. The translator himself, one Father Douglas Kent Clark, pastor of St. Anne's Church in Richmond Hill, Georgia, has conveniently provided us with a list of such Criteria in an article he published in the Summer, 1993, issue of the USCC Department of Education's quarterly religious education review *The Living Light*.

In this article, entitled "On 'Englishing' the Catechism," Fr. Clark explains that, while he worked with two editorial committees in making the translation, one in Britain and one in the United States, and also enjoyed both the services of a research assistant as well as advice and counsel

from other experts, the decision was early made that a single translator should perform the task of translation, "in order to ensure a consistent style and a relatively quick translation."

Much of what Fr. Clark says in his *Living Light* article concerning the problems of translation in general and of translation from French into English in particular few translators would disagree with. It is quite true that translation involves considerably more than, as it were, rote word-for-word substitutions; choices and judgments constantly have to be made. I must admit that I was initially quite impressed with Fr. Clark's exposition of all the problems posed by this particular translation the first time I read it—but that was before I saw the translation itself. In the light of the product, it seems pretty clear that some of the translation Criteria employed were at the very least questionable; and more than one of them have turned out to be, in my opinion, grossly erroneous Criteria.

In fairness to Fr. Clark, it should be pointed out that he was not himself responsible for all the Criteria employed; they appear to have been decided collectively; he was working under direction with his editorial committees and such. Nevertheless that does not make everything right. Committees can make mistakes too. Now that I have looked at the translation in some detail, compared it to the French original, and then have subsequently gone back to ponder the stated Criteria used in producing it, I seriously wonder whether any translator could have produced an entirely acceptable translation using such Criteria.

Let us examine some of them.

## III.

### SCRIPTURE.

The minute we get into the translation's handling of Scripture, we immediately sink deeply into the morass of the problems created by the original decision to go with inclusive language. It is virtually impossible to read even a page of this

translation without running into such renderings as the one in Paragraph 146 from Romans 4:11 where Abraham, as “the father of all who believe,” becomes instead “the *ancestor* of all who believe”; or the one in Paragraph 205 from Exodus 3:15 where “the God of your fathers” becomes “the God of your *ancestors*.” The statement in Acts 4:12 that “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” becomes in Paragraph 452 of the translation “among *mortals*.” The phrase “in the likeness of men” from Philippians 2:7 becomes in Paragraph 461 “in *human* likeness.” Acts 5:29 records Peter and the apostles saying, “We must obey God rather than men.” Paragraph 2256 changes “men” here to “*human authority*.” In the paragraph following, to a quotation from Matthew 5:21 beginning, “But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother...,” we are not even surprised by this time to find the translation adding: “and sister.” And so on. You get the idea.

Now at the simplest level it must be recognized that, quite apart from the motives of the translator, all these renderings do not represent what the original text *says*. To state this may strike some as simplistic; nevertheless it remains true, and truth ought to count for something, especially where Scripture translations are concerned.

Reading this translation, though, it seems that Scripture itself is simply being arbitrarily changed to fit the feminist mold wherever this is thought to be necessary. But *who* has ever been authorized to change sacred Scripture in this fashion (or in any fashion)? To alter the very words of Christ and then give out the alteration as if it is issued from Christ? This is a form of falsification. Is anybody at all authorized to do this?

But then in our present case it turns out that all these renderings are not just the banal fabrications of the translator of the Catechism; it turns out they are all taken from a new and highly touted *published translation* of the Scriptures, the so-called New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, which Fr. Douglas Kent Clark, in discussing

his translation Criteria, describes as “the premier scholarly English translation used on both sides of the Atlantic.” I fear some of us might wish to demur about that particular judgment.

However, the fact that we are talking about an actual, supposedly standard new translation of the Bible, and not just some arbitrary proceeding of the translator, does put a somewhat different light on the problem. Moreover, as Fr. Clark hastens to point out, this NRSV has not only been approved for liturgical use in the United States (in November, 1991); this approval by the American bishops of this version of the Bible has also been confirmed by Rome’s Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments (on April 6, 1992).

What kind of a translation is this NRSV? We have already encountered some its renderings as used in the Catechism translation. In fact, it is only too easy to imagine how the NRSV handles many other passages. For example, we read in Mark 1:17: “And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’” Or take John 2:24-25: “But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them because he knew all people and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.” Such a stilted, flaccid sentence as this provides an immediate illustration of how the gospel message is inevitably distorted by using inclusive language to avoid saying: “But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man.”

Many more examples could be given but I will spare you. The realization that our American bishops, after some two decades of imposing the mediocre New American Bible on us, have now approved *this* translation, and are apparently contemplating its universal use, is dispiriting if not dismaying. Nor does it help that the NRSV is a so-called “project” of the National Council of Churches, an organization that long ago would seem to have abandoned strict gospel imperatives in order to pursue leftist politics (is the NCC

going to get the royalties on all the sales to Catholics too? What a prospect! The Catholic Church helping to subsidize the National Council of Churches!).

We truly must hope that the hot water in which the Catechism translation currently finds itself in Rome will spill over into the liturgical area, and that the current Roman approval of this new NRSV translation will be revisited. We must hope that our own hierarchy will decide that this decision has to be revisited. Eventually it *will* have to be revisited. It is incompatible with the faith that has been handed down. And the health and strength of that faith on these shores, if not in other English-speaking countries, could be at stake for years to come.

Meanwhile let us call things by their true names. This New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is *not* a “translation.” It is an ideological adaptation. Jesus did *not* say, “I will make you fish for people.” The Greek is: *poiesu umas genesthai aleis anthropun*: “I will make you become fishers of men!” To impose the supposed demands or prejudices of our age and our culture upon any text transmitted from antiquity, not just a gospel text, is a falsification (and this assumes that inclusive language *is* what our age really wants).

Nevertheless, this is what this translation of the Catechism would now involve the Church in English-speaking countries in: falsification. It is a high price to imagine we have to pay in order to appease ideological feminists whose dedication or commitment to the Catholic Church is hardly the most salient thing about them that might ever strike anybody.

And it is all so unnecessary. From the point of view of faith, for example, the Scriptural passage Genesis 1:27 already *demonstrates* that God’s creation of “man” expressly *included* “woman”: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created *them*.” The switch to the plural here is precisely intended to make clear that “woman” *is* included in “man” in the general sense, regardless of how the feminists may grouse.

Genesis 5:2 goes farther; it goes on to say: “Male and female he created them and he blessed them and named *them* ‘Man’ when *they* were created” (emphasis added). Scripture is absolutely clear on the matter. Why is this so hard for some people to understand?

“What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?” This invocation from Psalms 8:4 is familiar to all Christians. The NRSV renders it: “What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” Here the important biblical phrase “son of man,” in Hebrew *ben adam*—especially important in view of its later extensive use by Our Lord—is actually translated “mortals” in the NRSV. This is a wholly arbitrary translation; the question of man’s mortality in no way arises in connection with this text; and it seems to be an especially arbitrary choice when we recall that the Son of Man came, among other reasons, in order to overcome our mortality.

## IV.

**S**o much for the translation of Scripture in the Catechism. Let us go on now to review, at least briefly, some of the other translation Criteria mentioned by Father Douglas Kent Clark, the Catechism translator, in his article in the Summer, 1993, issue of *The Living Light*.

### LITURGICAL TEXTS.

Fr. Clark explains that where liturgical texts appear in the Catechism translation they were taken from the approved ICEL translations from the Latin currently in use in English-speaking countries. Strictly as a Criterion, of course, it does make sense for these liturgical texts to be uniform in both the Catechism and the Missal—quite apart from what we may think of some of the ICEL’s handiwork.

Fr. Clark adds that the currently approved liturgical texts “were not changed in the Catechism” even when different in some respects from the French. Again, this is all right in prin-

ciple. Unfortunately, however, what he says does not appear to be entirely true; once again the feminist imperative raises its head, apparently overriding every other consideration. For in Paragraph 380, for example, the current Fourth Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass is quoted as: "Father...you made us in your own image and set us over the whole world..." But the currently approved text of the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer actually reads, as Mass-going Catholics will recall: "Father...you formed *man* in your own likeness and set *him* over the whole world..." (emphasis added). Thus, the currently approved ICEL translation *was* apparently changed in this case—in order, once again, to avoid those dreaded words "man" and "him."

No doubt the translator in this case was simply "anticipating" the new ICEL translations with inclusive language which are presumably expected to be approved; but if this sort of thing keeps going on, pretty soon we men are going to start feeling "excluded" too. We will have to start demanding inclusive language for *us*!

### ECCLESIASTICAL WRITERS AND MAGISTERIAL DOCUMENTS.

F. Clark explains that the numerous quotations from these sources were not simply translated from the approved French text. "Patristic and older magisterial documents for which no official translation exists were translated directly from the original texts and not from those texts in French translations," he explains. This may sound impressive, and may even seem like a perfectly reasonable Criterion. What it allows the translator to do in practice, however, is, once again, to re-fashion the text in the feminist image. The result is, in such texts as Paragraph 2783, to make such substitutions in a citation from St. Ambrose as "O mortal" for "O man"; and "child" for "man." (Again, though, that is not what St. Ambrose *said*; a translator who alters what his author said in accordance with extra-translation considerations is no longer really a translator.)

Also, compare the following text of the

Catechism found in Paragraph 1458 based on an important teaching of St. Augustine, which bears not only upon the topic of sin but upon that of the God-man dichotomy. I give my own fairly literal translation from the French first, and then the translation using inclusive language:

### MY TRANSLATION

The one who confesses his sins already acts along with God. God accuses you of your sins; if you accuse yourself, you join yourself to God. The man and the sinner are so to speak two realities; whenever you hear tell of the man, this is what God has made; whenever you hear tell of the sinner, this is what man has done. Destroy what you have done so that God may save what he has done (St. Augustine, *In Jo. Ev.*, 12, 13).

### INCLUSIVE-LANGUAGE TRANSLATION

Whoever confesses his or her sins already cooperates with God. God rebukes your sins; if you also rebuke them, you are united to God. The person and the sinner are, so to speak, two realities; when you hear "person"—this is what God has made; when you hear "sinner"—this is what the person has done. Destroy what you have done so that God may save what he has done (*Idem.*).

Quite apart from the fact that the important scriptural theme of the God-man dichotomy is obscured here, by using "person" instead of "man," the inclusive-language translation inescapably distorts the meaning in a more fundamental way; the text no longer conveys what St. Augustine said. This is true for the simple reason that "person" is not equivalent to "man." God is a person, for example; Jesus is a person; are they also "sinners"? Did they "make" sinners? The questions answer themselves.

If this is how "ecclesiastical writers" are treated according to these translation Criteria, what about "magisterial documents"? A crucial—and I believe fatal—decision was made when the

translator decided not to use any of the existing standard English translations of the documents of Vatican II for the literally hundreds of citations from the Council that the Catechism includes. This decision was made, Fr. Clark tells us, because his “editorial committee discovered errors and infelicities of style” in the existing Vatican II translations. This may well be but the translator’s decision to make his own Vatican II translations can scarcely be said to further the aim of “the development of a common theological and catechetical vocabulary for English-speaking Catholics”—which, elsewhere in his *Living Light* article, Fr. Clark had indicated to be one of the principal aims.

The principal advantage of doing his own Vatican II translations, though, was no doubt so that—you guessed it!—he could also present Vatican II in inclusive language, along with everything else! Certainly the existing Vatican II translations in current use today in English-speaking countries would not help him much there. As it is, he has a field day. In Paragraph 541, for example, he changes what in the Flannery Vatican II translation of *Lumen Gentium* #3 is “raise men” to “raise human beings”; in Paragraph 1701, what in the Flannery translation reads “the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love fully reveals man to himself” becomes instead “the mystery of the Father and his love fully discloses what it means to be human.” Again, you get the idea. You could do this yourself. You don’t need to be either a theologian or a French translator.

*Gaudium et Spes* #13, in the Flannery translation, informs us that “man, enticed by the evil one, abused his freedom at the start of history...” The Catechism translation instead renders this in its Paragraph 1707 as “humanity was beguiled by the evil one and abused its freedom at the dawn of history...” But “humanity,” an abstraction, did no such thing, neither at the dawn of history nor at any other time; only individual human beings with will and intellect would be capable of doing such a thing, and so, once again, the inclusive-language translation again distorts the

true meaning of the text.

*Lumen Gentium* #11 in the Flannery translation specifies that the faithful, “reborn as sons of God...must profess *before men* the faith they have received from God through the Church.” In Paragraph 1270 of the Catechism translation, we find instead the rendering, “reborn as children of God”—the French text also specifies “through baptismal regeneration” here—“the baptized are in duty bound to profess *publicly* the faith they have received from the Church.” Elsewhere in his *Living Light* article the translator specifically defends this rendering—the use of “publicly” in place of the expression “before men” so often found in Scripture—as being perfectly valid and adequate. In this he is surely mistaken; “publicly” simply does not mean the same thing as “before men,” as even the NRSV recognizes, translating such passages as Matthew 10:32—“Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven”—by saying “before others.”

### RECENT MAGISTERIAL DOCUMENTS.

Still discussing his translation Criteria, the translator declares that “all recent (post-Vatican-II) documents of the Holy See for which official English translations exist are quoted from the official Vatican translations”—but not, apparently, without adding such things as “or hers” to “his” where considered necessary in such texts as the quotation from the CDF’s Instruction *Donum Vitae* found in Paragraph 2375. Inclusive language, like *amor*, always *vincit omnia*, apparently.

### CODE OF CANON LAW.

The translator notes under this rubric in his *Living Light* article that the American CLSA translation of the new 1983 Code of Canon Law was used by common agreement on both sides of the Atlantic. A similar decision should have been regarding a single standard Vatican II translation. Many of the problems with this translation would never have arisen if available standard translations of Church texts had simply been uniformly used.

Yet even here consistency would appear to be lacking. In Paragraph 2102, for example, if we compare the Canon Law Society of America's actual translation of Canon 1191 § 1 with the way in which our Catechism translation apparently modifies (and garbles) this same Canon, we find the following discrepancy:

#### CLSA VERSION

A vow is a deliberate and free promise made to God concerning a possible and better good which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion.

#### CATECHISM TRANSLATION VERSION

A vow is a promise deliberately and freely made to God concerning some good which is possible and good. The virtue of religion requires that it be fulfilled.

Now how can a possible "good" simply be—"good"? The Catechism's translation of this Canon is tautological. The CLSA version properly distinguishes that what is at issue is a *better* good—the object of a religious vow. We are always obliged to do good and avoid evil; but vows "which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion" involve, precisely, a "good" which is "better."

How much easier it would have been if only the translator and his editorial committees had been willing to utilize existing and surely acceptable English translations of the hundreds and hundreds of quotations in this Catechism taken from Popes, Councils, Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the Code of Canon Law, and so on. But no: once the decision was apparently made to try to *improve* the product, particularly with regard to modern feminist imperatives, instead of merely translating it—which it was really their responsibility to do—they inescapably entered upon that well-known slippery slope in which the only direction they could henceforth go was downhill.

## V.

**W**hat we are dealing with in the case of this translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is not a translation at all; it is no more a translation than the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is a translation. Neither document aims to render in English what its original text says, no more, no less. Both documents are ideological adaptations consciously made in order to serve the ends of what has aptly come to be called today "political correctness."

It is startling, in fact, to realize how much more important modern political correctness appears to be for the artificers of both documents than does the proclamation of God's authentic revelation and his plan for man [!]. This divine revelation and this divine plan constitute the essence of what is truly to be found in the Holy Bible—as it is similarly to be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The translators of both documents had an obligation to *these things*—the divine revelation and the divine plan—which should have automatically overridden all other considerations whatsoever.

But no: having set forth his principal translation Criteria, Fr. Clark, in his *Living Light* article, then goes on to state quite plainly what is only too glaringly evident from his product in any case, namely, that what really appears to have driven this translation effort, from beginning to end, is nothing else but insistence upon using inclusive language. "So-called inclusive language reflects a concern that is almost overwhelming in the United States," Fr. Clark declares in his article. Whether this assertion is his own idea and he convinced his editorial committees of it; or whether, as he indicates, he was "directed" by them to proceed in the way that he did is immaterial. The dismal result is the same.

We can only wonder who the people are such Churchmen talk to when they assert that the demand for inclusive language is "overwhelming" in the United States. Fr. Clark actually claims that

what he calls the primary and secondary acceptations of the word “man” have been “reversed over the past half-century, so that one can no longer say ‘a woman is a man’ and be understood.”

I dare say there was *never* a time when anybody ever said anything like that; such an artificial example does not reflect how generic language is normally and characteristically used in English. Moreover, judging from my own random unscientific survey, I think Fr. Clark might be hard pressed to find a standard English dictionary older than, say, *ten* years, which lists the primary definition of the word “man” as “an adult male human being.” And I suspect he will not be able to find any dictionary at all which drops or excludes the meaning of “man” as “the human race,” “men, women, and children,” etc., in the way that inclusive language wants and tries to exclude this meaning of “man.” For the fact is that the generic use of “man” still is used in English and still is legitimate. To imagine that the language has somehow been evolving along feminist lines over the past “fifty years” is not true to the facts.

Ideological feminism is a product of the last couple of decades at most; and there is not only no assurance that characteristic feminist demands are going to be adopted by society as a whole; there is already strong and growing evidence that many people are turning away from radical feminism already. Of all possible institutions the Catholic Church is surely the last that should ever have gotten involved with this particular ideological fashion. The only result that is likely to come of it will be to see realized once again the old adage that marrying the *Zeitgeist* usually makes for early widowhood.

## VI.

One final point needs to be touched upon in this discussion of ecclesiastical translations, and that is the unhappy fact that, at the present time, our bishops do seem to have been sold the inclusive language bill of goods. In 1990 they even issued a set of “Criteria for the Evaluation of Inclusive

Language Translations of Scriptural Texts.” In point of fact, there shouldn’t be any such Criteria for the simple reason that there shouldn’t be any such translations.

As is usually the case with episcopal statements, however, these particular Criteria are very carefully framed and on their face appear to be very moderate and reasonable. What could possibly be amiss? In the Criteria the bishops note that “some segments of culture have become increasingly sensitive to ‘exclusive language,’ i.e., language which seems to exclude the equality and dignity of each person.” Does it exclude them, or not? What segments of “culture” are even concerned? Is the concern *legitimate*? The bishops do not say. They nevertheless go on to legitimate inclusive language anyway, regardless of whether or not it is really called for, by the very fact of issuing their Criteria.

But what a tenuous foundation on which to base what amounts to a veritable revolution! The bishops assume what needs to be demonstrated.

The bishops’ Criteria go on to say that “impromptu efforts at inclusive language...have...offended...” I would add, on the evidence of the translation of the Catechism alone, that *not only* “impromptu efforts” have “offended”! Yet the mere fact that impromptu efforts go on appears to be one of the principal reasons why the bishops found it necessary to issue their Criteria in the first place. Apparently it never occurred to anyone—or was perhaps thought too difficult if it did—to do what a young priest in my own parish recently did when he told the lectors who were indulging in their own “impromptu efforts at inclusive language”: “You have no right to change the words of sacred Scripture,” he said. “So *don’t*.” The result? Some of those lectors in question have simply not re-appeared at the lectern to read. Many of our other problems today might perhaps be susceptible of solutions as simple as this if it were not, perhaps, for so many moistened fingers being held up to test today’s *Zeitgeist* “blowing where it listeth.”

The bishops do go on to point out in their Criteria such things as that “not everything is Scripture will be in harmony with contemporary cultural concerns” and that language referring to God and to Christ in particular cannot be inclusive; masculine references must continue to be used for them. The upshot of this is supposed to be that only so-called “horizontal language” referring to human beings can be inclusive, while “vertical language” referring to God and Christ cannot be inclusive.

At first sight it may seem that a knotty problem has been solved by making such a distinction. Many people sincerely see nothing wrong with making horizontal language inclusive. On the evidence of the translation of the Catechism, however, it turns out that the distinction between horizontal language cannot be that easily maintained in practice. Once caught up in the feminist logic, it would appear, it is impossible not to be affected in more ways than one. Examples of this abound in this translation, beginning with the very first paragraph of the Catechism, and continuing, where we find such things as repeating the noun “God” in order to avoid using “He” or “Him” to refer to God; or dropping the pronoun “He” entirely, even when it is present in the French original and stylistically or syntactically should be in the English as well. Later on we find turgid sentences such as the subtitle just above Paragraph 469—“How God’s Son Is Human”—that are framed so unnaturally that, again, they appear to have been written only in order to avoid having to say that God’s Son is a man.

Moreover, there are not a few instances where inclusive language creeps in anyway, even when the reference is supposed to be vertical. For example, Paragraph 659 uses the term “Christ’s humanity” to translate the French “*corps du Christ*” which means the [physical] “body of Christ.” Have we reached the point where it is considered insensitive or indelicate to speak of Christ’s physical body because it is male?

Similarly, in Paragraph 2214, “*la paternité divine*,” “the divine paternity”—or “fatherhood”—

is translated into English as the “divine *parent-hood*,” apparently, again, in order to avoid having to say the word with a masculine reference, “fatherhood.” Now this is vertical language referring to God; yet the feminist imperative once again rules the translation, contrary to the express Criteria of the bishops. In any case, we have surely traveled very far down the wrong road when perhaps the major single fact about God’s revelation of himself to us, namely, that he is a “Father,” has to be avoided in deference to the imagined sensibilities of “women.”

Other examples of this kind of thing could be cited from the text of the translation; they are probably inevitable in the nature of the case, once inclusive language has been accepted.

Furthermore, insistence on inclusive language can distort the meaning of the text, sometimes seriously, even when the bishops’ Criteria are being followed. Paragraph 480, for example, tells us in translation that “Jesus Christ is true God and true man in the unity of his divine person; for this reason he is the only mediator between God and humanity.” But Jesus is not the only mediator between God and “humanity.” God, of course, is joined to humanity in and through Jesus (*his humanity!*); it is for this reason, i.e., the fact that he is “true man” at the same time that he is “true God,” that he is the only mediator between God and *men*—that is, between God and all individual men, women, and children (not *between* God and “humanity”!). The French text gets it exactly right by unself-consciously using “*les hommes*,” “men,” in a generic sense in this passage.

This translation, in using “humanity” to translate the French “*les hommes*,” is in this case in conformity with the bishops’ Criteria, since the substituted word “humanity” is supposed to refer to us and not to God or Jesus. Yet the use of this word “humanity” here nevertheless does distort both the real reason why Jesus is the only mediator between God and men and what his relationship is as mediator to individual men, women, and children. These are not fine points. What this kind of example shows is that inclusive language does not

really work and cannot work. This is a fact that has to be faced by English-speaking Catholics confronted with such a translation as this.

After all, since Jesus had no human father, the only sense in which it is really possible for him to be a "son of man"—the designation by which he most frequently referred to himself in the Gospels—is: *as the son of Mary!* No other way for him to be the Son of Man! It follows as a necessary consequence that Mary is "included" in "Man" in the term "Son of Man" as used by Jesus in the Gospels. Indeed this is surely a proto-typical example of the legitimate generic use of the word "man."

If "man" truly means something "exclusive" of women, as our modern feminists pretend, then Mary, the mother of Jesus, the mother of God—his only human parent—is the first woman who has to be excluded. Can such a prospect even be *contemplated* in any scheme of things that is truly *Catholic*? I think not.

We must pray to Mary, conceived without sin—our whole country is dedicated to her under her title of the Immaculate Conception, after all—that she urgently intercede for us in this as in all the things for which we pray. ☩

---

*K.D. Whitehead was a U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education in the Reagan Administration. A former career diplomat, he is the author of five books, co-author of another, and editor of and contributor to a number of other volumes; he is also the translator of eighteen books from French, German, and Italian, of which ten are from the French. This paper was delivered at the annual conference of Women for Faith and Family held on November 5-7, 1993, in St. Louis.*

## Managing the Mediation: A Report on the CUA Workshop on the Universal Catechism

W.H. Marshner

A

"workshop" on the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was held on the campus of the Catholic University of America (CUA) from 23–26 May 1993. The principal organizers were the faculty and staff of the Department of Religion and Religious Education at CUA, with help from the Department of Theology and the staff of the Campus Ministry.

The event consisted of 12 addresses, each followed by a question-and-answer session, plus a Eucharistic Liturgy and a concluding panel discussion. The addresses were videotaped for broadcast this fall on the CTN television system, which is supported by the American bishops and made available to diocesan institutions. The question and answer sessions were not taped.

As listed on the Workshop's printed program, the main speakers were to be

Fr. Berard Marthaler, long-time chairman of the Religious Education Department at CUA and editor of *Living Light*, the principal journal of the catechetical establishment in the United States,

Fr. Joseph Komonchak, a famous *Humanae Vitae* dissenter and a professor in the CUA Theology Department,

Fr. Douglas Clark, the translator selected by Cardinal Law to put the new universal *Catechism* into its official English translation,

Fr. Peter Phan, an ardent Rahnerian, a strident theological progressive, and the current chairman of the CUA Theology Department,

Fr. Robert Friday, a moral theologian currently active in campus ministry at CUA, and

Fr. Gerard S. Sloyan, a Scripture scholar recently retired from Temple University. He is serving as a Visiting Professor at CUA and was recently elected to the presidency of the ultra-liberal Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA).

An address by Fr. Virgilio Elizondo, formerly director of the Mexican-American Cultural Institute and now a pastor in San Antonio, was expected to be of equal importance, but it turned out to be non-substantive.

Of secondary rank on the list of speakers were James Nash, a layman and a convert to the Faith, who spoke intelligently on Justice-and-Peace issues, Ft. John Borelli, a soporific expert on inter-religious dialogue, and Sr. Kate Dooley, who failed to achieve coherence on the topic of liturgical catechesis.

## WHAT THEY SAID

In general, the addresses were not worth hearing. They were tedious academic performances, boring and routine, on topics of very limited interest to anyone actually working in catechesis. Fr. Marthaler keynoted with "The Ecclesial and Theological Context of the Catechism," but he could not bring himself to say what the context was. The closest he came to explaining why, at the Extraordinary Synod of 1985, the bishops suddenly called for a new universal catechism, was this: there was "preoccupation with a crisis in the Church, real or perceived, which was attributed in part to disarray in the ranks of religious educators." Well, Fr. Marthaler perceived no crisis and attributed no disarray. In the question-and-answer session, he praised the existing U.S. catechism series as examples of successful inculturation, use of the human sciences, age-specific methodology, etc. The smugness was impenetrable.

Fr. Komonchak was assigned the open-and-shut question of the new *Catechism's* doctrinal

authority, to which he gave (after a bit of wriggling) the correct answer: it is an exercise of the papal ordinary magisterium. Then he wandered off onto other topics, to which we shall return below.

Fr. Clark, the translator, showed his remarkable capacity for self-pity. He droned on about the travails of the would-be englisher of a foreign text, the sweat, the toil, the savvy, the serendipity. How treacherous are the *faux amis*, how elusive the *mot juste*. The right word is more elusive than ever when local feminist orthodoxy forbids 'man' to render 'homme.' Fr. Clark surrendered (some would say cravenly) to the Amazons but declined to admit that he was doing so. He allowed God to remain 'He', but man was turned into 'people' or 'humanity'. Fr. Clark called this "horizontal inclusive language" and attributed it to a simple change in English usage ("See any dictionary published in the last 10 years"). When it was pointed out to him in the question-and-answer period that this change of usage had not been a pacific one, had in fact been ideologically promoted, and was still being resisted, Fr. Clark confessed: "I don't think I would ever join the resistance to it." No ma'am. Yes ma'am.

Fr. Phan fussed about everything. The overall structure of the *Catechism* was a shambles. Using the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer as the framework to accommodate the doctrine of Vatican II was "pouring new wine into old skins" (a remarkable conceit: as though the religion of Vatican II differs from these hardy perennials of Catholic devotion; as though the Law came by them, grace and truth from Vatican II)! At the same time, Fr. Phan took splenetic exception to the *Catechism's* way of expounding Vatican II as a Council consistent with long-settled doctrines on the Seven Sacraments and the Christian moral life. The *Catechism* declined to embrace Lonergan's historicism, Fuchs's fundamental option, or Charles Curran's situationism. The *Catechism* instead appealed to the natural law tradition, presented an act-entered morality, and insisted that negative moral norms apply in all situations. To Phan, this was pouring old wine into new

skins. One way or the other, the wrong liquid was always going into the wrong container.

Fr. Phan was thus the bad cop, and he was succeeded on the stage by Fr. Marthaler, returning as the good cop. His topic was the hierarchy of truths in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter CCC) and he found very many things to praise. "There is something for everyone in these pages that witnesses, informs, and inspires," said Marthaler, happy, no doubt, to have the CUA theology department look like a nastier nest of dissenters than his own department.

Fr. Elizondo provided infectious charm and good humor, but Fr. Sloyan brought back dyspepsia and gloom. The CCC insists on using the Scriptures the way the Apostles did, as the Fathers did, and as the Councils have done: to find Christ present in type throughout the Old Testament, and to prove the truths of the Creed from the texts of both Testaments. Hermeneutical conduct so unbecoming to an historico-critical exegete left Fr. Sloyan breathless. This *Catechism* is "embarrassed," he said, "by the last 200 years of bible study." "It requires a second, revised edition very soon," Sloyan opined. "Adaptation in the meantime should be done only by people who know as much theology as its authors, and more." Predictable. Boring and predictable. The president-elect of the CTSA pretends that the difference between him and Rome is a matter of how much theology each knows, when in fact the difference is in what kind of theology each accepts. The dissenter is still trying to play *peritus*.

And so it went. The inter-faith dialogue expert, Fr. Borelli, had all the courage of a striped-pants diplomat. He worried that certain passages might annoy the Jewish community, and he pronounced himself "appalled" that the new *Catechism* allowed itself to use the word 'pagan'. The other addresses listed on the program were not worth mentioning.

Nevertheless, the most important speaker of the three-and-a-half day event was not listed. His name did not appear on the program anywhere. He was introduced at the very beginning, spoke

briefly, and took part in the panel discussion at the end. More on him shortly.

### WHY PEOPLE CAME

**W**orkshop attendance greatly exceeded the organizers' expectations. For by late May of this year, worldwide interest in the CCC was intense. The master edition, in French, had gone on sale within the previous few weeks and had sold out almost overnight. Spanish and Italian editions had also appeared and sold briskly, and the English-language edition was expected to be available in plenty of time for the Workshop.

Interest in its appearance only intensified when it was learned that the English translation was being held up at the Vatican. Strong criticisms of the translation's accuracy and of its attempts at "inclusive language" had been communicated to the Vatican by Msgr. Michael Wrenn of the Archdiocese of New York, a respected conservative opponent of the catechetical establishment in the U.S., and by Fr. Joseph Fessio, S.I., the well-connected director of Iguatius Press and publisher of *Catholic World Report* (formerly 30 Days). The idea that there should be a new catechism at all had divided liberals against conservatives in the churches of Europe and North America; but now this attack on the English translation and—what was more—the fact that the attack was prevailing in Rome in the highest circles, lent a crisis atmosphere to the prospect of the Workshop's opening.

What would Fr. Marthaler and his team do? Would they cry alarm? Would they cry surrender? Would they use the Workshop to rally a coast-to-coast opposition against the impending horror? Or did they think the new *Catechism* was something less than a horror? Did they think the CCC was a monster that could be tamed? People from all over the country, both the sane in matters of doctrine and the lunatic, wanted to know.

Diocesan officials came from Newark, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Tucson, Rochester, Fort Worth, Albany, San Antonio, Helena, Rapid City, and Green Bay. They came from Manchester in

Yankee New Hampshire and from Jackson in deepest Mississippi. Parish DREs came from all over the Washington metropolitan area and from as far away as Indianapolis. A few colleges and religious orders sent representatives, but the textbook publishers were out in force. Speaking of the lunatic, Sadlier, Inc., sent Dr. Marie Murphy; Benzinger Publishing Co. sent Michael Buckley; Silver Burdett Ginn sent a delegation of no less than five persons. A bishop turned up from New Zealand.

But those who came to hear dire things were disappointed. The faculty of the Workshop declined to see a major horror on the horizon. With the exceptions already mentioned—Fr. Sloyan, who relishes his role as a senior curmudgeon, and the boisterous Fr. Phan—none of the speakers chose to speak harshly of the new *Catechism*. Most struck a balanced tone and found plenty to praise. Apart from a touch of exasperation over the held-up translation, the overall effect of the Workshop was to calm fears, not raise them.

But it is very important to understand why.

## THE POWER TO MEDIATE

Within five minutes of the Workshop's opening, before any of the scheduled speakers had been introduced, the floor was given to a distinguished-looking priest with light brown hair. Everything about him—the hands, the suit, the voice, the manners—had a fine combination of authority and smoothness. They said, "Site of Future Bishop." For he was already high in his ecclesiastical career. Until recently, he had been the man responsible for catechetical policy, under Cardinal Bernardin, in the vast archdiocese of Chicago. His name was Fr. John Pollard, and since Cardinal Bernardin's arm is long, Fr. Pollard was now in Washington. He was the staff person for a committee of the U.S. bishops. It was a

new committee and important -- not for what it would do, but for what it would not. It was the Bishops' Committee on the Implementation of the *Catechism*.

In this nation of 40 million Catholics, there are probably less than 400 who know that this committee exists. But the organizers of the Workshop knew, and so they put Fr. Pollard on the microphone first, before all others, for his was the voice of the Management. When he spoke, one heard the USCC.

Fr. Pollard spoke briefly and to one topic alone. It was the "implementation" of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The present writer will confess: the topic was a novelty to him. It does not occur to an ordinary person that a book needs to be "implemented." An ordinary person thinks that a book just needs to be... "read"..."assigned" ... "used." But a man's way of seeing things changes a great deal when he gets into Management, and his way of seeing Documents changes most of all. They become instruments of policy. It was from a high perspective, then, that Fr. Pollard made three comments. The first was on the "intended audience" of the new *Catechism*; the second was on its purpose, and the third was on "mediation."

As to the audience, Fr. Pollard cited exactly half of what the CCC says about itself. He said it "is intended primarily for bishops," then for other official teachers, and then for the publishers of catechisms or related materials. The other half,

which Fr. Pollard consigned to silence, says that the CCC is intended for all the faithful (12), and this half was underlined by the Pope in his Apostolic Constitution *Fidei depositum* accompanying the release of the *Catechism*: "It is also offered to all the faithful who want to know better the inexhaustible riches of salvation." Indeed, the Pope said, "it is offered to everyone who asks of us a reason for the hope which is in us

---

**Workshop attendance  
greatly exceeded  
the organizers'  
expectations. For by  
late May of this year,  
worldwide interest in  
the CCC was intense.**

---

[1 Peter 3:15] and who wishes to know what the Catholic Church teaches.” The effect of Fr.

Pollard’s half-quotation was unmistakable. He was sending a message: ordinary laypersons and their children should not butt in. Rather, the U.S. bishops, who are part of the “intended audience,” are taking care of things. He went on to explain how. The bishops have established his Committee, Pollard said, “to suggest ways the CCC can be integrated into the catechetical mission of the USCC and of the dioceses.”

Notice this carefully worded mission statement. Notice the exact and passive idiom: ‘be integrated into’ — not an active verb, as in “to suggest ways the CCC can revolutionize the catechetical mission of the USCC,” etc. Not even ‘renew’, as in “to suggest ways the CCC can renew the catechetical mission.”

It is striking how a word or two will reveal a large agenda. This ‘integrated into’ reveals that Fr. Pollard has been put in place... well, to keep a legend alive. I mean the legend that the “catechetical mission” of the American Catholic Church is a vibrant affair, some sort of thriving enterprise, an engine of renewal in the spirit of Vatican II. It “integrates” whatever matter comes to it from Rome, like roughage in the diet of a healthy beast. You see? No stray word shall be allowed to suggest that the enterprise is sick.

Ft. Pollard’s committee will not suggest ways the CCC can “renew” the American bishops’ education business, because one only seeks to renew what needs renewal, what is flagging, what is failing. To admit that there is anything like a problem with the existing “catechetical mission of the USCC and of the dioceses” would be to commit the unpardonable sin of granting a premise supported by statistics.

In matters of faith, one does not look at statistics. Such premises are used by reactionaries. They are not persons of faith. (Remember: “We are Christ to each other.” “We are Jesus. “We are the church.” The American Church is credally reflexive. Its object of faith is itself.)

Since the Committee’s mandate is to let the

CCC “be integrated into what is already in place, the Committee doesn’t have much to do. It has things to prevent. The custodians of the established order will do the work. The diocesan bureaucrats and their pet publishers will do what little “integrating” they feel is necessary. The bishops’ Committee will justify its existence by offering them a few suggestions—and by preventing the more conservative bishops from getting on their case. So Fr. Pollard added immediately that “no plan will be imposed on the various dioceses.” Rather, it will be up to each diocese and university to arrange its own program, workshops, etc., if it wants to. Management can be gentle, non-directive. Management can be non-functioning. Nevertheless, Management is skilled at creating in the absence of life the appearance of motion. Fr. Pollard hastened to tell us that the Congregation for the Clergy had convoked a meeting of all the “catechism commission presidents.” His Committee had a man on the scene. Fr. John Leibrecht had represented the United States at this critical event. He had gone and come back. He was writing his report. It was scheduled to appear in *Origins*. Inaction is belied by motion.

When he turned to the purpose of the CCC Fr. Pollard repeated the correct and official phrases. It “conveys the basic content of faith and morals.” It is “a point of reference.” It is a “positive, objective, and declarative exposition of Catholic doctrine.” It “presents what all Catholics of the world believe in common.” As a work of such generality, the CCC leaves plenty of room for local catechisms, Pollard explained, which will be more sensitive to local concerns. He concluded soothingly: the new *Catechism* is “a gift for the Church, not a straightjacket.” This was a signal. The lunatics in the audience could relax. The *Catechism* would be integrated in such a way as to leave them plenty of elbow room. It did not occur to Fr. Pollard that a straightjacket for the lunatics would be a gift for the Church. Such a thought would not occur to him because the American Church, believing theologically in itself, believes that its members are Spirit-led. Do they

want to re-write the Scripture? Censor Tradition? Delete dogmas? Do they want to paint God as a woman? Accommodate sodomy as a form of matrimony? Ordain priestesses? They are not lunatics but prophets. A straitjacket for the prophets would hardly be a gift for the Church. Good Management does not quench the Spirit. And so Fr. Pollard told them that the new *Catechism* is not a straitjacket, despite the fact that it rejects utterly what the "prophets" want to do: it proclaims the Scriptures without amendment, it exalts Tradition, it repeats the dogmas, it condemns sodomy and refuses priestesses. No, Fr. Pollard told them that the new *Catechism* was (how to put this delicately?) a "gift." You see, gifts happen. Your mother wishes upon you a large, two-inch thick something-or-other, having no foreseeable use, but expressing her good wishes in her own, inimitable taste. When Fr. Pollard commented on the "mediation" of the *Catechism*, he came to the heart of his subject. He was able to quote Cardinal Ratzinger, who chaired the commission working on the *Catechism* project since 1986, to the effect that the CCC "requires the indispensable necessity of mediation." This means, he said, that its content is to be adapted by national and diocesan catechisms to the "different socio-cultural ecclesial contexts." Once again, Fr. Pollard was quoting by halves. The Prologue of the *Catechism* does say (in 25-24) that the emphasis of the work falls on doctrinal exposition and that, thanks to this purpose, the CCC "does not try to make adaptations of the exposition or of catechetical methods, such as are required by the differences among those to whom catechesis is addressed -- differences in culture, in age, in spiritual maturity, in social and ecclesial position. These indispensable adaptations are left to catechisms tailored specifically to such groups and, even more, are left to those who do the teaching." But the same Prologue gives a piece of very con-

---

**He concluded  
soothingly: the new  
*Catechism* is "a gift for  
the Church, not a  
straightjacket."  
This was a signal.  
The lunatics in the  
audience could relax.**

---

crete guidance on how the adaptations are to be made, and this section (para. 22) Fr. Pollard consigned to silence. It says:

At the end of each topical unit, a series of short texts summarizes the essence of the teaching in a gathering of statements. These "In Brief" sections are intended to give local catechesis suggestions for synthetic statements which can be memorized.

In other words, the CCC is providing its own summaries,

section-by-section and topic-by-topic. They are pithy statements suitable for students to memorize, and the Roman authors of the CCC expect these to start showing up in locally produced catechetical materials. There are 550 of them in all, and Cardinal Ratzinger has said of them that they are "the common language of faith... that transcends culture." The implication is this: a reasonably faithful reproduction of the "In Brief" statements in the local catechisms, series, filmstrips, etc., will serve as something very close to a litmus test of "implementation" in Rome's eyes. Effective communication of these brief, clear statements will be a test of honest adaptation and genuine "mediation." It is of the highest significance, then, that Fr. Pollard said absolutely nothing about them. Not one word. For the reader who enjoys detective fiction, this is the dog that did not bark. Pollard's silence means that the In-Briefs are no part of the "implementation" for which his Committee is named and for which it exists. Why not?

#### A NEW PHOBIA

**A**fter Fr. Pollard finished his remarks, and the scheduled addresses of the Workshop began to unroll in their dreary series as sketched above, the present writer began to notice a recurrent theme, which he has not yet reported. You could call it the theme of apophthegmatophobia — the fear of brief, pithy statements. Fr. Martbaler quoted

Cardinal Sanchez as saying: “don’t rely only on the ‘In Brief’ statements.” Fr. Phan denounced “brief summaries to be memorized,” because they “reinforce the idea that catechesis is a matter of orthodox formulas to be memorized.” Ugh! Perish the thought! “Use of them as free-floating mantras would be wrong.” Fr. Sloyan had such horrors in mind when he answered a question put to him by Dr. (formerly Sr.) Janaan Manternach. “Will existing catechetical materials,” she asked, “be called into question by this *Catechism of the Catholic Church*? The strain of anxiety was evident on her face and in her voice. “I’ve thought of that,” replied the oracular Fr. Sloyan. “I cannot guess. I think religious educators at every level will be told in some jurisdictions to use the CCC in ways their consciences will not permit, and this will cause new pain. I think in most jurisdictions the experts will be trusted.” [Alas, no one until now has published this quote under the headline it deserves: “Sloyan predicts prisoners of conscience in Peoria.”] But it was Fr. Komonchak who articulated the phobia at greatest length.

“These statements are a mixed bag,” cried Komonchak. “Some are bible quotes; some are dogmatic formulae; some are drawn from prayer. They don’t all have the same theological note!” Then he complained, “Their meaning depends on the paragraphs to which they are attached.” Then he said what he really thought. Ratzinger *thinks* these In-Brief statements are a trans-cultural expression, “a common language of faith.” But they are not. “They are inculturated expressions of the faith and so will demand further inculturation.”

Yes, the Workshop faculty had its party line together. The U.S. catechetical establishment had its party line together. The In-Brief statements must be avoided at all cost. They must not start showing up among the vapid paragraphs in Sadlier. They must not intrude between the pretty pictures in Benzinger. They are dangerous

things, wells of poison, torments to conscience. The silence of Fr. Pollard is now eloquent. It means that the USCC is in tacit collusion with the same party line. The weight of the Management will be used against those who try to invoke the Vatican’s standard of faithful “mediation.”

One more question and this essay is finished: Where does this fear of brief, clear statements come from? Why does the prospect of their appearance in American Church catechisms fill certain people with bewildered incomprehension, as a certain prospect once filled Aunt Pitty Pat in *Gone with the Wind*? “Mah Gawd, Yankees in Atlanta! “How did they git heah?” Why are brief, clear statements supposed to be as out of place in a catechism, of all places, as Sheman’s troops in Georgia?

The quick answer goes as follows: Ever since John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council with a speech in which he said, “The substance of the ancient doctrine... is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another,” people who wanted something different from what good Pope John wanted — not better prose but different dogmas — have been interpreting his words as vindicating a theological movement from the late 1940s called la *nouvelle theologie*. The hallmark of that movement in its more radical champions was the claim that God’s truth cannot come to us in pure form but always comes incarnated, inculturated, in a given, historically limited conceptual system. There cannot be a proclamation of the Gospel that transcends culture, because every act of human communication is a time-bound and culture-bound act. This ‘carried the implication that all past acts of the Magisterium provide us with time-bound and culture-bound teachings. Well, suppose the demands of a new age can and do require that we sweep all those past teachings away and replace them with a new expression, a new inculturation proper to the

---

**Pollard’s silence  
means that the  
In-Briefs are no part of  
the “implementation”  
for which his  
Committee is named  
and for which it exists.**

---

modern age? (The Abbe Loisy had said something quite similar. See his *Memoires*, vol. 1, p. 121.) All those who wanted to use the “spirit of Vatican II” as a broom with which to sweep away the historic teachings of the Catholic Church were depending, then, upon one thing: a theory of language which made a cross-cultural “common language of faith” impossible. To that theory and sweep-away project, the CCC looms up as a deadly menace, and no part of it is more deadly than the “In Brief” statements. Why? Because they are clear. They will be understood in Botswana, Nepal, Naples, New Rochelle. What is worse, they will be understood in Milwaukee. They will form a new generation of Catholics who will be living proof that the more radical *nouvelle theologie's* theory of language is wrong. When young Catholics all over the world understand the same brief and clear propositions as true articulations of their faith, they will be living proof that God not only condescends to meet us where we are born, in our ghettos and localisms and parochialisms, in our narrow ideologies and inadequate cultures, but also lifts us out of them, in the Truth who is His Son, into the new and common world-wide fellowship of the Kingdom that is beginning already in His Church. World-wide communion in brief, clear statements will vindicate the words of Irenaeus: “The Church spread throughout the whole world carefully guards this kerygma she has received,

together with the faith. She guards them as if she had only one house; she believes them as if she had only one heart and one soul, and in the same way she preaches and teaches and hands them on as if she had only one mouth.... Just as the sun, a creature of God, is one and the same over the whole earth, so the preaching of the truth appears everywhere and enlightens all who want to come to a knowledge of the truth” (*Adv. Haer.* I, 10, 2). And then it will occur to people that the blessing of this world-wide sun of Truth has been in the world since the Apostles and was shining during the Council of Trent, so that it joins the Church of today with the Church of yesterday in sameness of belief. Then past teachings of the Magisterium cannot be swept aside. Then the Spirit of Vatican II cannot be used as a weapon against the dogmas of Vatican I, Trent, Chalcedon, Nicaea. Then the renewal of the Church must take the form that Cardinal Ratzinger champions, and not the form preferred on the campus of the CUA. That’s why some people on that campus are very much afraid of brief, clear statements. Oh, by the way, the Management is afraid of them, too. At the very end of the Workshop, Fr. Pollard spoke again, as part of the panel discussion. “We need to receive the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* seriously,” he said, “but... as in need of inculturation, not as transcendent to culture. So let’s hasten slowly with this.” ♣

# On Being a Catholic University:

## SOME THOUGHTS ON OUR PRESENT PREDICAMENT

**A**t a poignant juncture early in *Brideshead Revisited*, Sebastian, after briefly recounting for Charles his family's rather checkered performance with regard to its Catholicism, remarks, "I wish I liked Catholics more." When Charles replies, "They seem just like other people," Sebastian rebukes him: "My dear Charles, that's exactly what they're not ... It's not just that they're a clique—as a matter of fact, they're at least four cliques all blackguarding each other half the time—but they've got an entirely different outlook on life; everything they think important is different from other people. They try and hide it as much as they can, but it comes out all the time. It's quite natural, really, that they should. But you see it's difficult for semi-heathens like... me."

Outsiders are often distracted and even mesmerized by the blackguarding. In discussions of the elusive "Catholic character" we have come to expect comments like, "You can't even agree among yourselves what 'Catholic' means; is it any wonder that the rest of us get edgy when we hear of efforts to reinforce the Catholic character of Notre Dame?" Larry's paper helps us to understand a bit better both the significance of these internal disagreements and the fervor with which they are carried on. As he suggests, a true catholicity is marked by a kind of "coincidence of opposites," a plurality within a unity, or perhaps better, a creative anarchy within fixed limits, a volatile mixture of the hierarchical and the charismatic, of the stabilizing and the spontaneous, of St. Peter and St. Paul. Chesterton characterized it as an equilibrium in which the duelling opposites are allowed to become exaggerated just short of the point where the one would wipe out the other: "St. Francis, in praising all good, could be a more

shouting optimist than Walt Whitman. St. Jerome, in denouncing all evil, could paint the world blacker than Schopenauer. Both passions were free because both were kept in their place. The optimist could pour out all the praise he liked on the gay music of the march, the golden trumpets, and the purple banners going into battle. But he must not call the fight needless. The pessimist might draw as darkly as he chose the sickening marches or the sanguine wounds. But he must not call the fight hopeless ... By defining its main doctrine, the Church not only kept seemingly inconsistent things side by side, but, what was more, allowed them to break out in a sort of artistic violence otherwise possible only to anarchists" (*Orthodoxy*, chap. VI).

But if this is so, then everything hinges on preserving the balance that holds the exaggerated opposites together:

"It is exactly this which explains what is so inexplicable to all the modern critics of the history of the Church. I mean the monstrous wars about small points of theology, the earthquakes of emotion about a gesture or a word. It was only a matter of an inch; but an inch is everything when you are balancing. The Church could not afford to swerve a hair's breadth on some things if she was to continue her great and daring experiment of the irregular equilibrium. Once let one idea become less powerful and some other idea would become too powerful. It was no flock of sheep the Christian shepherd was leading, but a herd of bulls and tigers, of terrible ideas and devouring doctrines, each one of them strong enough to turn into a false religion and lay waste the world" (*ibid.*)

This immediately invites the question: What is the source of unity that keeps these diverse elements together and prevents them from being fragmented into isolated eccentricities? My oldest son came home from World Youth Day pretty much overwhelmed by the instant bond of solidarity he felt with other Catholic young people from all over the world, even though they came from economic, political, linguistic, and cultural back-

grounds very different from his own. What united them? What is it that unites such disparate and seemingly contradictory figures as St. Francis and St. Jerome—and makes heroes of them both to boot? (indeed, we will be celebrating both of their feasts within the next few days.) More relevant to our own situation, what is it that makes an educational institution Catholic and unites it to other things Catholic? Larry's paper is extremely illuminating in this regard, and also very revealing as we reflect upon the last twenty-five years at Notre Dame and upon our present and seemingly insoluble predicament.

(Let me throw in a disclaimer here. Even though some of my colleagues have at times expressed doubts about this, I do indeed understand the differences among elementary schools, secondary schools, seminaries, small liberal arts colleges, and universities replete with professional schools and graduate programs. But my topic here, taking my cue from Larry's paper, is what unites such educational institutions as Catholic rather than what distinguishes them from one another. Catholic universities, like the Church as a whole, have lots of tensions built into them by their very nature as universities and as Catholic universities, tensions that would lead to heated disputes even in a university where the faculty shared much more in common by way of fundamental moral and religious vision than it does at this university. But such disputes could be fruitful because they were taking place within a common framework of shared assumptions and in an atmosphere of trust generated by that unity of outlook. It is precisely the unity that I want to focus on here.)

Larry reminds us, first of all, that at the center of Catholicism lie the sacraments as instruments of divine grace and as divinely instituted sources of the new life of liberation from sin and ignorance won for us by Christ's life, death, and resurrection. In the supernatural light of faith, we see the world

---

**More relevant to our  
own situation,  
what is it that  
makes an educational  
institution Catholic  
and unites it to other  
things Catholic?**

---

and, more importantly, ourselves as both sinful and called to sanctity, as both in dire need of spiritual healing and yet already redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God. It is through the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, that this saving work of our Lord is appropriated by us as individuals within the community formed by His Body and Blood.

And it is in this context that we live out what Vatican II termed our universal call to holiness, our daily lives of prayer and repentance, of fasting and good works, of the sanctification of the ordinary and the extraordinary—in short, our daily lives of sacrificial love of God and neighbor made possible by Christ's own sacrificial love. Or this, at least, is what we strive for. The sacraments, then, and other related liturgical practices, both communal and private, lie at the center of our lives. We long with the Psalmist to live in the presence of God. But, of course, the sacraments do not exist in a vacuum. They express and effect a vision of the world, a faith, that has been bequeathed to us down through the centuries as the pearl of great price. Word and sacrament, as we say today. The two go together ineluctably: *Lex orandi est lex credendi*. Two of Larry's "Salient Characteristics of Catholicism" are especially relevant here.

This isn't tradition. The Faith comes to us hammered out, as it were, through a two-thousand-year quest, exciting yet oftentimes painful, to spread the Gospel faithfully and intact to every comer of the earth. The excitement and pain are both evident from the very beginning, in the Acts of the Apostles, and they continue to this day. The blood of martyrs, as well as the ordinary and extraordinary lives of millions of saints down through the centuries, have mediated the passage of the Gospel from the time of Christ to our own time. This is a Church that has survived many deaths, to use Chesterton's image, only to rise again when, from a merely natural perspective, it

should have perished once and for all; and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit it will undoubtedly survive many more deaths to come. We may battle among ourselves about the fine points, about what is essential to this tradition and what is peripheral. But the stakes are high; for central to the Catholic faith is the haunting conviction that to cut ourselves off from this tradition is to cut ourselves off from Christ. This is our inheritance, sealed from the very beginning with the blood of martyrs. It is not ours to reinvent; nor are we free to make it up as we go along.

The second, and closely related characteristic, is communion, communion with the successors of the apostles, a communion that, to use Larry's words, "Finds its organic center by union with the Bishop of Rome." It is this characteristic I want to focus on in the remainder of my remarks, and this because neither the confusions that permeate the present conversation about the Catholic character of Notre Dame, nor the deep distrust many faculty members feel for the university Administration and the Congregation of Holy Cross, can be fully fathomed without adverting to the fact that for the last twenty-five years the higher echelons of the Notre Dame family have consciously and deliberately distanced themselves and the University of Our Lady from the Bishop of Rome and from the Vatican generally. I'm not talking here explicitly about theological disagreements, though there are certainly many such disagreements lurking in the background. Rather, I'm talking about a pervasive attitude that typically manifests itself as a type of condescension, not unlike what embarrassed family members might feel toward grandpa's latest antics, and that sometimes erupts into outright hostility and arrogant disdain. It is an attitude that slowly but surely undermines our love for the apostles, our respect for their authority as teachers and

pastors, and our ability to recognize in their office the continuation of Christ's threefold ministry as priest, prophet, and king.

In a moment I will descend to examples. But first I want to make clear that my purpose here is not to engage in polemics—or in blackguarding, as Waugh puts it. To be sure, I personally am deeply saddened and sometimes angered by curt dismissals of very holy and (I judge here as a philosopher) extremely intelligent men like Pope John Paul and Cardinal Ratzinger. It grieves me even more that this dominant attitude of disrespect might pose an obstacle to our students' discovering the truth that will set them free and the truth that did set me free—spiritually, morally, and intellectually—after my own ten-year hiatus from the faith. However, here I'm concerned mainly with the atmosphere that has been created by this attitude and by the resulting confusions that have been spawned in our discussion of the Catholic character. One last preliminary point. It is not part of my purpose to speculate about motives. Some are fairly obvious and close to the surface, e.g., the desire to win acceptance and acclaim from our counterparts in secular universities; others are more hidden and perhaps somewhat darker. It makes no difference for now.

---

**...For the last  
twenty-five years the  
higher echelons of the  
Notre Dame family  
have consciously and  
deliberately distanced  
themselves and the  
University of Our Lady  
from the Bishop of  
Rome and from the  
Vatican generally.**

---

What has happened? "We will be Catholic," they said, "but on our own terms and in our own way. We have come of age. We will hire the best and brightest (or some reasonable facsimile thereof), and we won't scare them away with Catholicism; we will invoke those aspects of Catholicism and Catholic doctrine that they are likely to find attractive and ignore those aspects that they might find repugnant. In any case we will not give in to those individuals and groups [read: grandpa and his friends] who 'would propose to control the development of the Church,'" as our newly

minted mission statement darkly puts it. So as time went on--in the 70's but especially in the remarkable expansion of the 80's—we hired many people who knew very little about Catholicism; who were perhaps hostile to what they did know but were much more likely to be indifferent; who were never so much as invited to meditate on the relationship between faith and reason or on the unity of truth across the disciplines, including theology; who would be bemused by the notion that at a Catholic university we, the faculty, ought to be concerned with the spiritual development of our students as well as their intellectual development; who could not themselves serve as role models of Catholic, or, more generally, Christian intellectuals. Vast numbers of them didn't even have the cultural advantage, shared by many of their older colleagues, of being lukewarm or fallen-away Catholics.

To be sure, at various points in the 70's and 80's directives would come down from on high to hire Catholics. These directives were rather mysterious, seemingly arbitrary, and lacking any intellectually coherent context. In any case, they were easily enough circumvented. I myself remember vividly receiving a phone call in my office at Brown University shortly after I was hired by Notre Dame. The call was from a future senior colleague who told me in no uncertain terms, "Look, I don't care what you do or don't believe these days; but it's really important to us that you check the Catholic box." Again, just a few years ago my department hired four "Catholics" to junior positions, one priest and three others who made no attempt to hide the fact that they had not practiced the faith since childhood; yet they are numbered among the dwindling percentage of Catholic faculty that Fr. Malloy fretted about in his recent letter to the faculty. And, of course, each of us knows of many similar cases. So even if Fr. Hesburgh himself had a coherent vision, that vision never filtered down to the administrative levels where the vast majority of personnel decisions were effectively being made. Is it any wonder that many faculty members, especially younger

faculty members, feel threatened by talk about the Catholic character? Might not some of them reasonably come to suspect that they were hired under false pretenses? But it gets worse. In 1990 Pope John Paul issued his apostolic constitution on Catholic universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. When a preliminary draft had been circulated for comments a few years earlier, the general reaction by administrators on this campus, as well as on other Catholic campuses in this country, might be accurately summed up by a condescending recital of the phrase, "Uh-oh, there goes grandpa again." Don't get me wrong; I, too, believe that the preliminary draft was unsatisfactory. The pope must have suspected as much himself; that's why he sent it out for comments. He got comments alright, but a lot of prideful public posturing as well. Imagine St. Paul, with his deep love for the Church and his repeated insistence that attacks on the unity of the Church are among the most grievous of sins, airing his differences with St. Peter on the pages of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Well, all turned out just fine in the end. Our official—and breathtakingly minirealist—response to the formal version was that we have nothing to fear from the document ... and, it went without saying, nothing to learn from it, either. And this, despite the fact that the first part of the document articulates a deeper, more thoughtful, and more cohesive vision of what a Catholic university is than anything that has ever emanated from the Dome—a vision, by the way, from within which an administrator could deal openly, honestly, and straightforwardly with non-Catholic and non-Christian faculty members. Why, you might ask, wasn't a copy of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* sent to every faculty member? Is what the Vicar of Christ has to say about Catholic universities less significant for us and less worthy of being distributed to the faculty than, say, the President's annual address to the faculty or the Provost's homily at the opening mass? (We now know, from reading the *New York Times*, that in Fr. Malloy's opinion papal documents are boring. Can that be what distinguishes them from the other elocutionary

gems just mentioned?)

As I have adumbrated, this dismissive attitude toward the Holy Father makes it well-nigh impossible for the Administration to deal honestly and openly with precisely those people who feel threatened by talk of the Catholic character. In the same week that Fr. Malloy was bemoaning the decrease in the percentage of Catholic faculty, he was telling (who else?) the New York Times that the Pope's forthcoming encyclical on moral absolutes, *Veritatis Splendor*, can be dismissed a priori as a conservative document issued by a conservative pope. Perhaps Fr. Malloy meant to reassure non-Catholic faculty by intimating that they shouldn't be so naive as to confuse his own use of the term 'Catholic' with the Pope's. The problem, of course, is that none of us knows exactly what Fr. Malloy does mean by 'Catholic' in the phrase 'Catholic character'. An honest observer might even get the impression that he is making it up as he goes along. And, indeed, that is precisely what several of my non-Catholic colleagues believe. I myself first learned of the New York Times article during a faculty meeting which constituted the first serious departmental discussion of the Catholic character we've had in my fifteen years on the philosophy faculty. The article was quoted by a colleague, no friend himself of the Holy Father's (to put it mildly), who complained at length that Fr. Malloy's disdain for the Pope demonstrates that all of this hiding behind Catholicism is not to be taken seriously, and that in fact what we have here is nothing more than a raw power play on the part of the Congregation of Holy Cross to maintain control of the university and to keep the faculty from seizing control. (By the way, it is this line of reasoning that leads to the conclusion, astonishing to me but nonetheless apparently widely accepted, that Fr. Miscamble is no more and no less than an agent of Fr. Malloy's.) Ironically, my unnamed colleague

and many like him view the top echelons of the Administration and of the Order as being every bit as authoritarian and autocratic as the latter themselves accuse the Vatican of being. As one wag put it: "Dissent in the Church but not, by God, in the University!"

In any case, the atmosphere is poisoned; distrust is rampant. My contention is that this is in no small measure due to the failure of the Administration to articulate a deep and carefully thought out vision of what a Catholic university is, and that this failure is itself in no small measure due to the confusion that will inevitably arise when a university—or any other institution or individual, for that matter—tries to be Catholic on its own terms while distancing itself from the Vicar of Christ, i.e., from him who stands in the place of Christ and holds the keys of the Kingdom.

To some outsiders the Catholic Faith will seem anything but what I know it to be, inexhaustible in its spiritual and intellectual riches, liberating in its effects, and full of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Yet a university fashioned in the image of Part I of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* welcomes even such as these—on its own terms, to be sure, but on terms that flow from a coherent vision that promises to preserve the distinctiveness of a Catholic university while promoting the sort of intellectual excellence that could earn the respect, if nothing else the grudging respect, of academics at other, more conventional, universities. It is a vision the rudiments

of which have already attracted many of our most distinguished colleagues to this place, and in the absence of which it will be much more difficult, if not impossible, to attract such established scholars in the future. The alternative, as we know from experience, is to have no coherent vision at all. Within such a context, administrative efforts to patch a bunch of Catholics onto our already existing faculty will be viewed as a merely arbitrary imposition and

---

**Perhaps Fr. Malloy  
meant to reassure non-  
Catholic faculty by  
intimating that they  
shouldn't be so naive as  
to confuse his own use  
of the term 'Catholic'  
with the Pope's**

---

will lead to nothing but more resentment, more distrust, and more of the cynical circumventions we are now all too familiar with. This business-as-usual approach will eventually lead, I predict—extrapolating from the likely future fate of my own department—to a relatively wealthy second- or third-tier university that is distinguished neither in the eyes of God nor in the eyes of the world. This is not a pleasing prospect for any of us. Do we really need yet another second- or third-tier secular university with a good football team? If for no other reason than revulsion at such a bourgeois and, shall we say, boring prospect, I invite you, my colleagues, to study and discuss Part I of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* with an open mind.

Whatever the future might bring, however, this is still at present a great environment for a Catholic intellectual. I know beyond the shadow

of a doubt that I personally have much more intellectual freedom here than I would at a completely secular university. What's more, the students are bright, eager, and teachable; many of them have grown weary of minimalist talk about what they don't have to do or believe in order to be good Catholics, or about who they don't have to pay all that much attention to. They, like the tens of thousands of young people who gathered in Denver last month, are looking for something more positive, for the very sort of spiritual and intellectual challenges that the Faith in all its purity and splendor can open up to them. ♫

Alfred J. Freddoso

September 28, 1993

The eve of the feast of the Archangels,  
Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel

Seton Academy  
350 North Westmore Avenue  
Villa Park, IL 60181

Dear Dr. McInerny,

I am pleased to tell you that Dr. Herbert Ratner has been named the recipient of the 1993 Exemplar Award of Seton Academy. Dr. Ratner has been distinguished as a public health physician, medical philosopher, writer and editor, pro-life leader, eminent Catholic physician, world-traveled speaker, student of Nature, and servant of the Church.

Dr. Ratner is editor of *Child and Family Quarterly* and is a consultor to the Pontifical Council for the Family. He has served as President of the National Federation of Catholic

Physicians' Guilds; Director of Public Health of Oak Park, Illinois; Senior Medical Advisor of La Leche League International; Professor of Community Medicine at Loyola University and New York Medical College, and has been named to many other academic and professional appointments, honors and awards.

Seton Academy is one of many endeavors which looks to Dr. Ratner as its spiritual father. It was not only Dr. Ratner's warm encouragement, but also his profound insights into the nature of the child and of the family which have sustained Seton Academy during its first decade. Now about to begin its eleventh year, Seton Academy is the only Catholic Montessori

elementary school in the Chicago area.

The Exemplar Award is presented annually to someone who exemplifies in an extraordinary way the virtues which we would like our children, and ourselves, to emulate. Dr. Ratner's long life of service to the medical profession, to the pro-life movement, to his many students and friends, and to the Church; his ceaseless toil, gentle wit, and his personal kindness more than qualify him as an exemplar for all.

Sincerely,

William F. White, M.D.

[The award was made on October 17, 1993 at the Ambassador Banquet Hall in Elmhurst, Illinois.]

Professor Ralph McInerny  
President of FCS  
University of Notre Dame, IN

Dear Prof. McInerny,

I had meant to talk to you in Los Angeles about our Canadian Chapter of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars but somehow missed the opportunity. I enclose a copy of our first newsletter —1992, and of the '93 Convention Programme. We have over a hundred members from across Canada — some from almost all of the provinces — most from Ontario. Our convention was well received this year. Indeed our first conven-

tion had over sixty present, with about seventy-five this year. Our focus was *Humanae Vitae* and we hope to have Sceptre publish the papers within the year. Bishop Brendan O'Brian STD, DD, opened our convention and Archbishop Carlo Curis, our papal Nuncio, gave the after dinner oration. We hope to be of benefit to the Church in Canada and wherever we can help. One of the members of our board is Prof. Joseph Boyle, Academic President of St. Michael's College University, Toronto. If you have any questions you would like answered, I will be glad to do so.

The Fellowship, which I joined 13 years ago, has been a great solace and guide to me. John Stone and I decided to try to found the Canadian Chapter over two years ago with Msgr. George Kelly's help and gentle hint to 'do it yesterday.'

May God bless you and your work for the Fellowship,

John B. Shea, M.D. FRCP (C)  
Fellowship of Catholic Scholars  
Canada  
813 Hillcrest Road  
Pickering, Ontario, Canada,  
L1W 2P5

## FCS NEWS

### "I've Made Up My Mind, Don't Disturb Me with the Facts"

Response of Hanna Klaus, M.D. (Sister Miriam Paul, M.M.S.), to: *Natural Planning Not For Children: A Catholic Analysis of Teen STAR*, produced by Human Life International (Rev. Paul Marx, OSB)

**T**hat conclusion was the only one possible for me, after reading Father Paul Marx and Human Life International's No. 6 in HLI's Series of Sex Ed Critiques, *Natural Family Planning, Not For Children: A Catholic Analysis of Teen STAR*. If an undergraduate had written a paper which used sources so selectively and frequently out of context in order to support a conclusion which would appear totally unwar-

ranted to anyone who knew the whole picture, that paper would have received a failing grade. Nonetheless, two members of the Fellowship have concurred in its publication (Fr. Marx, publisher, and Fr. Matthew Habiger, Executive Director of HLI). Fr. Marx says in his bulk mail letter to me that he is circulating this to all the bishops, many priests, etc. and is willing to send any two of his sex ed. critiques for a donation of \$30.00 or more. He also invited John Billings, M.D., to prepare an 800 word review which he proposed to publish. John Billings declined.

I have written a detailed rebuttal of the entire piece which frequently uses incorrect statements even though the authors could know better. Two examples will suffice. Page 1 accuses us of inviting teenage males to *chart* their sexual erections. The Teen STAR program has *never* done that. Even

if we had no moral reservations, such a record would be meaningless. Nevertheless, the writers assert this repeatedly, as if it were true. Further on, they accuse us of trying to drive a wedge between parents and children by having the youngster sign the consent form first. In context, parents receive a letter which explains the program and invites them to a meeting to learn more about it. At the meeting, the program is presented, the consent form explained, and the entire curriculum is available for perusal. Only then do we approach the teens and invite them to participate. Those who choose to do so, must sign the consent form and obtain at least one parent's consent in order to participate. The piece is interlaced with personal attacks on me and arrogates to itself the power to know my mind and my motives. Any one who wishes to see my rebuttal may request it from me.

I have spoken with Fr. Habiger repeatedly and pointed out the errors in the HLI's earlier critique in the July 1992 Special Report. To continue to publish non factual statements even when the discrepancy has been pointed out is not worthy of a Catholic trained in a scholarly discipline and who is obligated at least to justice (if not charity).

Sister Hanna Klaus, M.D.  
Executive Director,  
Teen STAR Program  
PO Box 30239  
Bethesda, MD 20824-0239

*[I have read Sister Hanna Klaus's rebuttal and appended materials and only wish that I could publish them in their entirety in the Newsletter. Interested members are urged to contact Sister. R.McI.]*

## Capital Research Center News Release

Washington, Oct. 26, 1993.—A Washington based philanthropic watchdog has charged that the Campaign for Human Development, a fundraising appeal of the American Catholic Bishops, is supporting the abortion establishment. *Organization Trends*, a Capital Research Center newsletter reports in October that the Bishops' annual collection has given \$100,000 in the last two years to the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP), a nonprofit organization that promotes funding for pro-abortion groups. In 1990, NCRP released a report that discussed "the campaign

of harassment" being waged by the pro-life movement. The report "sounded the alarm over attempts by pro-life groups to push corporations to stop funding abortion organizations, particularly Planned Parenthood," according to the *Organization Trends* piece.

Editor Bob Pambianco notes that NCRP's board of directors has included representatives of five groups which belong to the Coalition for Abortion and Reproductive Equity (C.A.R.E.) The Coalition promotes taxpayer funding of abortion through Medicaid.

The Campaign for Human Development was established by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1969. CHD raises funds ostensibly on behalf of the poor, but routinely funds political pressure groups such as Citizen Action and ACORN. Rather than helping those in need, CHD channels the generous contributions of Catholic Laity to serve radical political activists.

Pambianco asks, "Why does the Campaign for Human Development — established by the Catholic Bishops — finance an organization that seeks to shore up corporate funding of Planned Parenthood, which in 1990 performed 129,155 abortions?"

According to Pambianco "the CHD association with NCRP shows a total disregard for Church teaching on the issue of abortion." He accuses the CHD of "exploiting parishioners for a cause they would never knowingly support."

Copies of the October *Organization Trends* are available through Capital Research Center, 727 Fifteenth Street, N.W., 8th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005. 202-737-5677; FAX 202-737-5692.

## Position Opening

**K**enrick School of Theology, the major seminary of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, invites nominations and applications for a full-time, graduate-level position in Systematic-Doctrinal Theology, with duties to commence in August, 1994. Doctorate and ordination are preferred, but others will be considered. Roman Catholic background is required. Salary and rank are negotiable, according to qualifications and experience.

Responsibilities include instruction at the M.Div. and M.A. level, academic advising of M.A. students, and annual evaluation of M.Div. students. Applications should be received by March 31, 1994. Please send letter of application and c.v. to: Rev. Lawrence C. Brennan, C.M., Academic Dean, Kenrick School of Theology, 5200 Glennon Drive, St. Louis, MO 63119. Telephone: (314) 644-0266. FAX: (314) 644-3079.

**Money Guide —  
Best College Buys Now,  
1994 Edition, showed  
Thomas Aquinas College  
as one of the  
top fifteen Colleges  
in the West.**

### *Living a Christian Life*

Germain Grisez

Franciscan Press; 1800 College Avenue; Quincy, Illinois 62301. Pp. xxiii, 950.

Reviewed by Ronald Lawler

This long awaited second volume of Germain Grisez's major work in moral theology builds on his first volume, *Christian Moral Principles*, and treats at great length and with admirable clarity the specific moral responsibilities faced by people generally. Volumes 3 of the set will treat the special responsibilities of certain groups of people (physicians, lawyers, business men, and the like), and volume 4 will treat the responsibilities of clerics and religious.

This is a very long book. Much is crowded onto each of its 950 large pages. It covers the sorts of questions that moral theologians always treated, and many that they treated only briefly or not at all. For Grisez has learned from the Second Vatican Council a larger and more appropriate understanding of the aims of moral theology than classical manualists had. Here there is no neglect of the Gospel roots of Christian morality, no minimalism, no forgetfulness of the sublime vocation of every Christian.

To study this book is to acquire a broad education in moral theology, and in all the great ideas with which moral theology is concerned. The book has not only a grand scope, but it speaks to moral questions with sensitive awareness of all the contemporary objections hurled at Christian morality. Some may object to certain features of

this creative and forceful study; but no one seriously interested in Catholic moral theology in our times should fail to study this work carefully.

The first three chapters of the book, on the responsibilities flowing from faith, hope, and love treat far more than theologians ordinary treated in discussion the moral responsibilities related to these virtues. Much of the fresh material is splendid. He presents a carefully reasoned treatment of what makes Catholic faith genuinely credible; he provides a compact expression of, and a sound answer to, the "logical", case against supernatural faith; and he spells out freshly the basic reasons why it is good to be a Catholic Christian.

Some of the eleven chapters are really book length treatises. The 100-page chapter on "Marriage, Sexual Acts, and Family Life" would be well over 200 pages in another format. And this does not even include the treatment on contraception which appears in another chapter (as a life question, rather than one of sexual ethics.)

This treatment of family and sexual ethics is excellent. It faces difficult questions with exceptional clarity and force. One sees *why* the positions faith has taken are true with a new clarity. The reasons why lustful acts are always objectively gravely wrong are presented more clearly than I have ever seen them presented elsewhere. Moreover, this whole chapter is pastorally most helpful: it treats a host of real questions that are important for many of the faithful, yet are seldom treated with the wisdom and grace with which they are treated here.

Chapters ten and eleven, on "Work, Subhuman Realities, and

Property" and "Patriotism, Politics, and Citizenship" treat very well subjects often neglected in seminary study, yet clearly of great contemporary importance. The moral questions raised by environmental concerns and by those who defend animal rights are presented with great clarity. In his careful study of the social teachings of the Church Grisez gives his readers a very clear and balanced introduction to the creative work of Pope John Paul II.

Grisez's work is always thorough. In the treatment on abortion, for example, his treatment of the reasons why it is reasonable to hold that human persons begin to be at fertilization, and of the reasons why from fertilization the new young instance of human life should be counted as a person are magnificent, and face effectively the most sophisticated contemporary objections to the received Catholic position.

Still, in this reviewer's position the chapter on life issues is marred by retention of a familiar position of Grisez's: that acts such as craniotomy are sometimes legitimate. In craniotomies the head of the unborn child is crushed and its brains squeezed out. Craniotomy is unconvincingly described as merely altering "the child's physical dimensions (p. 502)." With many others who agree fundamentally with the author's action theory, I find this very mistaken. So to crush a child's head is not a morally neutral kind of act, which happens to have death as an unintended side effect. Like an act of removing a person's head, it is a killing act, and when such an act is chosen and done (even to save another's life), it should be called gravely wrong.

Now it is true that the author properly (but in a way rarely followed by contemporary theologians) urges readers to "follow the Church's teaching" rather than his own positions when these might be in conflict (n.85, p. 503). It is true also that those who disagree with the author have seldom given anything like adequate responses to his objections to the received teaching of the Church. Still, I think that the case for the Church's positions should have been given more satisfactorily in a manual intended chiefly for seminarians.

Moreover, I am not persuaded by his novel account of certain kinds of marriages. So-called "imperfect marriages" are said to be true marriages, but to lack some of the essential properties of marriage. This is explained by saying that since marriage is not a natural species, it can somehow really be marriage without having marriage's essential properties (p. 595). It seems to me that no instance of a kind of thing that has essential properties can lack those essential properties. But what is more important to me is that this creative thesis, which deserves the reflection of theologians, deserves also their criticism before the study is placed in a text in moral theology intended chiefly for seminarians; and I think that the contrary view, which is more in accord with Church teaching, should be presented more persuasively. But this cannot be said fairly without recalling how strong and courageous a defender of the moral teaching of the Catholic Church Grisez has always been. All of us who work in Catholic moral theology are deeply indebted to this author, and this volume gives us many new reasons for being

grateful for his work.

[Note, This book sells for \$35.00 at the publisher. But copies of both volumes one (*Christian Moral Principles*) and two (*Living a Christian Life*) can be obtained from the author for just \$27.50 each, including postage. When ordering at this special price, write to Jeanette Grisez, Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, MD 21727-7799; specify clearly which volume or volumes is being ordered; and make checks payable to Mount Saint Mary's College.]

**To Hunt, To Shoot, To Entertain:  
Clericalism and the Catholic Laity**

Russell Shaw

Ignatius Press, San Francisco

201 pages. PB \$12.95

Reviewed by K.D. Whitehead

"Clericalism." in the minds of most historically educated Americans, is a phenomenon thought to be mostly applicable to the Church in Europe, where the once traditional alliance between throne and altar long persisted in perceived involvement by the clergy in matters which, in modern times, came to be thought more within the province of the secular state. According to this understanding of the word, the sometimes rabid anti-clericalism typically found in such predominantly Catholic countries as France, Italy, or Spain represented the reaction of forces bent on secularization in these countries to the always enormous fact that the Catholic Church and her clergy are inevitably going to loom large in any society where they retain the loyalty of even a fraction of the population.

In the United States, where the separation of Church and State has obtained from the beginning, however, neither "clericalism" nor "anti-clericalism" was ever thought to be present in the same degree or to pose problems in the same way.

Anyone with this fairly common meaning of the word "clericalism" in mind, then, might initially wonder why Russel Shaw would want to write an entire book about "clericalism and the Catholic laity." What is the problem? some might even ask. Catholics loyal to the Magisterium during the crisis of faith of the past thirty years might especially wonder what the problem might possibly be, since we have all been so busy defending the legitimate authority of the hierarchy and the clergy in the system Christ set up, defending it both from today's theological dissenters (who have too often themselves been clerics) and also from the half-baked "leveling" notions of those whom Russell Shaw calls the "neo-congregationists" in the Church—the people who have unilaterally interpreted "the spirit of Vatican II" to mean that henceforth we should all simply bask in one big happy "democracy" within the Catholic communion in the United States, with priests and religious and even bishops henceforth considered to be "no better" than the laity and anybody's view in particular of faith and morals just as valid as anybody else's view.

In setting out to write this book, Shaw admits that he encountered incomprehension of his aim in writing about "clericalism." A priest told him, for example, "I don't think it's much of a problem. There's a lot of anti-clericalism out

there among women over the woman's ordination thing. But you don't find much clericalism anymore."

Russell Shaw begs to differ. It is a matter of what you mean by the word. The fact is that he has written a very important book on what he means by clericalism. For him clericalism represents an attitude of elitism on the part of the clergy and religious whereby their status as members of the body of Christ who are expressly "set apart" for certain purposes is also supposed to mean that they are somehow superior to those not set apart, namely, the laity; and that the clergy and religious are somehow the Christians riding in the "first class" compartment while others are banished to coach or tourist class. On this view, the priesthood and the religious life would be the sole and necessary "models" of the Christian life, to which all must necessarily aspire, even though these models are also necessarily beyond the reach of anyone without vows or the sacrament of orders.

One application of this common elitist attitude on the part of many clergy which Shaw identifies as "clericalism" is the belief that the laity can only approximate the Christ-life to the extent that they imitate the clerical or religious life—a belief which, according to Russell Shaw, is, unfortunately, widely shared by the laity themselves in America today. Indeed this belief has in some ways been strengthened in recent years, with many of the laity imagining that the fullness of the Christian vocation to which they have been called by Vatican Council II essentially means that they should now

be getting into all the new clerical or semi-clerical "ministries" which have so proliferated in recent years (while, ironically, so many liberal priests and nuns, exemplifying the same general confusion a rebours, get into so many "activist" pursuits in the world, saving the environment, fighting the multi-national corporations, lobbying Congress, and the like.)

No one can deny that there remains much confusion concerning the whole question of "vocations" in the church, even though Vatican II emphasized that God calls each and every one of us in whatever state of life to go and bear fruit. Shaw ascribes much of the responsibility for this confusion to clericalism, which he finds to have been present through a good part of the Church's history. Even Jesus was a victim of the clericalist mentality of the time, he points out.

Shaw takes his title from a once famous sally by the once well-known Msgr. George Talbot, the egregious nineteenth-century British ultramontane—and frequent nemesis in Rome of Father John Henry Newman—who once rhetorically asked the archbishop of Westminster: "What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, to entertain? These matters they have no right at all." the clericalist assumption behind this remark, namely, that the laity have no role to play in the Church except to follow—at a distance!—the direction of the clergy and try to imitate them the best they can, was most effectively answered around the same time by the future Cardinal Newman himself, when he responded to a similar question by his own bishop about the laity by

observing that—"the Church would look pretty silly without them"!

Writing today from the perspective of Vatican II's "universal call to holiness" and the specific call to the laity in *Lumen Gentium* to work to order temporal affairs according to the plan of God, Shaw convincingly demonstrates from Church teaching that the laity, no less than the clergy and religious, are indeed called by God in their own sphere, that is, as laity; they have their own vocation which are in no way merely pale imitations of the priestly and religious vocations.

Among other things, this book constitutes one of the best expositions of the authentic meaning of important teachings of the still much misunderstood even though much discussed Second Vatican Council. The essential ecclesial task today remains getting out the authentic message of Vatican II and getting it put into practice in the lives of the faithful. The author is acutely aware—in opposition to both the liberals and the extreme traditionalists in the Church—that Vatican II has not been tried and has failed; as Chesterton remarked of Christianity, it has still not yet been tried. And one of the reasons for this, according to Shaw, is the persistence of attitudes of clericalism in the Church which never could really be justified but now can even less be justified in the light of Vatican II.

According to Shaw, it has been Vatican II which, for the first time in the history of the Church, has finally ever been able to present the Catholic laity as something besides the body of the faithful within the Church who were neither priests

nor religious. This largely negative definition of the laity—which unfortunately, has essentially been the Church's traditional definition of the laity, and, in some respects, persists still—has now been superseded by the great chapter on the laity in Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium:

By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope, and charity, they must manifest Christ to others (#31).

As Shaw aptly remarks: "To put it bluntly, the Catholic laity have more important things to do than 'ministry.'" They have a world to sanctify—a world to which they must bring Christ since he is too often currently absent from it.

It would be an understatement to say that today's laity have even properly begun to develop their true vocations along the lines Vatican II has called for. One of the principal reasons for this failure, according to Shaw, is the still too-common attitude of clericalism. Nevertheless, as he sees it, "the elements for making an end of

clericalism now exist. They are a new theology of vocation which emphasizes unique individual vocation; a new vision of the Christian life which stresses the continuity in human goods between life in this world and life in heaven; and a new ecclesiology of the Church as communio. The challenge we face is to put these principles to work."

Russell Shaw has abundantly demonstrated in this book that the attitudes of believers in Christ must be separated from the false old clericalist ideas, if Christ is ever going to be effectively brought by the witness of lay Catholics to today's world.

**Born to be King:  
The Epic of the Incarnation,**  
Dom Bernard Orchard,  
(London, Ealing Abbey  
Scriptorium 1993, 352 pp., no  
price listed)

Reviewed by George A. Kelly

**I**t is a pleasure to read this book by a distinguished English biblical scholar who, though an octogenarian, is young in the love of the Church and the bible.

Dom Orchard, a Benedictine monk and priest of Ealing Abbey, writes about Christ not simply out of the Church's documents of its ecclesial infancy but out of its living witness to their meaning. The opening chapter recapitulates the history of salvation prior to Christ and then in twenty additional chapters lays out the story of his infancy and childhood, his public life in fifteen separate stages, ending with two chapters of what he calls the life of glory.

Of special help to readers, in a

style breeding clarity more than putative but obscure learning, but scholarly nonetheless, Fr. Bernard is particularly adept at laying out the social and political background of the Lord's life and his gospel message within the Catholic tradition. For example, he says: The view taken in this book, based on the two-gospel hypothesis, is that Mt. is not only the first gospel to be written but it was published before AD 44, and that Mt. and Jn. are the accounts of the apostolic eye-witnesses of Jesus' words and actions, while Lk. and Mk. are guaranteed by apostolic eye-witnesses.

The appendices are especially helpful: references to Christ in contemporary secular literature, chronological tables, the plan of Jerusalem and of the temple, and a map of the Holy Land at the time of Jesus's ministry.

We await the American edition.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

### New from Alba House, Staten Island, NY:

*My Rosary Journal*, William F. Maestri, ISBN 0-8189-0673-1, 102 pp.

*The Angels*, Maria Pia Giudici, ISBN 0-8189-0636-7, 151 pp.

*Meditations on Mary*, Terence Cooke, ISBN 0-8189-0683-9, 132 pp.

*Killing Me Softly*, Msgr. Aloysius Schwartz, ISBN 0-8189-0685-5 154 pp.

*Man, Woman & God*, Msgr. Vincent Fecher, ISBN 0-8189-0672-3, 91 pp.

*Spiritual Direction according to St. Paul of the Cross*, Bennet Kelly, ISBN 0-8189-0653-7, 161 pp.

### New from St. Bede's Publications:

*Word & Spirit: A Monastic Review, The Spiritual Journey*, ISBN 0193-9211, 108 pp.

*Centered on Christ*, Augustine Roberts, ISBN 0-932506-99-2, 173 pp.

### New from Continuum Publishing, New York:

*Hans Kung: New Horizons For Faith and Thought*, ed. Karl-Josef Kuschel and Hermann Haring, ISBN 0-8264-0593-2, 402 pp.

### New from Crossroad Publishing Co., New York:

*South and Meso-American Native Spiritual-ity: From the Cult of the Feathered Serpent to the Theology of Liberation*, ed. Gary H. Gossen, ISBN 0-8245-1224-3, 563 pp.

*Mary: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, ed. Edward Schillebeeckx and Catharina Halkes, ISBN 0-8245-1371-1, 88 pp. \$9.95.

*The Great Church Year: The Best of Karl Rahner's Homilies, Sermons, and Meditations*, ed. Albert Raffelt and Harvey Egan, ISBN 0-8245-1228-6, 396 pp., \$29.95 hardcover.

*The Birth of the New Testament*, Raymond F. Collins, ISBN 0-8245-1276-6, 324 pp.

*Reasoned Faith: Essays on the Interplay of Faith and Reason*, ed. Frank T. Birtel, ISBN 0-8245-1247-2, 231 pp.

### New from Franciscan Press: Stuebenville, OH

*We Hold These Truths And More: The Thought of Fr. John Courtney Murray, S. J. and Its Relevance Today*, ed. Donald J. D'Elia & Stephen M. Krason, ISBN 0-940535-48-3, 263 pp.

### New from Georgetown University Press: Washington D.C.,

*Catholic Universities in Church and Society: A Dialogue on Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, ed. John P. Langan, ISBN 0-87840-544-5, 261 pp

### New from Ignatius Press: San Francisco, CA 94118 (415) 387-2324

*Rome Sweet Home: Our Journey to Catholicism*, Scott & Kimberly Hahn, ISBN 0-89870-478-2, 182 pp.

*Redeemer in the Womb*, John Saward, ISBN 0-89870-427-8, 184 pp.

*To Hunt, To Shoot, To Entertain: Clericalism and the Catholic Laity*, Russell Shaw, ISBN 0-89870-455-3, 201 pp.

*Saints for Sinners*, Alban Goodier, S.J., ISBN 0-89870-463-4, 171 pp.

*Quo Vadis?*, Henry Senkiewicz, ISBN 0-89870-475-8, 493 pp.

*50 Questions on the Natural Law*, Charles Rice ISBN 0-89870-454-5 332pp.

*He's Put The Whole World In Her Hands*, Dan Paulos ISBN 0-89870-466-9, 128 pp.

*John Paul II Speaks to Youth!*, Ed. Catholic News Service, 128 pp.

### New from Sophia Institute Press:

*Meditations Before Mass*, Romano Guardini, ISBN 0-918477-17-4, 204 pp.

### New from St. Paul Books & Media:

*Film Makers, Film Viewers: Their Challenges and Opportunities*, Cardinal Roger M. Mahony, ISBN 0-8198-2654-5, 32 pp.

*Intimate Bedfellows: Love, Sex and the Catholic Church*, Thomas and Donna Finn, ISBN 0-8198-3667-2, 85 pp.

*He Loved Them To The End*, Bruno Forte, ISBN 0-8198-3369-X, 127 pp.

*The Splendor of Truth*, John Paul II, ISBN 0-8198-6964-3. 154 pp.

### New from The University of Illinois Press:

*The Pluralistic Philosophy of Stephen Crane*, Patrick Dooley, 212 pp., \$34.95 hardback

**Board of Directors  
of the Fellowship of  
Catholic Scholars  
1993-1995**

*PRESIDENT AND EDITOR OF FCS  
NEWSLETTER*

**Prof. Ralph McInerny,**  
Jacques Maritain Center  
714 Hesburgh Library  
Notre Dame, IN 46556  
(O) (219) 631-5825  
(H) (219) 232-2960

*PRESIDENT EMERITUS*

**Rev. Msgr. George A. Kelly**  
St. Joseph's Seminary  
Catechetical Institute  
Yonkers, NY 10704  
(O) (914) 968-6200 ext 8275

*1ST VICE PRESIDENT*

**Prof. Gerard V. Bradley**  
219 Law School, Notre Dame, IN  
46556  
(O) (219) 631-8385

*TREASURER*

**Dr. Joseph P. Scottino**  
Gannon University, Erie, PA  
16541  
(O) (814) 871-7272  
(H) (814) 459-6258

*EXECUTIVE SECRETARY*

**Msgr. William B. Smith,**  
St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie  
Yonkers, NY 10704  
(O) (914) 968-6200  
(H) (214) 963-7487

*DIRECTORS*

**Dr. Carl Anderson**  
John Paul II Institute  
2900 N. Dinwiddie St.  
Arlington, VA 22207  
(O) (202) 526-3799  
(H) (703) 534-9144

**Rev. Kenneth Baker, S.J.**  
Homiletic and Pastoral Review  
86 Riverside Dr.  
New York, NY 10024  
(O) (212) 799-2600

**Rev. Cornelius Buckley, S.J.**  
University of San Francisco  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
(O) (415) 666-0123

**Dr. Jude Dougherty**  
Catholic University of America  
Washington, DC 20064  
(O) (202) 635-5259  
(H) (301) 299-7886

**Sister Timothea Elliot, RSM**  
St. Joseph's Seminary  
Dunwoodie  
Yonkers, NY 10704  
(O) (914) 968-6200

**Sister Joan Gormley**  
Mount St. Mary's Seminary  
Emmitsburg, Maryland  
(O) (301) 933-1279  
(H) (301) 447-5295

**Dr. Michael J. Healy**  
Franciscan University of  
Steubenville  
Steubenville, OH 43952  
(O) (614) 283-6228  
(H) (614) 282-2146.

**Dr. James Hitchcock**  
St. Louis University  
St. Louis, MO 63103  
(O) (314) 658-2910  
(H) (314) 863-1654

**Rev. Ronald Lawler, OFM.  
CAP.**

St. Paul's Seminary  
2900 Noblestown Rd.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15205  
(O) (412) 921-5800

**Dr. Joyce Little**

St. Thomas University  
Houston, TX 77006  
(O) (713) 522-7911  
(H) (713) 956-1936

**Dr. William May**

John Paul II Institute  
487 Michigan Ave.NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
(O) (202) 526-3799  
(H) (301) 946-1037

**Dr. Janet E. Smith**  
University of Dallas  
1845 Northgate Dr.  
Irving, TX 75062  
(O) (214) 721-5258  
(H) (314) 650-0785.

**Dr. Joseph Varacalli**  
Nassau Community College  
Garden City, NY 11530  
(O) (516) 222-7454  
(H) (516) 334-3103

**Rev. Earl A. Weis, S.J.**  
Loyola University  
Chicago, IL 60626  
(O) (312) 274-3000

**Dr. Kenneth Whitehead**  
809 Ridge Place  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
(H) (703) 538-5085

---

**Fellowship of  
Catholic Scholars  
Newsletter**  
Box 495  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

---

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Notre Dame, Indiana  
Permit No. 10

---

Fellowship  
of Catholic  
Scholars  
Newsletter

