

Abortion, and Now, Suicide

Gerard V. Bradley

Did you know that the New Testament views the suicide of Judas not as sinful (or as wrong or regrettable), but approvingly as an “act of repentance?” Have you heard that the “rage for suicide” among early Christians was turned back only by St. Augustine’s “utilitarian” concern that the ranks of Christians were fast thinning?

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, based in San Francisco and with a jurisdiction covering about a quarter of all Americans, affirmed these propositions (and many more, equally preposterous) in a March 6, 1996 judicial opinion. The false teaching is bad enough. What’s worse is that the judges justified a constitutional right to physician-assisted suicide partly on the false teaching. The opinion (eerily titled *Compassion in Dying v. Washington*) reads much like *Roe v. Wade*, with all its pseudo-history of Greek, Roman and general historical attitudes toward abortion. Like *Roe v. Wade*, *Compassion* sought to present its conclusion as, if not within the mainstream of Western ethical reflection on the taking of one’s own life, just barely outside it.

Compassion’s systematic misrepresentation of Christian moral judgment owes not just to stupidity and disingenuousness, but also to the judges’ reductionist account of human action. On their account, one does an act and one ends up dead. Call it suicide if you like. Call it martyrdom. What’s the difference? One is just as dead, either way. So, the *Compassion* court adduced a history of martyrdom and of Christian hope of heaven during times of earthly tribulation, as evidence of Christianity’s favorable evaluation of suicide. On this court’s view (and in the view of the lower court opinion it affirmed), whether Jesus was a martyr or a suicide is impossible to say. And it doesn’t really matter what you say.

The heart of the Ninth Circuit holding is the heart of the Supreme Court’s privacy jurisprudence — precisely the moral subjectivism that the Holy Father so aptly denounced in *Veritatis Splendor* as incompatible with the Christian life. I call this overarching constitutional protection for “autonomy” the “megaright,” and it was anointed in a 1992 abortion case, *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*. Of prior decisions affording “constitutional protection to personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation,

(continued on page 2)

O Timothee, depositum custodi, devitans profanas vocum novitates et oppositiones falsi nominis scientiae, quam quidam profitentes circa fidem aberraverunt. Gratia vobiscum. 1 ad Timotheum 6

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contraception, family relationships, child rearing, and education,” the *Compassion* court said (quoting *Casey*):

These matters involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, are central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of the meaning of existence, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State.

Compassion got this much right: once you affirm the “megaright” (note well: articulated in a pro-abortion opinion by three Republican appointees — Souter, O’Connor, and Kennedy) — it is a straight shot to a suicide and, I should think, “gay marriage.”

The Supreme Court might hear an appeal from the Ninth Circuit, but it could not reverse *Compassion* without implicitly repudiating the basis of its abortion jurisprudence. Do not count on that. And, when Hawaii legalizes “gay marriage” next year, the Supreme Court will, in my judgment, eventually affirm it as well. ☒

Being Catholic: Whole and Entire

Patron’s Day Lecture

Allentown College of St. Francis De Sales

Wednesday, January 24, 1996

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

The Church at its Best

More than fifty years ago last September, four baby priests, each ordained two years, sat in a Jacksonville rectory dissecting the problems of the Church, when out of the corner of the room came the voice of the irritated pastor, up to then quietly reading his office, “If you guys are looking for the best of the Church, look to your own priesthood and you’ll have no time to complain about your seniors!” The barb was somewhat deserved, because at our age we had no perspective or experience to make judgments on anything. We had just completed — with 100 other priests — the parish visitation of every Catholic home in the Diocese of St. Augustine, then almost all of Florida and, having walked the streets for three months, we had come face to face with a great many talkers, talkers often being the parishes’ best complainers.

The parochial facts, when finally in, were quite impressive. In that year 1944, three quarters of the married Catholics made their Easter Duty and attended Mass every Sunday. These couples had larger families than non-Catholics. The better educated were the better practicing Catholics, and also had larger families than the less educated. More than 85 percent of single Catholics attended Sunday Mass.

Little did I know, then, that I was entering one of the most impressive periods in the history of the Church in the United States, or anywhere. The Catholic population was to double from 20 million in 1940 to 40 million by the opening of the Second Vatican Council, mostly practicing Catholics, priests doubling from 25,000 to 50,000, religious tripling from 50,000 to 150,000 and a Catholic school enrollment that grew to 5 million and more. This system was already turning out upwardly mobile Americans and practicing Catholics in record numbers. Up until the Council, the most stable and fruitful Catholic families, the most religiously observant, the most zealous lay apostles in the Church, were the graduates of Catholic colleges. Revisionists later spoke only about how the Church was too insti-

tutional, insufficiently charismatic, and had failed to penetrate the American culture in those days. Still the piety of the faithful then, and their “*sensus fidei*” cannot be gainsaid, and it would have been difficult to find the equal of the American Church anywhere. As for the culture, the Catholic moment might have arrived had the Church retained its clear convictions and clerical discipline.

Fr. George Bull, S.J., a professor at Fordham, writing for *America Press* in 1956, just six years before Vatican II, asked the question “What is a Catholic college?” He attributed the success of our American Catholic college system to the Church’s ability to improve the intelligence level of its faithful in all fields of secular knowledge, and to send forth young men and women well-informed about the Catholic creeds and worship. Fr. Bull took for granted the educational excellence of the Fordhams of the United States, but was not shy either to add: “If the Catholic college in this country has neglected even partially either of its two functions, it has not neglected the first. It has, thank God, sent forth from its halls generations of men and women who knew their Catholic faith.” Having been a parish priest 14 years by that time, I would hasten to assure you, “and knew how to practice it, too!”

Why should anyone have expected otherwise, when the Church was doing its best? Things were not always so good, however, for our infant Church. When she began to come into her own, about the time of the early Baltimore Councils after 1829, priests were described by one Church historian as men “who knew not how to obey,” and Catholic laity were said to be “interpreting their share of Catholic life by non-Catholic norms.”¹ The chief obstacle to a vibrant Catholicity at the time, apart from the inherited weakness in all of God’s creatures, was the dominant Protestant culture which, though Christian, did not like papists, and whose leaders conducted a crusade to keep them from securing a favorable place in American society.

But, then, the bishops went to work. They preached to their own all the credal truths the country’s opinion-molders did not like, brought discipline into priestly lives, encouraged the coming and oversaw the development of religious communities of men and women, identified their flock with the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, established a separate school system,

defended their poor (even when prelates were embarrassed at times by their prodigal behavior), inculcated in immigrants a genuine love of America and the importance of obedience by Catholics to the laws of the land. Etched in the keystone of every Catholic school was the maxim: “For God and Country.” This was the patri-mony out of which came as fine a body of Catholic Churchgoers and American Patriots as this nation, or any other, ever saw.

Catholicity as Universe

Again, I ask: When the Church is working at her best, why should this not be so? Is not Catholicity intended to be a cosmos of sorts, a global religious village, a world view whose breadth encompasses God in his heaven and the lowliest of those made in his image and likeness? A universe which embraces Jesus Christ as its Lord, whose Living Body was commanded to “makes disciples of all nations.” Is this not the reason Orestes Brownson and Flannery O’Connor became converts, the reason why the Church gained the Sisters of Charity and the Paulist Fathers, the reason why Elizabeth Seton and Isaac Hecker so believed? Who said it better than the greatest convert after St. Paul, the bishop who explained his change of heart by his change of mind: “I would not believe in the gospel had not the authority of the Catholic Church moved me.”² That convert was, of course, St. Augustine of Hippo.

The Church, therefore, is no mere congregation of people who pray in a different way, whose beliefs and customs are simply alien idiosyncrasies, nor a people who are content to live in their local situation without attempting to change it. No, the Church is a community of believers on a mission to lead all mankind to God, providing this mankind with a world view about human nature itself and about the eternal dimension of their existence. Catholicity is a way of life; but it is also a way of thinking. Some undoubtedly consider this claim to be an arrogant posture, but it belongs with the

territory claimed by Christ. Hans Küng compared “Catholicism” to “Communism” to make the Church look bad but, as both Marx and Lenin discovered, their most formidable foe was the Catholic Church. Her total commitment to God guaranteed that the Church would be a stranger in

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the land of its secular counterpart, and a threat to totalitarianism of any kind, even if the Church at times committed her worst sins by aping the worst features of the omniscient State.

The Church seeks to cast its spell over every sphere of human life — intellect, will, emotions, conscience, and behavior, mankind's private and public world, society's philosophy, business practices, artistic expression, its law and scientific research. Influence on the culture, if it comes at all, springs from the impact of Catholic lives on the civic community, and through the faith-filled Catholic institutions willing to place their witness to Christ out there for all to see. These citizens and these institutions, created by bishops or by religious communities under the jurisdiction of bishops, are not simple self-defense mechanisms for the Church, though they are that, too; nor are they self-interest groupings seeking special privilege. Catholic institutions, if faithful representations of what the Church is, are stand-ins for Christ feeding the multitude, healing the sick, scolding the hypocrites and the money changers, teaching all, who will listen, how to pray to God. A Catholic body free to function but willing to hide its identity, or to conduct itself as if half believing/half unbelieving, is hardly the right witness to a credible Christ.

Would it not be ridiculous for the Body of Christ to be otherwise? Was it not He who argued “No house divided against itself will stand.” (Mt. 12:26)? And in whose name St. Paul (I Cor. 1:13) inveighed “Is Christ divided?” What did the final Book of Scripture, called Revelation, mean when it importuned the disciples in Laodicea to be “hot or cold,” not lukewarm (Rev. 3:15-16)? The same Christ whose final prayer at the Last Supper petitioned that the world would continue to know him only because his disciples were one (Jn. 17:23)?

Gilbert Keith Chesterton insisted that there is a Catholic way of teaching everything, even the alphabet. Sister Catechismus of eons ago, and the Jesuit Fr. Bulls of old, knew that the best compliment paid in those days to some of our graduates was the surprise of an observant non-believer, which caused him to say, “You must be a Catholic!” When that happened, the Church was doing right.

Catholicity the Rival of Secularity

For these and similar reasons, every historian worth his doctorate takes for granted the built-in rivalry between Christ's Church and Secular States,³ from their study of Emperor Constantine through that of King Louis XIV and President William Clinton. After centuries of absolute monarchs and strong popes invading each other's domain, secular thinkers discovered that a “neutral state” would be a blessed relief from the religious wars of yesteryear. Many Catholics, too, looked upon the American experiment as particularly laudable, in view of its seeming benefits to both religion and civility. However, practice does not always follow theory. The Catholic Church is never neutral toward any State, so why should any State be neutral to her? The Church survived Protestant America because the Founding Fathers, Christians in background, as they were, allowed Catholic bishops maneuvering room. Opinion-molders of the 19th century may not have liked Catholic immigrants very much, and native American Catholics were often embarrassed, too, by the behavior of their new co-religionists, but Catholic bishops had freedom, along with their religious orders, to establish schools and agencies which were totally Catholic in purpose and identity, yet American in sentiment and enthusiasm. Catholic leadership was free to manage these infrastructures without interference, and at certain points of time, Protestant legislators provided money — no strings attached — whenever any of those schools or agencies provided a public service. Furthermore, the mores of the nation, especially as they pertained to family life, character formation for citizenship, restraint of social deviance, were based on the Ten Commandments of God, which were Jewish before they were Christian.

This is past history, we know. Protestant culture is no more. The Catholic moment never arrived. And the benign Welfare State, conceived with Christian inspiration, has grown up to be secularist. Not secular, mind you, in the adjectival sense, meaning simply “worldly” or “of the times,” but an ideology which rejects religion “from on high,” even Protestantism. Secular Humanism, as it is regularly called, has no interest in God, not even in pagan idols. Their protagonists treasure man and the evolutionary betterment of the human condition. They search for wisdom not by listening to prophets, rabbis or popes, but by collating

human experience and studying it scientifically. We of the 20th century know, if anyone does, the profit that has come to human kind from such studies. But we men and women of faith know also that many eternal verities are not scientifically verifiable, like Jesus Christ Son of God. We readers of Holy Writ have not forgotten the Kingdom of Babel either, nor the babbling tongues that plagued the children of Noah, when they decided that, by human effort alone, their generations would live prosperously and safely (Gen. 1 1). Nor Our Lord's words to his tempter: "One does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God." (Mt. 4:4).

In the modern dispensation, the Secular State is a tempter, which looks upon entanglement with Deity, as represented by Churches, as inimical to its worldly pursuits. Its "neutrality" to any religion, putatively from "on high," is feigned. Partisans of enlightened mankind consider revealed religion to be an obstacle to human progress, no less so than do Marxian Socialists. Furthermore, it makes no sense for them to encourage, support or underwrite a contentious rival to secular hegemony over the minds of their citizens.

Significantly, the Supreme Court, beginning in 1947 with its extreme rhetoric in the Everson case, began to reinterpret the U. S. Constitution as having a high wall of separation between religion "from on high" and the allegedly neutral government. By 1961, the Supreme Court further declared (*Torcaso v. Watkins*) that Secular Humanism, though non-theist and "from below," was a real religion, on a par with Judaism and Christianity, protected within the meaning of the First Amendment. (Over the years several Humanist Manifestos⁴ — akin to Christian creeds — have publicly rejected notions of God, of Christ as Son of God, the Baptism of infants, the Confirmation of the young, and any Christian indoctrination aimed at children.) Our Protestant forefathers would likely be outraged to discover, on Resurrection Day, that their grand experiment with a neutral State, which favored Protestantism, would two centuries later permit the American government to become entangled only with Secular Humanism. Was not the first American Catholic intellectual a perceptive convert? One year after his

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conversion in 1844, Orestes Brownson, saw clearly that, if religion was necessary to make democracy work, it must be, he said, "a religion which is above the people." His fear, then, was that, despite the promise of democracy, an aristocracy of one kind or another would arise in America, which would arrogate to itself "the voice of God." Brownson foresaw, too, that the inevitable consequence of a populist Protestantism was Secularism.⁵ Constitutional

lawyer William Bentley Ball calls the recent jurisprudence of the modern Supreme Court as "No Popery in New Garb."⁶ What makes anyone, therefore, especially a Catholic, think that the Secularist State can ever be neutral to any religion which claims to be above the people?"

Secularized Religion or Religious Secularism

But, another type of secularism is also worthy of our attention, viz. Religious Secularism, or, if you prefer, Secularized Religion. Since the secularist thinks that nothing is "above the people," that God does not exist, nor a divinely instituted Church, he also sees religion, whose existence he cannot deny, as being "of, by, and for" the people. Only voluntary associations of searchers for a transcendental experience can be recognized by the secular State, whose authority over the people's worldly well-being is overarching. The study of this religious experience is not theology, but anthropology, the sociology of religion or religious studies. No "Church," therefore, can set parameters for the State; it is incumbent upon the State, however, to set parameters of behavior for any "Church" which claims to be "above the people."⁷

At the turn of the 20th century, when Pius X caught up with this ideology within "the Church," he labeled it "Modernism." What was Modernism? It was, and is, a school of thought which considered, or considers, Christianity, whatever be its divine pretensions, to be merely a human religious enterprise, and which, after a scientific study of its needs by those most competent to make proper judgments on such matters,

is subject to development according to evolutionary laws of human progress and change. Although Christianity claims its origins in the credible witness of Christ (Mt. 5:21-22; Jn. 5:36-37), a testimony meant to be validated throughout history by the authentic witness of the Apostles and their successors, Modernism's heresy shifted the focus for such judgments, even about Christ and the Church, from bishops to "the knowledge class." Furthermore, the creeds, formulated by early Church Fathers (on the basis of empirical evidence), are neither divinely inspired, nor timeless, nor irrevocable. In the lexicon of Modernists supernatural is out, nature is in, and religion itself, whatever its mystical characteristics, is little more than a body of non-quantitative verbalizations about people's secular experience.

Lest this identification of Secularization with Modernism be seen as a flight of fancy, permit me to single out one area of human experience about which the Church has had a great deal to say, viz. sexuality. Dr. John Marshall, a British member of the *Papal Birth Control Commission*, reasserted his opinion of the Church's teaching on contraception in 1995, more than a quarter century after *Humanae Vitae*. Notice the direction of his argument:

Scripture and tradition do not provide knowledge of the nature of sexual intercourse, its biological function, which can only come from living experience and scientific study.⁸

Now, substitute for "sexuality" in that sentence other words like racism, atomic warfare, sweatshops, experimentation on human fetuses, "lusting in the heart" and sundry conduct that has long been declared immoral by informed and enlightened Christians. Then ask yourself: Where does Dr. Marshall's analysis leave the Ten Commandments, or even Christ? Like all judgments flowing from a Secularist or Modernist rationale, morality is determined by people ("from below"), not according to norms coming "from on high." Call it Modernism, call it Secularism, it is not Catholic Christianity.

Permit me to reinforce this point by harking to the words of Professor Bernard G. Reardon about the present plight of the Church vis-à-vis Modernism at this or any stage of future history:

Catholicism, thanks to the modern media of communication, is exposed to world opinion as never before. Argument and protest will not be silenced by imperious ges-

tures, and heresy is no longer a word to scare away any but the most timid. Nor can the non-Catholic Christian stand aside from the anguished discussion, for the crisis of Catholicism is the crisis of Christianity itself. And whatever its outcome will be cannot be foretold. But, "we may be sure" — to quote [George] Tyrrell's words — that "religion, the deepest and most universal exigency of human nature, will survive."⁹

Alfred Loisy, the most prominent Modernist of an earlier generation, was, after his excommunication in 1907, even more specific. The defrocked priest prophesied as follows:

The Catholicism of the pope being neither reformable nor acceptable, another Catholicism will have to come into being, a humane Catholicism, in no way conditioned by the pontifical institution or the traditional forms of Roman Catholicism.¹⁰

To this day much of what was called Modernism, or is now known as Secularism, involves a denial of the truth of what Christ claimed to be, and the truth also of the Church which bears his name. In either world, Modernist or Secularist, creeds are man-made concoctions and there are no moral absolutes. In its world view, only historically conditioned postulates will be lasting or helpful or true, and only as long as they prove to be useful to those who control the Secular City."¹¹

The Slippery Slope of Secularism

In spite of the Church being a universe all its own, and its infrastructures, including colleges, sharing in the universality of her faith, modern secular religionists reached into history for time-tested ways of luring the Godly-minded to think more positively about the advantages available to them under the humanist dispensation. Power, fame, worldly influence, the very temptations offered to Christ in Mt. 4, in exchange for his disavowal of divinity, were re-presented to Catholics in the hope that this time the answer would not be "Begone, Satan."

Back in 1967, only 8 Catholic college presidents, their religious superiors and/or staff, 26 in all, began the walk for all Catholic institutions down the slippery slope of secularization. At Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin, they decreed that they were colleges or universities first, and, therefore, independent of episcopal supervision, from existence under Church law, too. They excused their action as a pursuit of excellence, but

really it was a quest for secular blessing and secular money. Linguistically, and morally, a college, be it Catholic or secular, is merely the highest level of someone's system of education. There is no intrinsic incompatibility between academic excellence and fidelity to its birthright. However, by Council's end, the blessings proffered by the Government, Foundations, and the AAUP, tempted leading Catholic higher educators beyond recall. So, to accept the world's favors, they attenuated their juridical status within the Church, choosing instead to accept the controls from their new benefactors.¹² The tragedy is that only a dozen or so of them could ever have acquired the civic status of Harvards or Yales for which they lusted (and none have). In the meantime, the typical small or modest Catholic colleges were pulled down into the swirling vortex of secularization along with Georgetown, Notre Dame, and Fordham. To this day 150 Catholic colleges are still small, those whose enrollment never goes beyond 2500. It is a matter of some surprise that the hierarchy allowed this theft to happen.

At the very time this country needed authentic Catholic minds to help re-shape the vulgar post-Christian deconstruction that arose to alter historic American mores, developments dominating the American scene, the chief framers of that "mind which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord" (Phil. 2:5), second only to bishops in that role, chose to walk the secular road. Instead of being clarion witnesses to the whole Christ and to his Universal Church, they decided to become testators to the American secular experience, and to do this before a predominantly young American Catholic audience. If those young today, by and large, are ignorant of our glorious Catholic intellectual tradition, based on faith, out of which our Western civilization and our Catholic worship of God have developed, is it not because this intellectual patrimony may no longer be appreciated by their teachers? But if those elders chose to extol the American experience, should they not have taken notice that, by the 1960's at least, the national ethos was moving away from anti-papist Protestantism toward anti-papist Secularism?

What had been wonderful about the Catholic experience during the Protestant Crusade was the depth of "*sensus fidei*" developed within the

Catholic community. The pious lay Catholic, the fallen-away Catholic, the apostate Catholic, all knew what the Church taught and what was expected of believers. Many might not have been able to write a dissertation on biblical exegesis or probabalism, but they know that Christ was the Son of God, Mary was ever a Virgin, believed in the Real Presence, if in mortal sin that they must go to confession, and that Christian marriage was "until death do us part." Over and above their mental grasp of what it meant to be Catholic, was their ingrained reverence for sacred persons, places, and things, evident in the poorest practitioners. Fr. Bull was right about Catholic colleges. I directed a marriage course for 400 seniors at Iona College from 1955 to 1965, all virile young men interested in girls. With good humor, we could discuss sex as the sacred thing it was, even though they recognized the fun. They knew what chastity was. And when I joked with them about their virginity, they roared with approval at my caveat — "But you're virgins, because your Catholic girl friends wouldn't let you be anything else!" These were the youngsters, whose fathers had already brought credit to the Church by their conduct in business, in labor, in government and, years earlier had made us proud by their military service.

The Catholic community of those years owed its "*sensus fidei*" to the Church's "white martyrs" who, a century and more before, gave their life's breath and energy to secure the faith of Catholics during the long nativist war against it. I refer to bishops like Jean Baptiste Lamy of Santa Fe, nuns like the Sisters of Charity, or the Schools Sisters of St. Francis, American girls inspired by Elizabeth Seton as early as 1817, or German emigres forced out of their homeland by the *Kulturkampf* beginning in 1874. How can we fail to

mention a bishop, like John Hughes, who in 1840 bought a large tract of land called Rose Hill for a college to upgrade the Catholic intelligence of New Yorkers. Once Hughes persuaded Jesuits to take it over, it became Fordham. The least remembered patriarch of the American Church was a missionary priest who left France in 1841 to save the souls of plainsmen in Indiana, and within a year of his arrival decided that the way to do this was to establish Notre Dame. Who, in the vast American

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Catholic public of 1996, remembers Holy Cross Father Edward Sorin? And so, the Church planted its roots in every nook and cranny of America, edifying the country by educating young Catholics to be civilized, up-to-date and Catholic. Even *the Catholic Theological Society of America*, as late as 1946, was born as a bastion of scholarly defenders of the Church's "*sensus fidei*." In 1962, weeks before the opening of Vatican II, its outgoing president, Aloysius McDonagh, C.P., reminded his Pittsburgh convention of theologians that no matter how important they were to the Church, "in relation to the hierarchy the position of theologian is auxiliary, subsidiary."

The question to be faced thirty years later is a new one for American pastors: Will they be able, in a Secularist America, to retain the "*sensus fidei*" among their own?

Secularism is a more dangerous and devilish foe. It is not simply anti-Papist but anti-Judaeo-Christianity. Like Royalists of old, its protagonists offer power, fame, and worldly influence to Christians who bow down and adore their thrones. Christians are often worldly, to the point of their shame; but Secularists, unlike the best Royalists, abhor all who speak for the "otherworld," and the Kingdom of which Jesus Christ was chief spokesman, or any religion based on revelation "from on high," and its priestly office in particular.

There is another aspect to the Revolution of the 1960's which we rarely discuss: Secularism is much more appealing than Protestantism since it does not demand that one forswear his Catholic identity when submitting to its allure.

The founding fathers and mothers of the Catholic faith in the United States treated their Protestant adversaries with large respect for the power they exercised over the American culture. And, in return, they gave no quarter by using American freedom and opportunity to develop a subculture protective of their faith, and one fully committed to the success and defense of the American enterprise. Catholics were distinguishable from Protestants by their worship as much as by their accents, but were one with their separated brethren in devotion to Christ and in the service of their country. They were certain Catholics, to be sure, who were

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embarrassed by the studied distinctiveness of their co-religionists, and Protestants, at the street level, although less and less so over time, often remained suspicious of Catholics. Still, by World War II, distinctive Christianities did not mean a divided America.

And then, seemingly out of nowhere, after World War II, a new class of Catholic evangelizers arose, especially in Europe, convinced that the time had come for the Church to mesh more agreeably with the secular

culture. In America the de-Protestantization of the State helped make that idea attractive. If the Church was only less hierarchic, they thought, more democratic, less clerical, more lay, less divine, more human, less otherworld, more this world, less Roman, more American, a grand Catholic moment in the country's life was possible. Indeed, the argument was made in some quarters, one that had a 19th century ring to it, that if the Church was ever to be accepted as an equal partner in the ongoing American experiment, suitable arrangements must be made with the State, now that it was becoming "neutral" to religion.

Secularist opinion-molders were prepared to go more than half way to provide Catholics with an opportunity to tone down their uniqueness, to mute that authority which separated the Catholic Church from other religious bodies. The gifts they offered were old ones, the kind once made to Popes by Kings and Emperors — status and money. (The difference, of course, that even strong Popes today would lack influence over the scions of Secularism, the kind they occasionally exercised over the baptized royalty of Europe.)

The proffered gifts by themselves are not the Church's modern problem. Such temptations have been with us since the days of Constantine. The trouble always begins when compromises of faith and morals are exacted under penalty of rejection, or conceded as the price of gaining secular favor. Almost immediately after Land O' Lakes, for example, two well-footnoted books appeared almost at once expounding the theory that, once a Catholic college becomes incorporated under civil law, it is transformed thus into a public institution, primarily serving a civic purpose.

Allegedly, this legal tie to government severed the juridical tie with the college's religious sponsor.¹³ (The

Roman *Congregation for Catholic Education* never accepted this view.¹⁴) After the 1968 Bundy Report recommended that New York State provide direct aid to private colleges (including religious schools), Fordham University led 20 Catholic colleges to claim their fair share of tax money (based on the number of degrees granted), accepting in return “non-denominational status” before civil law. One need not imagine what John Hughes and Edward Sorin would have thought of any Catholic college ceding or muting its birthright. And for dollars? Just imagine, too, what those pioneer priests, brothers and sisters on the other side of eternity, must think, those who gave their youth, their health, a longer life perhaps, the comforts of rest, summer vacations, pocket money, so that poor Catholic teenagers might advance the quality of their American lifestyle while they deepened their Catholic intelligence and piety.

Regrets are a small recompense for paying the price of secularization. What about the cost of dissipating the most valuable educational assets ever amassed by any particular Church in the entire history of Christendom? Have you noticed today, once the secularist perspective is accepted as a given for the Catholic enterprise, how difficult it becomes to define the word Catholic, or Catholic marriage, or Catholic theology, or Catholic priesthood? One contemporary academic, purporting to explain his new view of what a Catholic college is, made this claim:

Vatican II recast the very ideas of Church, authority in the Church, and the context of lay-religious relationships so that the terms of discussion in the 1940’s and 1950’s were not those of the post-Conciliar period.¹⁵

No matter what he intended a sentence like this to mean, its explanation, as given, cannot be found either in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nor in John Paul II’s *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Still, the openness to the secular rationale which it implies, is prevalent across the Catholic landscape. The overtones for Catholicity, that the recent Council changed the nature of the Church, revised the meaning of magisterial authority, or liberated the consciences of laity from the domination of clergy, are revolutionary, indeed. We already have a Commentary on the *New Code of Canon Law*, commissioned by the *Canon Law Society of America*, which teaches that Church law does not become effective when promulgated, but only when it is “accepted and acted upon by a community of intelligent and free persons.”¹⁶ (If a Catholic reacted to a serious civil law

in this wise, he would likely end up in jail.) Are Catholics liberated from Christ, too, at least as the Church has always understood him?

Another Church document in the making, allegedly dealing juridically with Catholic college identity, wants such an institution to demonstrate its Catholicity by programming issues pertaining to social justice, but does not demand first that it program into its campus way of life the creed, code, and cult of the Church. From a Catholic point of view, good works without faith are dead.

Apparently we have begun to reap what we have allowed to be sown in the Church’s field of mission. Immediately after the Council, one bishop commissioned me to evaluate his educational machinery. It did not take long to discover who was setting the tone for his post-Vatican II teaching corps. Three of the leading savants were Sr. Mary Augusta Neale of the Harvard Divinity School, Brother Gabriel Moran of Manhattan College, and Bernard Cooke of Marquette University. The nun did not think that Church institutions were sacred, nor did she highly esteem obedience to Church leaders either; the Brother looked upon both the Religious Order and the parish as obsolete, while the priest considered that apostolic succession to the Apostles fell on the whole Church, not simply on the hierarchy. Within a year of the Council’s end the Catholic Revolution was already in place, and we have been living through its after-shock ever since.

The Significance of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*

For almost thirty years, the Holy See had quietly acknowledged the perils of Land O’ Lakes, not only for the United States, but for the Church worldwide. Given the genius of Americans for exporting their creations, bad and good, the Holy See recognized the need to bring its higher education under Catholic law. When the first universal Code came into being in 1917, there was no need to cover Catholic colleges because bishops and/or religious superiors were in command of both their college presidents and/or Boards of Trustees. Today autonomy from such ecclesial oversight has become the rule. While secular agencies are probably quite satisfied with the secular competence of Catholic colleges, the Holy See has

reason to be dissatisfied with their Catholic performance.

Promulgated law is unlikely when *laissez-faire* works. In such circumstances, most of the citizenry are behaving themselves. St. Paul's counsel to Timothy [I, 1, 8-10], however, was on target: "Law is not meant for a righteous person but for the lawless and the unruly, the godless and the sinful, the unholy and the profane." In 1976, when the Pontifical Commission was writing the *New Code of Canon Law*, for what was already perceived as an unruly Church, Paul VI told the Cardinals in charge: "Ecclesial life cannot function without a juridical structure." Rome had spent ten years by then trying to bring Catholic higher education under some kind of Church discipline.

From 1968 to 1973, the *Congregation for Catholic Education* undertook a survey of varying university opinions around the world (not only organized bodies), which concluded with an International Congress of College and University Representatives, not all of whom were "official." In 1972 Cardinal Gabriel Garrone, Prefect for the *Congregation for Catholic Education* invited each Catholic college president (1) voluntarily to set out in statutes and "without equivocation" its Catholic character and commitment; (2) to create instruments of self-regulation in faith, morals, and discipline; and (3) to keep in mind that "relationship with ecclesiastical hierarchy" which must characterize all Catholic institutions. Nothing happened.

By 1980, work was well under way on the *New Code of Canon Law*. Americans resisted "the college canons" every inch of the way. Nonetheless, when the *New Code* appeared in 1983, Canons 796-821 specified that no school could claim the name "Catholic" without the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority; that those who teach Catholic theology at the college level or above need a mandate (license) from the same authority; that bishops have the obligation to take care that the principles of Catholic doctrine are faithfully observed in those institutions. Those canons — though the Church's Universal Law — were dead letters in the United States from the beginning.

Six years later (March 1, 1989), the Holy See, on its own initiative, upped the ante for Catholic college presidents and their faculties by requiring a Profession of Faith for new teachers "in any university" dealing with faith and morals, and an additional Oath of Fidelity for anyone assuming an office to be exercised in the name of the Church. The appropriate university per-

sonnel were expected to affirm their faith in what the Church teaches as divinely revealed, to accept all that is taught definitively concerning faith and morals, and to adhere to authentic hierarchical teaching, even when it is not proposed definitively. The Oath of Fidelity additionally calls on certain officials to preserve the deposit of faith and to foster the discipline of the whole Church and Christian obedience to the Church's shepherds. In one place they are told to shun those who teach contrary to faith.

The response of the American Catholic education community — from important members of the *Catholic University* faculty to delegates of the *Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA)* to university presidents — has generally been one of hostility. *Notre Dame University's* president simply said No. Msgr. Frederick McManus, CUA Canon Lawyer, and a leading voice against Roman interventions on many occasions, was even alarmed that pastors might be forced to take these Oaths.

A year later, John Paul II went further still, issuing his own *Apostolic Constitution for Catholic Higher Education (Ex Corde Ecclesiae)*, which requires hierarchies to establish a system of statutes called "Ordinances" binding on every college which would wish to call itself "Catholic." Recognition of Catholic identity comes only from Church authority. Professors in the field of ecclesiastical science are to be licensed (mandated), somewhat after the fashion of engineers, doctors, and lawyers in civilized countries. Bishops are to keep an ongoing eye on the quality of the Catholic performance. As of the moment, the Universal Law of the Church has not been applied to American Catholic colleges.

What is strange about the *status quo* is that almost every Catholic college president speaks as if his institution were a Rockefeller University, housed in a giant sheltered series of laboratories, on some city's lakeside or riverside — away from people and detached from the *magisterium* — Catholic to the extent that its personnel sometimes explore God's inner being and psyche. The fact is that most Catholic institutions of learning are "little" colleges, structured to pass on accumulated secular learning and the authentic content of the Catholic faith and way of life.

As for their insistence on "non-juridical" treatment by bishops, college presidents and/or some of their faculties cannot have it both ways. More than a few of their chief spokesmen and women have already taken a

juridical stand against hierarchy. The contemporary challenges given to bishops include expressions like “We want due process,” “Prove our offenses,” or, “Let the civil law decide.” As long as a college’s compensatory statutes do not protect Catholicity, the scales of justice favor secularity, and will by the nature of the case be tilted against *magisterium*. If *Canon Law*, which binds all the faithful in one way or another, and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which binds all Catholic colleges, do not draw the lines of the playing field of Catholic higher education, then loose canons will be unleashed up and down every line of Church authority.

The Nub of the Problem

The nub of the problem is that many Catholic elites who form public opinion within the Church, and have a critical role in determining the policies of Catholic institutions, no longer believe in an objective revelation from God, one that can be translated by authority alone or in such a way as to distinguish with certainty dogmatic truth from falsity, moral right from wrong. The so-called Word of God must be filtered through the subjective experience of their academic minds, or that of people in general. The penitent can say whether or not he sinned, not the confessor. What does the Word of God mean *to me*? is a question often asked by professional educators after reading the new *Catechism*, as if the answer is theirs alone to give. The arbiter of truth and right becomes personal conscience, not the magisterial Church. At rock bottom we deal here with a form of Protestantism or, in our day more likely with Secular Humanism.

In the same vein, the Catholic performance of Catholic college presidents and their faculties is professionally determined, independent of outside interference, from those alone who have the responsibility to decide what is authentically Catholic. Most professors are sharp enough to avoid saying or doing anything that might lead them into federal or state prisons. But, if Catholic, some academics, apparently, have long since discounted the authority of Catholic hierarchy to restrain their freedom to represent or misrepresent Catholicity to the Church’s young.

But whose authority do they

mean? Theirs, to redefine doctrine? And what freedom are they talking about? And who says that their self-definition of authority or freedom makes it true? Is the Church a mere political enterprise, with belief and unbelief co-existing as a matter of personal right? Are believing Catholics not free to hold on to their faith in peace? Are popes and hierarchies not free to protect the freedom of believers to believe as Christ told his disciples to believe? Are the Catholic creeds worthy of this protection? Granted that believing Catholics should expect to suffer for their faith, and bishops, too, in protecting it. Granted also that American Catholics have been spoiled by the earlier vitality of their Church, bishops, too, by not hitherto having to find their very role challenged from within. But a different die is now cast. What appeared as a debate in 1965 over abstractions, has become a struggle in 1995 for power over who governs the Church according to its own definitions. Or over who can force the Church to be something Christ and his Vicars promised she would never be. In the last analysis, the ultimate freedom, and responsibility, rests with the Pope and the Bishops in union with him.

Every society, to be true to itself, certainly to accomplish the purpose for which it was created, must be governed by norms necessary to preserve its integrity and peaceful existence. The anarchic state of American society is a good example of what happens to the well-being of all the people, when the freedom of the individual against his society is institutionalized to such an extent that the freedom of society to be what it is, is of lesser account. Granted that there are dangers in autocracy. Still in Catholic social philosophy, the common good of society prevails over the right of an individual to do his own thing, if in the doing he jeopardizes the peaceful and meaningful life of the community.

Christian society requires the rule of law. At present, the intellectual and moral chaos, which our media is exporting all over the world, represents the triumph of ideas spawned more by the French Revolution, than by the American. Freedom to think, say, and do what you want —divorced from truth, right, and social order — was the invention of atheists like Denis Diderot, not of Deists like Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson led an intelligent political revolution so that Christians of all persuasions could

Is the Church a mere political enterprise, with belief and unbelief co-existing as a matter of personal right?

practice their religion in peace under law.

Freedom, in most Western societies, and in the Church, is plentiful, for ordinary members, and for the creative, too, as long as it is exercised respectfully. A certain amount of antisocial behavior is expected, and tolerated, and of sin — within limits. But, once exercised, freedom, even if academic freedom, is subject to the laws of civility, of truth, of morality, of responsibility to the society to which the member belongs. When society is civilized, citizens by and large are disciplined in their social behavior, whatever the anarchic tendencies of some of them may be. In Christian society, believers are expected to be more than civilized. They are called upon, if they say they are believing Catholics, to “think with the Church,” especially if they hold positions of teaching, moral, or pastoral authority within the Church. In any case, it is the function of society’s governors to deal, according to its own laws, with public nuisance, with repugnant, uncivilized, or criminal behavior, as well. It is the function of pastors, good shepherds that they are, by appropriate laws and enforcement procedures, to protect the Church from heretics, schismatics, unscrupulous public sinners and public dissenters. And let me add: “Pick and choose Catholicity” seeking legitimacy from hierarchy is a form of heresy.

While freethinkers and/or habitual wrongdoers do what they can to characterize law-enactment and law-enforcement as oppression, failure by any society to do either, places its law-abiding membership in captivity to the unruly and the wicked. The Church is not dispensed from responsibility to protect its own common good, and the faith of the faithful; even if, in doing so, it becomes an object of ridicule among those who think virtue is found only in freethinking, or in a *laissez-faire* form of government designed mainly for them, or cynicism from those who have lost their faith but choose not to lose the Church.

The excesses of the post-Vatican II era have been amply demonstrated by Paul VI and John Paul II as inimical to the religious life of the faithful. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* itself is being undermined in large segments of Catholic higher education, as four recent *Commentaries* on it by college professors make clear. The Church’s public dissenters obviously do not “think with the Church.” It is the responsibility of the hierarchy, and the Pope, to deal with this situation. Surely, withholding honors and privileges from those who divide the Church doctrinally or morally is a rea-

sonable exercise of Church authority. Otherwise, Alfred Loisy will have gained the last word over Pius X, viz. that Christian creeds, codes, and cult are but the fruit of the historically conditioned human experience or scientific research, not hand-me-downs either from Church authority, or from Christ.

Beyond the Law

When the Church is in trouble, and, like Christ, she is always in trouble somewhere — the renewal of her life — and her glory — somehow follows the appearance of saints in unexpected places. When law does not seem to be working, Providence arranges for the faith that moves mountains to reappear in little known people. Today, the American Church is blessed with many uncanonized saints.

I find it difficult that we do not see more presidents and faculty — even if only few in number at the start — rising in the midst of the crowd to make a public confession:

“I would like my bishop to recognize my college as authentically Catholic.”

“I would like to make a public profession of my Catholic faith.”

“I swear my fidelity to the faith of Christ, to the Catholic Church, and to Christ’s Vicar.”

“I, as a theologian, wish to be licensed to teach Catholic theology.”

Less than thirty years ago a few important Catholic presidents, speaking of a college constituency that, by American standards, was small in enrollment, led their institutions away from a corporate commitment to the Catholic faith, and little college presidents followed dutifully in their wake. When I think of recovery from that fall from grace, the messianic prophesy of Isaiah (1 1: 16) comes to mind:

The wolf will dwell with the lamb
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
And the calf, and the lion, and the fatling together,
And a little child will lead them.

Already in this country little colleges are walking away from that Land O’ Lakes pack to demonstrate how academic excellence and authentic Catholicity go hand

in hand. Far beyond the scope of their uniqueness or the size of their budget, the presidents of these institutions are turning out priests, religious, and zealous lay apostles — often Harvard, Yale, and Princeton bound upon their graduation — to replenish the supply of disciples the Church always needs, and which other larger self-styled Catholic institutions have long ceased to contribute. Their presidents have courage but, more than that, a zealous Catholic faith burns within them. The salvation of the Church may well depend on the Allentowns presently existing all over the country.

... With St Francis De Sales

Few schoolmen in the United States associate Francis De Sales with Catholic higher education, except the people of Allentown, Pennsylvania.

How appropriate it is, therefore, that we close this address with the inspiration of this particular Bishop Doctor of the Church. More than that, he is particularly relevant to our age because during his lifetime his apostolate was mainly to people forced by circumstance to live secular lives in a very worldly French State. His primary goal: To make them devout Christians.

Francis came into this world two years after the Council of Trent (1567), and died (1622) the year that his model and mentor, Philip Neri, was canonized a saint. The culture of France and Switzerland in his day, was not unlike that of our own, alien to Christianity — romantic, sentimental, individualistic, earthbound, and pessimistic. To those who were sad this bishop taught joy, to the poor he offered hope, and to those who thought they were the lords of the universe, he made known the power of God. A creature of Trent, he taught its Catechism, made the Redemption of Christ the centerpiece of his preaching and, following the Council, saw to it that the worthy reception of the Sacraments became the heart of his pastoral mission.

(He himself was good at hearing confessions.) He taught his people to enjoy life, elevating their vision of what it meant to be human to include the practice of the Catholic faith. The entire life of Francis De Sales is captured by the word

“devotion,” a synonym for “piety” and “fidelity.” He was called a “humanist” because he wanted his people to deal as Christians with the world where they lived, and a “secularizer” because he trained them to be devout, not as religious, but as parents, teachers, statesmen were devout. (He anticipated Pere Cardijn by three centuries.)

Were Francis alive today, he might sense what is wrong with so many of our modern Catholic campuses — they lack devotion. Not simply daily worship that calls out to the young, or prayers before class, or Christ’s crucified body on the walls, or the Angelus at noon or at three, or little grottos around the grounds — but a “*sensus fidei*” everywhere, an inculcated respect for the sacred as much as for the mundane, for immortal life as for this, for the Scriptures, the Person of Christ, and his Vicars, as well as for men of learning and wealth. A college need not be a cold calculating place of cerebration, critical of things uninspired earthlings do not understand, or a house which thinks it is successful if it enriches the talented or patronizes the less fortunate, or one which substitutes politics for faith, reduces religion to good works, esteems self-fulfillment over doing God’s will.

The Catholic college campus, by definition, is a house for mental development, but also a training ground for intelligent saints. The Catholic college strives to gain endowments and to be known for its medals. Yet, from the perspective of faith, what do these profit on the Day of Judgment, if graduates are men and women of little faith, who go through life not knowing that they have been deprived, who live in sin without consciousness of being in sin, or who die without the Sacraments.

Christ once said: “I have come to set the earth on fire and how I wish it were already blazing.” (Lk.

The Catholic college campus, by definition, is a house for mental development, but also a training ground for intelligent saints.

12:49). The word “fire” appears more than 300 times in scripture, most often as a symbol of God Our Father, Christ Our Savior, and/or the Holy Spirit, Our Counselor. Fire consumed the sacrifice of Abel, sealed the covenant with Abraham, fell upon the tabernacle of Moses. John the Baptist foretold that we would be baptized “with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (Mt. 3:11). The Holy Spirit rested on the eleven Apostles one Pentecost morn in the

form of tongues “as of fire,” and through them on their teaching successors to this very day.¹⁷ It was to set the American soil afire with the special spirit of God that the Catholic college was established in the United States by the likes of a John Hughes or an Edward Sorin, to provide the country with intelligent and trained Catholics who loved God, who were grateful for Christ’s dying and rising, exemplars, also, to the world of his continued presence by their worthy participation in the Church’s sacramental life. From this sacred task no believing Catholic is absolved, certainly not a Catholic teacher nor a company of Catholic teachers.

Or, to borrow a different metaphor from St. Francis De Sales:

God commanded Christians, who are the living plants of his Church, to bring forth the fruits of devotion, each one in accord with his character, his station, and his calling.

To this prayer, and for all of us here tonight, let us say *Amen.* ✠

¹ Peter Guilday, *History of the Councils of Baltimore 1791-1894*, (Macmillan, 1932, p.186).

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #119.

³ See the Church’s claim to independence from the State in Vatican II’s *Dignitatis Humanae* (On Religious Freedom), No. 13.

⁴ *Human Manifestos I and II*, (Prometheus Books, Buffalo, New York 1973).

⁵ *Brownson Quarterly Review*, October 1845.

⁶ See his *Mere Creatures of the State?* (Crisis Books, 1994).

⁷ For a brilliant exposition of this unfolding secularist drama, read Paul Mankowski, S.J., in *Church and State in America: Catholic Questions* (St. John’s University Edition, 1992, p. 213, George A. Kelly, Editor).

⁸ *London Tablet*, June 10, 1995.

⁹ We cannot be so sure that any particular expression of the religious idea will survive. See his *Roman Catholic Modernism*, Stanford University Press, 1970, pp. 66-67.

¹⁰ Marvin R. O’Connell, *Critics on Trial: An Introduction to the Catholic Modernist Crisis*, (Catholic University of America Press, 1994, p. 370).

¹¹ See Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (Macmillan); and a Catholic response to post Vatican II developments within the Church; Donald J. D’Elia and Stephen M. Krason, *We Hold These Truths and More: Further Reflections on the American Proposition*, (Franciscan University Press, 1993).

¹² Notre Dame’s Marvin O’Connell succinctly stated the conundrum: “Does it not seem odd that the same educators who legitimately resisted undue encroachment from those who, at least, were members of the household of the faith, should, in the next breath, confess themselves more than ready to accept dictation from government bureaucrats, secular accrediting bodies and honor societies, foundation executives, moguls of business with tax deductible dollars to give away, and, a little later, from race and gender lobbies?” (cf. Theodore Hesburgh [Ed.], *The Challenge and Promise of a Catholic University*, Notre Dame University Press, 1994, p. 239).

¹³ John J. McGrath, *Catholic Institutions in the U.S.: Canonical and Civil Status*, (CUA Press, 1969); Walter Gelhorn and R. Kent Greenwalt, *The Sectarian College and the Public Purse: Fordman — A Case Study*, (Oceana Books, 1970).

¹⁴ See Adam J. Maida and Nicholas P. Cafardi, *Church Property, Church Finances, and Church-Related Corporations*, (Catholic Health Association, 1984).

¹⁵ J. Bryan Hehir in *Catholic Universities in Church and Society: A Dialogue On Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, (Ed. John Langan, S.J., Georgetown University Press, 1993, p. 29).

¹⁶ Paulist Press, 1985, p. 29.

¹⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 688 and 696.

Notre Dame Rejects Proposed Catholic Ordinances

Charles Rice

Notre Dame Law School

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ur last column, of November 20th, discussed the 1967 transfer of Notre Dame from ownership by the Congregation of Holy Cross to control by lay trustees. That transfer was in the

spirit of the Land O’Lakes declaration, adopted later in 1967, in which Notre Dame and other Catholic universities resolved that “the Catholic university must have a true autonomy and academic freedom in the face of authority of whatever kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself.” That severance of the University’s juridical link with the Church, the November column suggested, was the decisive cause of Notre Dame’s overemphasis on research and of its drift toward secularization. The column recommended, but lacked space to discuss, the article by Fr. James T. Burtchaell, C.S.C., in the April and May, 1991, issues of “First Things.” Taking Vanderbilt as an example, Fr. Burtchaell described the secularization of various Protestant universities once they had severed their juridical and authoritative link with their founding church. According to Fr. Burtchaell, that severance made total secularization

inevitable. The article, without naming any institutions, also details the journey of Catholic universities along the same path. Let me try to explain why the Burtchaell article is relevant in 1996.

In 1994, the American Catholic universities, including Notre Dame, rejected ordinances proposed by the American bishops to enforce *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the 1990 Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities.

Ex Corde says some things that make it unpopular with some on this campus and elsewhere. "Every Catholic University" it says, "has a relationship to the church that is essential to its institutional identity . . . assuming consequently special bond with the Holy See . . . [T]he institutional Fidelity of the university to the Christian message includes a recognition of and adherence to the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals." (No. 27) *Ex Corde* also provides that "Catholic theologians, aware that they fulfill a mandate received from the Church, are to be faithful to the magisterium of the Church as the authentic interpreter of sacred Scripture and sacred tradition."

The bishops are considering this year new ordinances to enforce *Ex Corde*. If they adopt them, Notre Dame's relation to the Church will be a hot topic again. So let's look at it in the context of the Burtchaell article.

The Burtchaell analysis can be discomfoting. For example, *Ex Corde* mandates that "the number of non-Catholic teachers should not be allowed to constitute a majority within the institution." For the past several years, fewer than half of the new faculty at Notre Dame have been Catholic, including as "Catholic" all who checked that box on the form. The issue, however, is not merely statistical.

Fr. Burtchaell does not name any institution, but we should consider whether his analysis could be applied to Notre Dame: "The Catholic colleges . . . have begun, one century after the Protestants did the same, to welcome an increasingly diversified faculty in which the communicants of the sponsoring church are fewer, and often a minority. But statistics tell only part of the story. The opening to non-communicants appears to reflect a spirit not so much ecumenical as indifferent. Non-Catholics are welcomed not as allies in a religious undertaking; instead they are recruited, evaluated, appointed, and welcomed without *any* frank word about religious commitment, the college's or their own, un-

less by way of apology. While the remaining believers of the sponsoring church may imagine that the newcomers are being incorporated into the traditional undertaking of the college, in fact the opposite seems to be happening.

Instead of their even being asked to defer to the college's religious commitment, the college stands ready to defer to their many individual commitments or anti-commitments, out of what it calls hospitality but what may frankly be called a failure of nerve. The ancient tokens of hallmark faith are withdrawn, evacuated, or desecrated so as not to make anyone feel estranged."

Fr. Burtchaell suggests that "secularization is rapidly bleaching the Catholic character out of that church's universities . . . with all the elements . . . typified in the Vanderbilt story . . . As with the Protestant alienation a century earlier . . . the Catholic institutions enjoyed an immediate honeymoon period wherein autonomy actually enhanced the institution as both a faith community and a house of liberal learning. But then the slow and inexorable gravity pull of the secularism dominant in the force-field of the academy begins to retard and then counteract the inertial momentum that has hitherto set the course of the Catholic college or university, until, after a period when the forms and symbols of Christian identity are gradually evacuated of their conviction, the institution finally emerges as a wraith of the Christian community it once was."

Fr. Burtchaell's suggested cure is strong medicine:

1. "*The only plausible way for a college or university to be significantly Christian is for it function as a congregation in active communion with a church. . . . In Christianity, communities that float free are not viable.*

2. "*[T]he academy must have a predominance of committed and articulate communicants of its mother church. This must be regarded, not as an alien consideration, but as a professional qualification*

3. "*A Christian college or university must advise non-communicant members . . . that the institution is constitutionally committed to its church in a way that must transcend and transfigure the commitments of individual members. Similarly, any institution will decline to let its foundational norms of scholarship yield to the private and personal standards of each individual scholar. Though the appropriate freedom of inquiry and advocacy will be protected procedurally for all, it cannot be done with prejudice to the school's filial bond to the church."*

(Emphasis in original)

In Colloquy 2000, Notre Dame proclaims its Catholic identity in a mission statement that does not even mention the Catholic Church. Having cut any authoritative tie with the Church, Notre Dame defines its “Catholic” identity, as a Protestant would, accord-

ing to its own lights. Before this issue comes up again, the Notre Dame community could well reconsider the Burtchaell article and reflect on whether Notre Dame is fated to verify by its own degeneration the accuracy of his analysis. ✠

A Strategy for Returning Catholic Colleges to the Fold

K.D. Whitehead

I.

How are we going to return Catholic colleges to the fold? This is the title of an article on the subject in the September, 1995, *Newsletter of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars* by Msgr. George A. Kelly.¹ It is a question that obviously has very special pertinence today.

On the one hand, the Holy Father, in an address to a plenary assembly of the Congregation for Catholic Education, has recently re-iterated his firm expectation “that the legal status of the universities and ecclesiastical faculties will be completed and that the applicable ‘norms’ of the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* will be drafted by the Episcopal Conferences.”²

The “norms” referred to here by John Paul II are the concrete “Ordinances” applying the General Norms of the 1990 Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to the local situation in various countries. National bishops’ conferences are required by Article 1 § 2 of this papal document to prepare and promulgate for their respective countries a set of Ordinances applying *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to their particular situations.

On the other hand, some five years of talks and efforts on the part of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) in the United States have

failed to result in a set of Ordinances governing Catholic colleges and universities here. Not only has no set of Ordinances acceptable both to the bishops and to the majority of Catholic colleges and universities been produced; if anything, the colleges and the bishops seem farther apart than ever.³

In 1993, a set of draft Ordinances was put on the table by a bishops’ committee for discussion; but these draft Ordinances were soon withdrawn when they encountered massive opposition in Catholic higher education circles. A very few observers criticized the draft Ordinances because they were too minimal, and actually seemed to water down the firm requirements of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* rather than implementing them.⁴

A far greater number of those in higher education opposed the bishops’ draft Ordinances, apparently because, mild as they were, they nevertheless represented a real, concrete claim by the Church to be in some sense “over” higher education institutions calling themselves “Catholic.” In this country, however, since the famous Land O’Lakes statement in 1967, the concrete reality has been that the greater number of Catholic colleges and universities has claimed to be independent in all respects of any authority “external to the academic community itself.”

In the face of this not very thinly veiled refusal on the academic side to recognize that the Church has any effective authority over Catholic colleges and universities at all, the bishops’ Implementation Committee for *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, in 1995, came up with a “compromise solution” even less acceptable, it would seem, than the earlier, failed draft Ordinances: a simple paper presented to the bishops’ conference described as a “Draft for Discussion.” This talking paper called for little beyond mutual trust and cooperation between the bishops and the higher education institutions — exactly what has been entirely lacking on the academic side up to now. The paper also provided for continuing dia-

logue between Church and university authorities. Styled a “non-judicial application,” this paper represented no real application of what *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* plainly requires.⁵

Presented to the full body of bishops at their annual meeting in November, 1995, this “non-judicial application” drew mostly negative reactions from those bishops who commented on it. Cardinal Bevilacqua of Philadelphia, for example, pointed out that the document was really bypassing the requirements of Canon Law pertaining to education.⁶ Of course this has essentially been the situation since the new Code of Canon Law was promulgated in 1983; it has not yet been applied in this country as far as Catholic colleges and universities are concerned.

None of this bodes well for any early implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* or for the expectations of Pope John Paul II that American “norms” might soon be “drafted” and indeed “completed.” As far as the United States is concerned, the situation, at least for the moment and certainly for the immediate future, seems to be a total stalemate between the bishops responsible for implementing *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and a sizeable number, perhaps the majority, of the higher education institutions in this country. Although these institutions were founded under Catholic auspices and still, for the most part, call themselves “Catholic,” they evidently no longer accept the Church’s higher education norms as in any way binding upon them.

What this means, although few care to say it out loud, is that such institutions no longer *are* Catholic in a true sense. They may continue to call themselves such; they may continue to recruit students or to make appeals to parents, alumni, and the general public as such (or at least represent themselves as being “in the tradition of”—such-and-such a religious order). They may even go on representing themselves to the bishops and Rome as Catholic; certainly most of them do not fail to renew their memberships in the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), whatever their motives for doing so. They may even continue to offer Mass and some other religious observances on campus, imagining that such things themselves somehow still keep them “Catholic.”

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But the reality is that neither these schools nor the ACCU itself can be considered truly Catholic if they reject *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and the authority the Church necessarily has over *everything* that claims to be Catholic. They are not Catholic even if the bishops continue to dither and decline to *say* that they are not; the reality remains the same. These schools have, in effect, departed from the fold, just as Msgr. Kelly has said; this is the fact of the matter, whether or not it is admitted — and whether or not it is permanent.

So Msgr. Kelly’s question is indeed quite pertinent: how are we going to return these Catholic colleges — all or only some of them — to the fold? A strategy is called for in order to move forward from the current stalemate between *soi-disant* Catholic colleges and the Church. Such a strategy should aim at or encourage the return of a maximum number of those colleges that are currently Catholic in name but not in fact. The “return” in question, of course, must necessarily consist of the authentic implementation on these campuses of John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

II.

Msgr. Kelly himself briefly adumbrates a “return” strategy at the conclusion of his article, although he does not go into any detail regarding what it would entail.⁷ It is worth examining the general strategy he suggests and bringing out in greater detail how it might unfold.⁸

Msgr. Kelly reminds us that the current “nationalization” of Catholic higher education through the NCCB has effectively made the local bishop “almost irrelevant to what happens on campuses within his jurisdiction.” Nevertheless, as Msgr. Kelly goes on to point out, each local ordinary remains “the Vicar of Christ in his own diocese.” There is thus no reason at all why individual bishops could not begin acting on their own with regard to the Catholic institutions of higher education within their own dioceses; there is no reason at all why they need to wait for the NCCB to promulgate higher education Ordinances for the United

States as a whole. Local bishops can embark on their own plans to restore Catholicity to Catholic campuses, regardless of whether the NCCB ever succeeds in promulgating effective Ordinances implementing *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* nationwide.

In this situation, Msgr. Kelly advocates a process whereby individual diocesan bishops would appoint episcopal vicars of higher education to deal with those Catholic colleges and universities found within their dioceses. His approach thus comes down to recommending that bishops begin to act locally and on their own with regard to the college situation; and that they do this by appointing a trusted official to deal with any local college(s) on a continuing basis.

How would the strategy unfold? Msgr. Kelly does not supply any further details; but the episcopal vicars, it would seem, would have to enter into a process of concrete dialogue and negotiations with the institutions in question, placing before them the clear requirements of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* — which themselves cannot be negotiable—and then working with them to identify and implement ways to bring their statutes and practices, and the conditions on their campuses, into eventual conformity with the requirements of the Church as spelled out in the papal document. The whole process could and no doubt should be as careful and gradual as the virtue of prudence might dictate; it cannot be denied how many and complex are the obstacles in the way of any progress on the Catholic college front, especially on some campuses.

Nevertheless there would have to be tangible progress as a result of the negotiations between the episcopal vicar and the college. Schools would have to commit themselves to a process, however gradual, of beginning to put back into place all the things spelled out in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* which make an institution truly Catholic. How the process might evolve, of course, could differ from campus to campus. If open dissent among the theology faculty were currently seen as too formidable an obstacle to be taken on by a direct frontal assault, for example, then at least the school could commit itself, say, to regularizing the liturgical situation on campus, eliminating open abuses there, while looking to what future changes might be made in faculty appointments to deal with the theological dissent question on a longer-term basis. Or the school could initially agree to other ways of manifesting publicly a renewed determination to restore its Catholic character, while carefully downgrading or even revers-

ing some of the secularizing features adopted over the past couple of decades.

In fact, there are many small steps that any institution could begin taking now back towards true Catholicity; all that would be required is the will to take them; the following are only examples:

- Revise the school's mission statement to reaffirm its Catholic character and then begin to select *new* faculty, trustees, administrators, etc., predominantly from among committed Catholics, in accordance with the standards of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.
- Begin writing into all *new* faculty contracts a requirement of respect for Catholic moral teaching and the Church's magisterium, even if this has not been required of those currently under contract.
- Begin a policy — publicly announced beforehand — of greater vigilance over events or speakers sponsored on campus — or public figures to whom awards are given — to insure greater public respect for Catholic teaching and practice.
- Insure that ample Masses, Confessions, and other religious observances in accordance with the Church's authentic norms are offered on campus, and that students are actively encouraged to take advantage of them.

These are only a few examples of the kinds of steps that could be taken starting now by most schools, if only they had the incentive to do it. The point of the bishop's local initiative would be to remind them of the necessity of getting their Catholic house in order in the new era inaugurated by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and to provide them, precisely, with the incentive to begin doing it. Many schools may have secularized without realizing the full implications of what they were doing: it was the thing to do in the 1960s and 1970s. But there is no longer any excuse to remain in the "time warp" of these years.

Beginning with small steps, however, is surely the most desirable way to go. In most cases it would not even be realistic simply to attempt to re-Catholicize campuses overnight by issuing administrative edicts; in any case, there is much tactical merit in taking a series of small steps and putting in place a number of new rules and requirements, no one of which perhaps, by itself, would be sufficient to arouse organized opposition by the aggressive secularists who are still present on many campuses.

Nevertheless, the steps taken would have to be real; schools would have to commit themselves to *begin* a concrete process of finding ways to restore the Catholic identity of the institution — a process that would have to be steadily encouraged and monitored by the episcopal vicar for higher education in the name of the local bishop. Once the goal was adopted in a real way, however, patience and prudence could well remain the watchword.

However, schools unwilling to commit themselves even to such a gradual process of re-instituting and restoring those features required by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to make an institution Catholic would presumably have to face the eventual prospect of open episcopal disapproval. Bluntly, the bishop might, after a certain point, have to declare publicly that certain institutions declining to enter into a concrete process for the restoration of a real Catholic identity no longer were, in fact, Catholic. No doubt this would be painful, both for the bishop and for the institution; it would be especially painful the first time or two it occurred; but such an episcopal declaration of non-Catholicity would be no more than what is in fact the case now on many campuses which still call themselves Catholic. And it is not clear how much longer evasion of the real truth of the matter can continue without compromising the integrity of both higher education institutions and of the Church. Indeed this may already have occurred in some cases.

Nevertheless, the practical point should not be forgotten that some schools might never move at all unless there is at least the implied threat of the loss of their public Catholic identity. On the Church's side, it would seem that there is no alternative to requiring that "Catholic" institutions must agree to be Catholic in a real sense now that *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* has been issued setting forth the definitive standard of what constitutes an authentic Catholic university.

However, it needs to be stressed further that, at the moment, it is by no means clear how many and which of today's *soi-disant* Catholic colleges will decide that they do indeed wish to go on being considered Catholic. Up to now, few or none of them has even been faced with any choice: they have been allowed without effective challenge to affirm the Land O'Lakes "autonomous" model of a university and to act in accordance with it; at the same time the Church has tacitly allowed them to go on claiming a "Catholic" identity at least in some sense. Only if and when this kind of

school finally is pressed in a real, concrete way will it become clear which institutions might agree to return to the fold (even if only in gradual stages), and which are probably lost to the Church for good anyway (in which case why do we go on agonizing over them?).

Only if and when some pressure is exerted on a school in a real way will it also become more clear which campuses possess elements within them — faculty, administrators, trustees — who might wish to go with the Church, even if the current administration perhaps remains in solidarity with the current erroneous national ACCU view that no "American" university can submit to any Church authority.

This is why a local "return" strategy has real merit: if an individual bishop, almost anywhere, actually undertook to start discussing these kinds of questions with the higher education institutions in his diocese, either in person or through his vicar for higher education, he might be surprised how many schools out there — or elements within schools — might turn out to be interested in considering a return to the Catholic fold. The secularization strategy has not in fact worked particularly well for many of them; many of them may already have begun to realize that they really have no future except by offering something different from today's secular colleges. Such schools might therefore be interested to learn what concrete steps they could begin taking back towards being an authentic Catholic institution.

Unless some movement is made somewhere, however, schools are as likely as not simply to remain immobilized in the current position of the ACCU, which is that real "American" universities *cannot* also be "Catholic" in accordance with *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. This is *not* true, of course, but it is nevertheless the position too many schools find themselves in. Currently, few or none of the Land O'Lakes college presidents would probably be prepared to break ranks with the ACCU national establishment; and so as long as the whole issue is essentially left in the hands of the current presidents to deal with at the national level, nothing much is going to happen. What is precisely necessary is that the current establishment's monopoly even on the discussion of the issue needs to be broken.

Thus, if some local bishops seriously begin pressing the institutions in their dioceses for some real, concrete concessions to the Church's viewpoint; and if, meanwhile, this becomes known in such a way that pro-Church elements within the colleges themselves could

perhaps begin to exert various kinds of pressures from within, some real progress could begin to be made, at least in the case of some institutions. Such a “divide-and-conquer” tactic could work especially well at times when new presidents or other high officials are being selected for the college. There is absolutely no reason why the bishop or his vicar should not be taking a lively even if discreet interest in the people being selected for such positions, especially by talking with the elements on the campus or on selection committees and the like who might favor the same result.

Surely the desire and ability to get along with the local Catholic bishop should be a legitimate qualification for any high position in the administration of any college still calling itself Catholic. There is no reason why such a qualification could not even be listed in the vacancy announcement in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*!

As things stand today, however, members of the current higher education establishment are only too likely to try to go on perpetuating themselves—*unless* the bishop or his vicar begin to take a much more active interest in the ways in which these decisions are currently being made on campuses.

In short, much could be accomplished by the local “return” strategy suggested by Msgr. Kelly whereby local bishops would begin to urge and nudge—and, indeed, even “pressure”—local colleges still bearing the name of Catholic to “get real” about their supposed public commitment to the Church. In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* we now have a blindingly clear statement about what a Catholic institution of higher education is really supposed to look like; institutions wishing to bear the name should no longer be allowed to forget either the existence of this statement or what it plainly requires of them.

III.

The ultimate goal for all Catholic colleges and universities cannot be anything else but the full implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. For the moment, however, it is not only all right to proceed in stages in

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situations of great sensitivity for bishops faced with institutions where a veritable “culture” of rebellion from Church authority obtains; proceeding one step at a time is surely the sensible way to go.

But how would an individual institution go about beginning to implement *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*? What would a local bishop or his vicar for higher education want to suggest that a college in his diocese should do in order to return to the Catholic fold?

One way is clearly spelled out in the papal document’s Article 1 § 3.

What is fundamental is “to incorporate [the] General Norms...into [the institution’s] governing documents and conform to the[se] General Norms...internalizing them into their governing documents.”

Article 2 § 3 further specifies that “every Catholic university is to make known its Catholic identity either in a mission statement or some other appropriate document.”

These are actions which any school can carry out on its own right now. Article 4 §1 states, moreover, that:

The responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic identity of the university rests primarily with the university itself. While this responsibility is entrusted principally to university authorities (including when the positions exist, the chancellor and/or board of trustees or equivalent body), it is shared in varying degrees by all members of the university community and therefore calls for the recruitment of adequate university personnel, especially teachers and administrators, who are both willing and able to promote that identity. . . .

The institution’s own responsibility could not be spelled out more clearly than it has been in this passage; and this would surely be one of the first things a bishop or his vicar would want to point out to the officials of a Catholic college.

The initial task for a college, then, is to revise the institution’s mission statement, constitution, by-laws, faculty handbook, student handbook, etc., to insure not only that all these documents conform to the General Norms of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, but that they also positively state wherever appropriate that the institution publicly affirms its fundamental Catholic character and intends to govern itself and operate entirely in

accordance with the ECE General Norms.

Far from stirring up unmanageable controversy — although there will inevitably be voices raised in opposition, perhaps especially media voices if there is any hint of “cracking down” — such a public affirmation and statement of intention on the part of a college, delivered “loud and clear,” could actually preclude controversy in the end. It could actually preclude controversy because it would then be absolutely clear to all future students, faculty, employees, associations, benefactors, trustees, accrediting agencies, government entities and the like exactly where the college stands on many of the controversial issues of the day. The current ambivalent situation concerning where a Catholic university stands on certain of these questions can actually tend to encourage protests by ideologues seeking to promote their own agendas — or even to encourage lawsuits in our far too litigious society.

It was precisely such an ambivalent situation that led a Fr. Charles Curran to hope that he could actually win a lawsuit following his dismissal from the theology department of the Catholic University of America. In the event, a secular court upheld the university’s — and the Church’s — legal right to govern a professedly Catholic institution in accordance with Catholic norms.⁹

Once the “internalization” of the General Norms in the basic documents of the university has been completed, it will then be time to consider what further measures might be necessary in order to begin to make *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* a reality in the life of the institution. What actual measures need to be taken, how far to go with them at the present time, how fast to proceed — these will necessarily be individual and prudential questions to be decided, whether by the institution’s Board, its president or administration, or its faculty, as the case may be, in the light of all the relevant circumstances and on a case-by-case basis.

The point is to produce first a firm and unambiguous institutional declaration of principles and intentions by revising the basic university documents and then to set in motion a process of implementation. Once the institution’s basic intentions have thus been publicly declared and been incorporated into its governing and policy documents, then all *future* decisions can begin to be taken in conformity with the General Norms of the universal Church for universities: no more grey areas and tacit acceptance of “American” campus policies and practices incompatible with the apostolic constitution.

Any new faculty contracts, for example, would henceforth have to require teachers who are Catholic “to be faithful to, and other teachers . . . to respect, Catholic doctrine and morals in their research and teaching” (Article 4 § 3). New contracts for teachers in the theological disciplines would have to require the famous “mandate from competent ecclesiastical authority” required by Canon 812, in accordance with this same Article 4 § 3 of the General Norms.

All new hiring decisions across the board, in fact, would henceforth have to take into account the religious commitment of new hires in order that “non-Catholic teachers should not be allowed to constitute a majority within the institution,” in accordance with Article 4 § 4. In this regard, some “affirmative action” in favor of practicing and committed Catholics might sometimes prove to be necessary. And why not? What is more “American” today than affirmative action?

Many of these steps could be taken without disturbing the situation of most of those already in place on the institution’s faculty or in its administration, whatever the different basis on which they might have been hired. For the most part they can simply be left where they are. Firings or dismissals of many who have grown accustomed to the current situation of paying no attention to the Church’s requirements is not always a necessity for an institution attempting to return to the Catholic fold, although there might sometimes be difficult cases, as discussed below, where actual removals could sometimes be necessary.

Once an institution’s intentions about restoring its Catholicity have been made clear, however, some of the current faculty or administration may *wish* to look elsewhere; it can even be gently suggested to them or others objecting to the path back to the Church which the institution has chosen that they might be much happier looking elsewhere. But firings and dismissals are not likely to be generally necessary following the procedures outlined here; resignations and retirements would eventually take care of most of those who do not want to be in a real Catholic university.

Moreover, once a college or university has re-affirmed its integral Catholic identity by incorporation of the General Norms into its governing documents in the manner described above, future students too will be clear about what is, and what is not, to be permitted on a campus which is Catholic. Setting an implementation process of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* in motion may even be advantageous in beginning to set “term limits” on the

present ambiguous and anomalous situation whereby such groups as those promoting so-called “gay rights” or advocating abortion seek official campus “recognition.”

No current “politically correct” cause, court decision, or secular statute should be allowed to supersede the basic right and responsibility a Catholic institution enjoys under the First Amendment to the Constitution to operate in accordance with its own religious and moral beliefs — and this means today in accordance with *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

However, a school does need to spell out publicly its intention of doing so; and then it needs to incorporate this intention into its own governing and policy documents. This is the line that the local bishop, or his episcopal vicar for higher education, should be endeavoring to promote in any Catholic higher education institution(s) in his diocese; it amounts to a strategy that could begin to move the current universe of Catholic higher education institutions back towards the Catholic fold.

IV.

Even if some bishops do begin to act on the local “return” strategy outlined here, and some individual institutions then decide to begin taking steps to return to the Catholic fold, it is nevertheless probably unwise to minimize the problem of dissent and disloyalty which is still to be found on too many Catholic campuses. Unfortunately, over the past quarter of a century during which dissent has been basically tolerated, many students, faculty, and college administrators have come to view dissent and disloyalty as some kind of a “right.” Similarly, it is widely claimed and taken for granted that colleges are no longer obliged to uphold any standards of personal morality and behavior on their campuses.

As has been pointed out, Article 4 § 1 of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* vests responsibility for the Catholic identity of an institution in the college or university itself; this article also cites Canon 810, which requires those who are responsible for university appointments to *remove*, “in accord with the procedures set forth in the statutes,” those in the institution who lack a requisite “integrity of doctrine and probity of life.” The Catholic bishops are given oversight responsibility concerning this question of removal by the same Canon 810.

The prospect of actually removing anybody for anything on an American campus today is one that has been distinctly shied away from. The feared public consequences of ever attempting any such thing, especially in the present media climate in the United States, may well be one of the things that has tended to paralyze both university administrators and bishops in recent years in the United States; it has perhaps been one of the things which has prevented some of them from even attempting to re-affirm or restore the Catholic identity of some higher education institutions—the prospects of ever successfully doing so have seemed too bleak.

However, even while conceding that decisions to remove people would need to be taken on a very careful and prudential basis — taking into account what is actually contained in current employment contracts, for example — the fears of deleterious consequences for Catholic institutions determined to be consistent in their affirmation of a Catholic identity are surely greatly exaggerated. Secular society in America today, after all, still fully recognizes that people, even very prominent people, once they have decided to defy or take issue with the announced policies and decisions of their organizations or employers, are normally obliged to *go* — to be fired, if necessary. This is the *rule* in American politics, business, industry, education, sports, entertainment, the media, etc. We read about such cases in the newspapers or hear about them on the evening news practically every day.

The same thing could well become the rule in Catholic colleges determined to re-affirm their Catholic identity. Does anybody really have a right to teach in a Catholic institution while publicly disagreeing with or denying known Catholic teaching, or while carrying on with an “alternate lifestyle” known to be in conflict with Catholic teaching? The answer to this question that the overwhelming majority of Americans, Catholic or not, would generally give is: No, of course not! Most people understand and even expect that rebels and dissenters within an organization sometimes have to be axed. Indeed, most Americans of almost any persuasion will only be able to respect the Church in the measure that she insists on upholding her own known teachings. Today’s bishops should begin to dare to rely on the basic fairness of the American public to understand and agree that colleges claiming the name of Catholic must be consistent in what they tolerate on their campuses; and that professors who openly chal-

lenge Catholic teaching, for example, may have to go.

Furthermore, once a public dissenter or two is actually let go somewhere, many of those still in place may be much less prone to practice public dissent or to flaunt an alternate lifestyle. Many such people might on their own very soon begin to seek new surroundings which they would regard as more congenial. It should not be assumed that putting in place a process that requires that teachers in Catholic institutions must henceforth exhibit at least a modicum of public respect for what the Church teaches must necessarily and always generate messy and endless public wrangling and controversies. Once dissenters discover that an institution really is serious about re-affirming and restoring its Catholic character, with the backing of the local bishop, many of them may just to decide to go quietly anyway.

Even so, the elimination of scandalous public dissent from Catholic campuses is only one of the reasons why local bishops should begin to require the colleges in their dioceses to begin the process of implementing John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. A much more compelling reason is that the Church, always and everywhere, ought to be what she claims to be in the eyes of the world, and institutions which want to be called Catholic ought to be Catholic in fact. Anything else is dishonest.

The current situation, where colleges and universities go on publicly pretending they are still Catholic, even while conforming in every essential respect to today's typical secular model of a higher education institution, can no more go on than our nation could exist as half slave and half free.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae is just one more of a long list of recent Church documents: *Veritatis Splendor*, *Ut Unum Sint*, *Evangelium Vitae*, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, etc. These documents mark a new era in the history of the Church—an era that at long last can and

must leave behind the disloyalty, contention, controversy, dissent, and rebellion of the past quarter of a century, and begin to look instead towards a new flowering of Christianity in the Third Millennium in which a truly renewed Catholic Church must necessarily take the lead. ✠

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NOTES

¹ Msgr. George Kelly, "How Are We Going to Return Catholic Colleges to the Fold?" in *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter*, September, 1995.

² Pope John Paul II, "Teacher's Task Is to Witness to the Truth," Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Catholic Education, September 14, 1995, in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition), November 29, 1995.

³ For a general discussion of the current Catholic university situation, see Kenneth D. Whitehead, "University Identity Crisis," in *Crisis*, February, 1996.

⁴ See the Commentaries in *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter*, September, 1993.

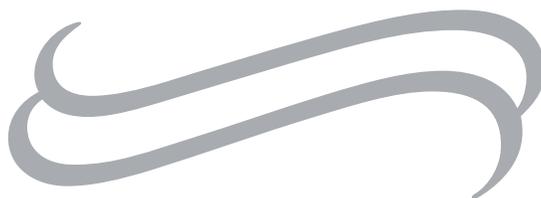
⁵ "Ex Corde Ecclesiae: An Application to the United States," Draft for Discussion by the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* Implementation Committee, August 25, 1995, reprinted with attached background papers in *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter*, September, 1995.

⁶ See, for example, the press release, "Bishops Consider Proposed Guidelines for Local Catholic Colleges," November 20, 1995, Cardinal Newman Society, P.O. Box 75274, Washington, D.C.20013.

⁷ *Vide Note #1 supra.*

⁸ Some of the points and ideas in the remainder of this article were also suggested to this writer by the fine paper of Robert F. Sasseen, "NCCB Proposed Ordinances for Catholic Colleges and Universities in the U.S.," in *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter*, March, 1994.

⁹ See the generally reliable study by Larry Witham, *Curran vs. Catholic University: A Study of Authority and Freedom in Conflict*, Edington-Rand, Inc., P.O. Box 511 Riverdale, Maryland 20738, 1991.



Biblical Scholarship: Certitudes or Hypotheses?

Evidence about the original language and dating of the Gospels. The contribution of Claude Tresmontant and others.

Introduction

One of the axioms of contemporary biblical scholarship is that the exegesis of a text depends on its dating. The question of dating truly conditions our understanding of the Gospels: at least insofar as what is essential to the text is concerned; witnesses were still very numerous when they were being composed and their statements could be verified. They were not transmitting their imaginings but rather their testimonies. In the words of the Prologue of the Gospel of St. Luke: “Many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events which have been fulfilled in our midst *precisely as these events were transmitted to us* by the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word. I too have carefully placed (or been carefully informed by these witnesses) of the whole sequence of events from the beginning and I have decided to set it in writing to you, Theophilus, so that Your Excellency may see how reliable the instruction was that you received.”

Scholarly introductions to the New Testament generally show that a consensus has been established among most Catholic scholars regarding the dates of the composition of the Gospels. For example, the majority of scholars place the composition of the Fourth Gospel toward the end of the first century and place the Gospel of Matthew around the year 85. They generally place the Apocalypse and the Acts of the Apostles at the end of the first century as well.

But in 1976 a bomb went off in scholarly circles with the publication of the late Anglican Bishop John A.T. Robinson’s *Redating the New Testament*.¹

Robinson’s book is not only scholarly but it is extremely amusing. He tells us that for a long time, that is, up until the respectable age which he has attained, he believed everything which he had been taught in the field of historical-critical exegesis, everything which the German school propounded. And then one day some years ago he asked himself a simple question, one of those which are at the heart of major scientific breakthroughs: On what are the theses of the critical school, regarding the dating of the composition of the Gospels, *scientifically* based? To this question posed in the cocktail hour of his life, Robinson was unable to secure a response. Being the good English empiricist that he was, he set about, in a scientific way, to look again at the entire matter of the dating of the books of the New Testament.

He started with a very simple, evident and startling fact. No text in any book of the New Testament proves that a particular author had been aware of that most startling event in the history of Judaism during the first century of the Christian era —namely the taking of Jerusalem and its destruction by the Emperor Titus in the year 70. In the entire New Testament there is not one word of commentary on this catastrophic event, even when occasion would have seemed to present an opportunity for it or even to warrant it, as for example with respect to Jesus’ prophecies, which forecast the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. If the Greek texts which report these prophecies, which can be read in Matthew, Mark, or Luke, had been written after the destruction of Jerusalem, they would have been followed by comments stressing that history had verified these prophecies.

The Gospel of Matthew is constantly concerned to show or emphasize that a particular ancient prophecy is verified by the events. This would have been a golden opportunity to add a comment which would have validated the sayings of Our Lord. Everything, however, takes place as if the four Gospels had been redacted as we read them today in Greek at a time when the Temple was standing.

In this book, one of a series of four on the Four Gospels, Claude Tresmontant, a distinguished scholar at the Sorbonne, sets forth his own views, not only on the language but also on the dating, of the New Testament; and he provides an argument from archeology to help to confirm the thesis of Robinson. He observes, in his work *The Hebrew Christ*,² that almost all scholars tell us that the Fourth Gospel was redacted around the end

of the first century. Yet we read in John 5:2 that “there is (in Greek, *estin*) at Jerusalem, at the sheep gate, a pool named in Hebrew *Bethzatha*. It has five porticos.” How do you conclude that around the end of the first century of our era an author would have written “there is at Jerusalem a pool” when Jerusalem would have been destroyed, some 25 or 30 years before, reduced to a heap of stones with a Roman encampment, at the very time, positioned on top of it? If one referred to a monument which existed at Hiroshima before the destruction of 1945 and which had not been reconstructed, one would not say there *is* but there was. Moreover, during this century, there were actually found the remains or ruins of this pool with five porticos. The author wrote in the present indicative because the pool existed when he wrote. The Gospel of Matthew was therefore written some time before 70 AD.

Catholic exegetes generally think that the author of the Fourth Gospel is John, the son of Zebedee the Galilean. If he is the author of the Fourth Gospel and if he committed it to writing around the year 95, then that would put him in extreme, old age. How psychologically improbable that John would have waited 65 years to commit to writing the account of the events of which he had been an eyewitness! We have only to reread the account of the cure of the man born blind from birth, in chapter 9, with the dialogues which are found there. We see quite well that these scenes have been set down immediately, fresh, warm in his memory, with amusing details of tremendous precision. These are not the recollections of a man of over ninety years of age. These are notes which were set down as they happened.

Robinson concludes his scholarly work with analyses regarding the dating which are quite different from those which have commonly been taught up until now. He believes, for example, that the Fourth Gospel was composed before 70 — in the main, between 40 and 60. He also places the Apocalypse before 70.

Claude Tresmontant in his pioneering work *The Hebrew Christ*, basing himself on arguments distinct from those of Robinson, situates the *Greek* version we have of the Fourth Gospel around the years 36–40, and therefore prior to the dates proposed by Robinson. He holds that there was an original Hebrew version of the Fourth Gospel before its translation into Greek; and proposes reasons for believing that in its present form, in *Greek*, the Gospel of Matthew had been composed before the end of the forties. But the original Hebrew

dates, of course, from before this time. Now hold on to your seats! What Tresmontant is in effect saying is that the Gospels as we have them are really *translations* — which are actually not that late either — of much earlier original compositions in Hebrew. Therefore, they are much closer to the *ipsissima verba Christi!*

In Tresmontant’s view, the unknown translators who rendered the Hebrew Bible into Greek, during the fourth, third and second centuries before the Common Era sought to follow step by step, word for word the inspired and sacred Hebrew text. This translation was intended for the brothers and sisters of the synagogues of the Diaspora scattered throughout the periphery of the Mediterranean Sea who were no longer sufficiently familiar with the Hebrew language in order to be able to read the sacred books directly without the help of this translation which we call the Septuagint. The unknown translators who translated the documents which comprise the Gospel’s of Matthew, John, Luke and Mark, from Hebrew into Greek, proceeded in the same fashion. They sought to follow step by step, word by word, the Hebrew document which they had in front of them. And their translations were intended, first of all and primarily, for the Jews in the synagogues throughout the Mediterranean basin who had received the message which came from Jerusalem, the *besorah*, the joyous news. They used the same lexicon, the same system of correspondence between Hebrew and Greek, as those who had translated the Septuagint from Hebrew into Greek. And when Paul dictated his letters — directly in Greek? in Hebrew? — he made use of this same traditional Hebrew–Greek lexicon.

Tresmontant attests that in retroversing the four Gospels from Greek into Hebrew into French, he has done so just like the unknown translators of the Hebrew documents, namely word for word, step by step, in order to rediscover the rhythm of the Hebrew sentence which is found underneath the Greek document, which is itself a translation from the Hebrew.

The Hebrew bible, Tresmontant further observes, was written in a popular language, a simple language, a language of peasants, of shepherds, of artisans, of laborers. It is therefore appropriate that the translation of the Hebrew bible into French, or any language, be readable, by and for everyone. The same can be said for the books of the New Covenant. The translation should be intelligible for a child. The translation should not be written in a language made up of words which show

traces of Greek and Latin.

Tresmontant is not alone. Until his unexpected death in October of 1986, the noted scholar of the Dead Sea scrolls and the world's most renowned expert on the *Our Father*, Father Jean Carmignac of Paris, whose warmth, kindness and priestly friendship I will cherish until the day I die, had for the last 20 years been working on the question of the language and dating of the Gospels. Fortunately a number of his friends had prevailed upon him to write a popular description of his theories which he did in 1983. I was privileged to translate this work, which is entitled *The Birth of the Synoptic Gospels*.³

Father Carmignac was a philologist, an exceptionally competent expert in biblical Hebrew. He knew well the ravages that a particular type of contemporary exegesis was producing among priests and faithful. For, if the Gospels were later compositions, simply witnesses of the growing faith of the earliest Christian communities, Bultmann was correct and so was Loisy. Yes, indeed, as Father Carmignac once observed to me, if the Jesus of History is practically unattainable, then it will be the Christ of Faith who will very quickly be rejected!

One day some twenty years ago Father Carmignac started to translate the rather inelegant and ear-grating Greek of St. Mark's Gospel into Hebrew. To his astonishment, he did not encounter any real problems in retroversing into Hebrew. As he relates, a certitude began to form within him: "I was convinced that the Greek text of Mark could not have been redacted directly in Greek and that it was in reality only the Greek translation of an original Hebrew The Hebrew-Greek translation had transposed word for word and had even preserved in Greek the order of the words preferred by Hebrew grammar." Carmignac continues: "As my translation gradually took shape, my conviction was reinforced; even a Semite having learned Greek later on in life would not have permitted the stamp of his mother tongue to come through; he would have, from time to time at least, made use of the expression current in Greek. But no. We have here the literal, carbon copy, or transparency, of a translator attempting to respect, to the greatest extent possible, the Hebrew text which he had in front of him."

In order to bolster further his position, Carmignac sifted out into nine categories the hundreds of semitisms in the gospels: semitisms of borrowing, of imitation, of thought, of vocabulary, of syntax, of style,

of composition, of translation, and of transmission. (An example of a semitism of transmission would be that of a copyist's mistake as a result of a similarity in Hebrew between consonants.)

Carmignac gives a number of demonstrations of Hebrew *plays on words* in the text. What follows is a quote in which he attempts to give us an example of play on words which Hebrew had a great preference for employing, taking great pleasure in making reference to similar sounds, thereby facilitating the task of memorization.

The Benedictus, reproduced in Luke 1:68-79, is composed of three strophes each having seven stichs: the first begins with the Biblical and Qumranian formula, *Blessed (be) the Lord the God of Israel*; the third begins, as frequently is the case at Qumran, with a personal pronoun: *And you, child*; the second has in its first stich: *to show mercy to our fathers*, in which the expression *to show mercy* translated the verb *hanan*, which is the root of *Yohanan* (= John); then follows the second stich, *he remembers his holy covenant*, in which he remembers translates the verb *zukur*, which is the root of *Zakaryah* (= Zachary); then the third stich: *the oath which he swore to our father Abraham* uses in two different forms, the root *shaba* (*to swear to take an oath*), which is the root of *Elishabaout* (= Elizabeth). Is it by chance that the second strophe of this poem begins by a triple allusion to the names of the three protagonists: John, Zachary, Elizabeth? But this allusion only exists in Hebrew — the Greek or English translation does not preserve it.

Moreover, Father Carmignac maintains that the destruction of Palestine by the Romans in the year 70 prevents us from supposing that such documents as the Gospels could possibly have been produced after the dispersion of the community for which they were originally intended. Carmignac also discovered that since the 15th century some 80 retroversions of the Gospels had been made into Hebrew by a number of scholars in different parts of the world.

The little treatise, *The Birth of the Synoptic Gospels*, is an introduction to his discovery and the five major works of retroversion which he managed to publish before his unexpected death. He once observed to me his conviction that by the year 2000 scriptural scholarship will start with the Hebrew or Aramaic rather than the Greek. "Sooner or later, specialists will be hit right between the eyes and see themselves like me staring

directly at the very backdrop of the Gospels.”

What follows are the provisional results of his twenty years of research on the formation of the Synoptic Gospels:

1. It is *certain* that Mark, Matthew, and the documents used by Luke were redacted in a Semitic language.

2. It is *probable* that this Semitic language is Hebrew rather than Aramaic.

3. It is *sufficiently probable* that our Second Gospel was composed in a Semitic language by St. Peter the Apostle.

4. It is *possible* that St. Matthew the Apostle redacted the *collections* of discourses or that he redacted the *Common Source* utilized by our First and Third Gospels.

5. Utilizing internal evidence in the Epistles of St. Paul, Father Carmignac next presents a very interesting and novel *hypothesis* regarding the dating of the Gospels.

In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul speaks in 8:18 of a person whom he describes thus: *the brother whom all the Churches praise for his preaching of the Gospel*. If it is a question of the preaching of the Gospels, this would not be a distinctive designation, for it would apply to all the collaborators of St. Paul. In order that the Gospel be a motive for special recognition throughout all the Churches and characterize one brother from all of the others, isn't it because this brother, alone of all the others, is the author of a Gospel? Thus it would have been *spread throughout all the Churches*. Many commentators have understood this allusion of St. Paul in this way, beginning with Origen (cited by Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 6, Chapter 25, #6).

The text of St. Paul is unfortunately not explicit enough to warrant being considered a final argument, but it constitutes, at least, an indication which is worth not forgetting.

6. Even if the indication of Second Epistle to the Corinthians (which would not be viewed as scientific) is taken into account, it is beyond the limit of probability to situate the redaction of Luke in Greek later than the years 58–60; it is beyond the limits of probability to place the final redaction in a Semitic language of our First Gospel much later than Luke; it is beyond the

limits of probability to place the redaction in a Semitic language of our Second Gospel much later than around the year 50, and equally beyond the limits of probability if account is taken of the indication of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (which would be viewed as more scientific), to situate the redaction of Luke in Greek later than the years 50–53; it is beyond the limits of probability to situate the definitive redaction in a Semitic language of our First Gospel much later than Luke; it is beyond the limits of probability to situate the redaction in a Semitic language of our Second Gospel much later than around the years 42–45.

7. It is *probable* that the Semitic Gospel of Peter was translated into Greek, perhaps with some adaptations by Mark, in Rome, at the latest around the year 63. It is our Second Gospel which has preserved the name of its translator, instead of its author.

As for external evidence, Father Carmignac refers to the witness of Papias. Toward the middle of the reign of Trajan (98–117), Papias composed a treatise of five books entitled *Exegeses (or Explanations) of the Words of the Lord*. We no longer possess anything except a few fragments of this work — so valuable because of its antiquity. These fragments are preserved in the *History of the Church* written by Eusebius. What follows are the two texts relative to Mark, which are taken directly from Eusebius and which, for the sake of convenience, we will call Text *A* and Text *B*. The first, Text *A*, is taken from Book 2 which covers the earliest Christian history from the Ascension to the end of Nero's reign, from 30 to 68 AD. In Chapter 14, Eusebius recounts how Peter came to Rome to preach the good news during the reign of Claudius (41–54) and there confronted Simon the Magician. The chapter has as its title, “The Gospel According to Mark.”

“So brightly shone the light of piety in the minds of Peter's hearers that, not satisfied with a single hearing or with the real teaching of the divine message, they resorted to appeals of every kind to induce Mark, whose Gospel has come down to us, as he was a follower of Peter, to leave them in writing a summary of the teachings which Peter had transmitted to them orally, nor did they cease until they had persuaded him and thus became responsible for the writing of what is known as the Gospel according to Mark.”

What follows is the second fragment of Papias, contained in the *History of the Church*, by Eusebius —

what we have referred to as Text B. Papias is quoted as saying:

“And this is what (John) the Presbyter used to say: ‘Mark who had been with Peter as the recorder wrote down *carefully, but not always in order*, all the things which he remembered to have been *said* or *done*, by the Lord.’”

“For (here Papias is again speaking), Mark did not hear the Lord nor did he accompany him, but later, as I said, he accompanied Peter. Peter used to give his instructions according to needs (adapt his teaching to the occasion), but without making a systematic arrangement of the Lord’s sayings, so that Mark having written down these things as he recalled them, made no mistake: he had actually one sole concern: to omit nothing that he had heard and to falsify nothing.”

This is what Papias reports regarding Mark (*Eusebius, History of the Church, Book 3, Chapter 39, 14-50*).

Moreover, Eusebius tells us:

“It is said that, on learning by revelation from the Spirit what had happened, the Apostle (Peter) was delighted at their zeal and enthusiasm” (referring to the fact that Peter’s hearers had induced Mark to set down in writing a summary of teachings which Peter had transmitted to them orally, (mentioned in Text A) and that he (Peter) authorized the reading of the book in the assemblies. Clement of Alexandria reports this information in *Outlines*, Book 6, and the Bishop of Hieropolis, Papias, confirms this by his own testimony. (*History of the Church, 11, 15, 1-2*).

We have, therefore, in this instance in the witness of Papias, a testimony going back to the very beginning of the Second Century which attests that Mark had written before Peter’s death; it is known that the apostle was martyred during the persecution of Nero which followed shortly after the burning of Rome in 64 AD.

Father Carmignac also studied the writings of Origen, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Clement, and shows that there is no need to break with the earliest tradition and to call into question the apostolic authenticity of the gospels.

Thanks to the efforts of Father Carmignac, a further new indication of the antiquity of the gospels is in the process of becoming established. Prior to the year 50, Christians from Judaic circles were only able to

express the message of Jesus Christ in Aramaic or Hebrew, and it is this primitive message which constitutes the basis for the gospel documents.

Space does not allow us to go into other considerations which bear upon the dating of the gospel texts and therefore upon their historical accuracy. Suffice it to say that there is renewed interest in the study of oral tradition as this would have affected the composition of the gospels.

Father Jousse, in 1925, published an astonishing work, *Oral Rhythmic and Memory Building Techniques*, by which even Loisy would become interested in Jousse’s thesis whereby the oral tradition of a great deal of the gospel becomes a very plausible and probably well-established fact.

Research shows that, as a pedagogical method, learning by heart plays a key role in the three Jewish institutions of popular education: *the family, the synagogue, and the elementary school*. Chanting or “cantillation” and memory-building devices and drills were part of this “culture of memory.” In his study of the oral style of the Gospels, Jousse sheds light on the rhythmic processes employed by Jesus and preserved by the earliest Christian recitators!

In 1957 at the Oxford Congress on the Four Gospels, the eminent Swedish specialist in the New Testament, H. Riesenfeld, maintained that not only was the gospel tradition prior to the Easter event — therefore going back to Jesus Himself — but that:

In the gospels we are shown very clearly that Jesus was a teacher, especially in his relation to his disciples. This means more than his mere preaching in their presence. He gave them instructions and in this we are reminded of the methods of the Jewish rabbis and that implies that Jesus made his disciples, and above all the Twelve, learn, *and furthermore that he made them learn by heart*. (*The Gospel Tradition, p. 22*).

In the light of such new hypotheses, as set forth in the works of Carmignac, Tresmontant, and Bishop John A.T. Robinson, it is possible to raise the following questions, which, even if these authors had not been cited, most people, in a state of doubt, would answer in the negative.

1. Is it scientifically *proven* that the gospels were written quite late toward the end of the first century and after the years 66-70? *No!*

2. Is it *proven* that a lengthy (from 40-60 years) oral transmission of the essential elements of the gospel

needed to take place before they were committed to writing? *No!*

3. With respect to the two previous questions, is it *proven* that a major problem would exist regarding the accuracy of the deeds and words of the Lord Jesus because of oral tradition? *No!*

4. Is it *proven* that if the Gospels had been transmitted only orally, there would have been a damage to the Faith? *No!*

5. Is it *proven* that Christian communities during the years between 70 and 90 AD altered, in the light of their own particular problems, some of the words of Christ which have been handed down in order to have Christ say things capable of justifying the practices of these communities? *No!*

6. Is it *proven* that the Gospel according to John was the last to be written because it is the most spiritual and apparently the most finely wrought? *No!*

In the light of this demand for certain proofs, isn't it also wise and scientific to propose other hypotheses dependent upon a no less attentive reading and based upon the obvious Hebrew substratum of our Greek texts?

For example, why wouldn't the majority of passages in our Gospels have been written, at least in bits and pieces if not in all their essential elements, a short time after — if not even during — the earthly life of Jesus?

Furthermore, since the apostles began to preach the Good News of Jesus when the Holy Spirit came upon them on the day of Pentecost, why would they be prohibited from committing to writing the essential elements of their preaching over a period of several decades?

Why would their hearers have formally abstained from taking notes during these years (in a Hebrew tradition which for centuries had noted down virtually everything any of the prophets ever said)? And why, all of a sudden, would this activity of committing to writing have been set in motion simultaneously in very different places, but according to very similar styles?

Why would there not have been a simultaneity between the oral transmission (especially preaching) and the writing down of a certain number of accounts, and words, as well as the major narratives such as the

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Passion and Resurrection — and this being done in very Jewish categories in the cultural presence of the Sacred Books of the Old Testament, in the everyday language of Hebrew and Aramaic?

Thus, we can also say that between the years 30 and 65, there was already a certain form of sporadic persecution coming from Jewish circles, though this does not mean that there was already a complete break between the synagogue and “New Way.” This is more in

line with the position of the Gospels having been written before the year 60 — the Roman persecution beginning in full force in the year 64. The writings of the New Testament rarely point the finger at the Romans, but always do so against the adherents of the Mosaic religion.

But even given the hypothesis of a lengthy purely oral transmission, before finally being written down after the seventies, we are still permitted to present the hypothesis of an oral transmission running alongside the redaction in Hebrew of partial texts during the thirties. Gradually these texts would have been employed as the basic ingredients at the very center of the redaction of each Gospel, essentially completed before the years 60 to 65. The entire corpus would have been translated into Greek in order to respond to the needs of new Christians coming from the Greek and Roman world.

In the light of these various hypotheses, the scientific test or control must examine which functions the best and which avoids the greatest number of objections.

It is not anti-scientific to think that the hypothesis of the lengthy oral transmission lacks genuine proofs and is fraught with many difficulties. It is not anti-scientific to claim that the hypotheses of a short oral transmission and a rapid writing down of the accounts or words of Jesus, shortly after the events, find solid foundations through an examination of the Greek text and its retroversion into Hebrew. It is an established fact that the practice of shorthand in Hebrew existed at the time of our Lord.

In a work entitled, *Un Homme Nommé SALUT, Genèse d'une "hérésie" à Jérusalem*,⁴ Madame Jacqueline Genot-Bismuth, who occupies the Chair of Ancient

and Medieval Judaism at the Sorbonne, ably demonstrates that in the scientific discipline which is critical exegesis, certain major errors have been taught for generations and have totally falsified our understanding of Christian origins. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, for example, it was commonly taught that the Gospel of John was a later composition under Hellenistic, Gnostic or Iranian influence. Madame Genot-Bismuth, through her exceptional knowledge of the most ancient rabbinic literature, makes a solid case for the Gospel of John's being a *script*, the translation into Greek of notes taken in Hebrew of a John who was also a Kohen (a priest).

Utilizing a wealth of details, she demonstrates that the Gospel of John is a contemporary collection of the words and deeds of Rabbi Yeshua. Where the German exegetes of the nineteenth century saw only fiction and mythology, she rediscovers history!

A profound disregard for the Judean ethnic milieu or environment explains the length of time that these errors have been in vogue. This disregard is due to an ingrained attitude of contempt for and detestation of Judaism, which are constants in German philosophy, the mistress of German critical exegesis accepted by the majority of exegetes since Renan and Loisy. The book of Madame Genot-Bismuth could inaugurate a veritable revolution regarding our knowledge of Christian beginnings.

There is a new kind of apologetic making its appearance in Catholic Biblical circles. Apologetics used to be a defense of Church doctrine against the Protestants, who used historical-critical exegesis as a weapon against the Church. But that is the old apologetics. The new apologetics is the defense of Catholic historical-critical exegetes, who learn their methodology from Protestants, against attacks by Catholics. In France, this apologetics is reflected in the work of Father Jean Grelot entitled, *The Gospels in Apostolic Tradition: Reflections on a Certain Hebrew Christ*.

Besides being an apologetical defense against Tresmontant's thesis, it also seeks to respond to Father Carmignac and to Father Rene Laurentin's, *The Truth of Christmas Beyond the Myths: The Gospels of the Infancy of Christ*. English-language examples of this new apologetics are Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's "Again Under Attack," *The Bible Today*, March 1984; "Danger Also From the Left," Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, S. J., and

Raymond E. Brown, *The Bible Today*, May, 1985; and *Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine*, by Raymond E. Brown, Paulist Press, 1985. In this last named work Brown continues the fiercely polemical attack on Father Laurentin which he launched on September 29, 1984, at the Catholic University of America. The rapidity with which this body of apologetic writing was formed, and the eminence of the historical-critical exegetes called upon to make the defense, indicates that a defense is seen as a matter of considerable urgency in the historical-critical exegetical camp.

Some sort of crisis seems to be at hand for historical-critical exegesis as this methodology is being practiced in the Catholic Church. Might some of the apologetic defenses by the Catholic historical-critical exegetes just mentioned be motivated, not by purely scientific motives, but rather by that feeling of dread and worry that must come into the minds of theoreticians when they see their own theories and hypotheses *seriously* — and *scientifically* — threatened?

But there are signs of hope. Recently a mutually vituperative and polemical exchange between Father Grelot and Mr. Pierre Debray in a French Catholic weekly has given way to a reconciliation of views between these two gentlemen who were in agreement that, yes, this Catholic layman's concern about hypotheses being set forth as scientific facts was indeed something that could cause, and had caused, tremendous difficulty in France and elsewhere. In short, both of these men agreed that "*hypotheses should not be presented as certitudes.*"

The present volume, *The Gospel of Matthew*, translation and Notes by Claude Tresmontant, contributes greatly to the new *hypotheses*. It has been rendered into English by Kenneth D. Whitehead, a professional translator, knowledgeable in Scripture and theological issues, in order to allow the English-speaking reader to come closer to the Jesus of History with the certitude that He is truly Our Way, Our Truth and Our Life. This work will soon be published by Christendom Press of Front Royal, Virginia.

A word of gratitude is owed to the Homeland Foundation for funding the translation of the Tresmontant Corpus; and to Mr. Joseph Mula, my parishioner, who gave the subvention needed to have this timely work published by the Christendom Press. ✠

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¹John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1976.

²Claude Tresmontant, *The Hebrew Christ*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1989.

³*The Birth of the Synoptic Gospels*, by Jean Carmignac, Translated from the French, by Msgr. Michael J. Wrenn, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1987.

⁴*Un Homme Nommé SALUT, Genèse d'une "hérésie" à Jérusalem*, by Jacqueline Genot-Bismuth, Editions, O.E.I.L. Paris, 1986.

DOCUMENTATION

A Rationale and Vision for the Natural Sciences at Franciscan University of Steubenville

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Dynamic Orthodoxy and Genuine Freedom

The emergence of Franciscan University of Steubenville as a major Catholic university over the last two decades owes much to the University's steadfast adherence to the essential purpose of a Catholic university: education *in the light of the Faith*. Franciscan University stresses its connection to the teaching Church, and boldly asserts its authentically Catholic character by

teaching "all the truths of revelation whether found in Scripture or Tradition as taught by the Catholic Church." *Dynamic Orthodoxy* is a hallmark of the University, and "as a policy standard for its life," it forms a learning environment filled with the spirit of Christ, and permeated with prayer.¹

From this foundation in Christ and the truths of His Church springs a lively search for truths in the various fields of human knowledge. With St. Ambrose the University celebrates the liberating power of *Credo ut intelligam*, the acceptance of irrefutable truths in order to investigate nature more freely with greater security and understanding.

This understanding of study and learning, which is the orthodox Catholic position, stands at odds with the ethos of academic freedom that permeates today's colleges and universities. Among other things, this ethos holds that to begin any intellectual inquiry, and especially a scientific inquiry, from the ground of uncritically accepted religious faith inhibits, if it does not completely invalidate the inquiry. Yet serious criticism ad-

vanced in the pursuit of truth necessarily presumes some sort of first principles that are preserved from criticism. If not, then all things will always be in doubt, and a dogmatic skepticism will be the order of the day. For if the principles underlying one criticism are laid open to criticism, and then the principles of this second criticism are themselves open to yet a third criticism, and so on, then either the chain of criticisms must finally settle on principles not open to criticism, or all criticism is merely a game which values intellectual abstruseness and wit, while it denigrates the truth. "It must be remembered," writes Christopher Derrick, "that fundamental skepticism down-grades the academic person while claiming to secure his freedom."²

As early as 1932 the philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand celebrated the more energetic orthodox Catholic conception of the intellectual life against the "darkening" hyper-criticism of the modern university, especially as they applied to the sciences. Because it is in love with creation as a reflection of God, and redeemed by Christ, "the Catholic attitude is specifically

soaring, specifically anti-pedantic, anti-selfcomplacent, openminded, filled with respect for reality.” The scientist with this attitude who has the necessary talent, training, and good work habits, and who is painstakingly methodical in his research, has a “tremendous start” in his field.

Von Hildebrand lamented that “a large number of Catholic men of science had allowed the modern university to force on them the ideal of its pseudo-freedom from prejudice,” a correlative to its pre-occupation with academic freedom. The single-minded pursuit of a value-free scientific point of view produces a class of men and women whose experience of the world and its people must by necessity be increasingly restricted for the sake of “objectivity.” This “pseudo-freedom” contradicts the “spirit of freedom, such as only a life from and with Christ can give.” Von Hildebrand:

[Christian freedom] alone is right and appropriate for a place [the university] devoted to the search for and proclamation of truth. Away with the ideal of pseudo-objectivity! . . . Away with the false conception that man is more capable of scientific study, the more sterile he is a man, the smaller his living contact is with the whole wealth of the world! Away with the fallacy that a pedantic, distanced neutrality is the true index of the scientific mind! Whatever a university achieves, can be but part of life as a whole. Knowledge, however great its value *per se*, must as a whole form an organic part of the destiny of the individual and of mankind.³

Those who reject a religious context for the study of the sci-

ences also forget the tremendous debt that modern science owes to the Christian Doctrine of the Incarnation, whereby God unified Himself with man and creation. Christ, the Word made flesh, is the agent of the creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*); He is the guarantee that creation is orderly, coherent, and knowable. No other religion or ideology so confidently avers the knowability of creation which was indispensable to the rise of modern science. Dr. Peter Hodgson, Head of the Nuclear Physics Theoretical Group at Oxford University, recently wrote: “Scientists are intent on discovering the laws of nature, those generalizations that enable us to describe in great detail the workings of the natural world, from the sub-nuclear particles to the vast galaxies. If God had not created things that behave consistently and, on the whole, rather simply, then science would not have been possible at all.”⁴

Bridging the Historical Divide between Faith and Science on the Pillar of Truth

Franciscan University’s Mission Statement and its Philosophy of the Curriculum conform completely to the foregoing conception of Christian freedom. These documents, which powerfully inform the life of the University, accord primacy to Christ, whereby all human knowledge of creation is related to Him, “the firstborn of every creature.”⁵ Through and in Christ, who “is the Way, the Truth and the Life,” men and women become “free indeed.”⁶ “If you abide in my word, you shall be my disciples

indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8: 31-32) Accordingly, if all things are from and in Christ, and He is Truth, the truths of the natural world cannot possibly be at odds with revealed truth, or with themselves. Franciscan University enthusiastically embraces the constant teaching of the Church that there can never be any contradiction between the truths of science, which proceed from experiment and reason, and the truths of revelation.

Faculty and students of the University are ever mindful of the exact distinction between faith and science or reason. It is implicit in the whole Christian tradition; and explicit in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, in the declarations of Vatican I (1870), and in the teachings of various popes over the past century and a half. With the Church, Franciscan University rejects the false opposition between Christian faith and science. It fully assents to what John Paul II told a study group of theologians, philosophers, and scientists in September 1991: the Church could not accept the rift that developed between science and religion in the 17th century, “convinced as she was that the truth of nature and the truth of revelation come from the same divine source.”⁷

Accordingly, Franciscan University has adopted John Henry Cardinal Newman’s “cardinal maxim” for a university: “truth cannot be contrary to truth.” And moreover that there is a unity of all truths,” whereby the diverse truths of each department of learning are unified and interconnected.⁸ The “unity of all truths” is a principal tenet of Franciscan University’s

Philosophy of the Curriculum, and the firm foundation upon which to build the new cooperation between the Church and the sciences “in the service of the human family” envisioned by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, and John Paul II.⁹

The Unity of Truth and the Importance of Limits

The “unity of all truths” means something quite precise in the intellectual life of the university. It welcomes the plurality of truths offered by each legitimate academic discipline, but it also does not back away from the difficult work of ordering these truths, and securing the natural limits of each discipline. A respect for limits is especially important in maintaining a fruitful partnership between religion and science. For it has almost always been the case that conflicts between these two flare up when one of them exceeds its legitimate boundaries and transgresses onto the intellectual domain of the other.

What are the boundaries of science? To be sure science is a kind of philosophy inasmuch as it attempts to explain reality rationally. But whereas philosophy in the broader sense studies the nature of reality as a whole, science probes the nature of particular classes of things. Science is more focused in its attention, more exact and more modest than philosophy. Nonetheless it has the same final end as philosophy: an understanding of reality. Philosophy and science also share in common the method of rational deduction, although science is rigorous in deducing conclusions from a well-defined base

of observed facts. “Strictly speaking,” the great historian Christopher Dawson wrote, “there is no such thing as science, but only sciences.” At Franciscan University these are biology, chemistry, physics, engineering science, mathematics, and computer science. To speak of a universal science is to venture into the realm of philosophy proper. In Dawson’s words, “The moment that the scientist leaves his laboratory and attempts to construct a universal theory of reality, he ceases to be a scientist and becomes a philosopher.”¹⁰

It is precisely this overstepping of bounds that led to the apparent rupture between the Church and the sciences in the 17th century. In the aforementioned address of John Paul II to the study group of theologians, philosophers, and scientists, he noted that the “growth of the natural sciences was sometimes accompanied by a certain kind of rationalism which contended that everything could be explained by scientific reasoning alone, or as later developed, by the conviction that nothing could be explained since the existence of absolute truth was altogether disallowed. Thus the question of God was often scrutinized by such a method as to make it seem devoid of meaning.”¹¹ Such rationalism is not science, but scientism — an ideology whose adherents claim that only the scientific method can yield valid knowledge and reliable value judgments. It was “the apostles of scientism,” as G. K. Chesterton called them, who by acting outside the natural limits of their field, provoked a deep suspicion of science among certain churchmen in the early years of modern science.”¹²

It is not surprising then that we

always find the Church warmly embracing the sciences when they are true to their own methods and principles. When Pope Leo XIII reestablished the Vatican Observatory in 1891, he said “the Church and her pastors are not opposed to *true and solid science* . . . They embrace it, encourage it and promote it with the fullest possible dedication.” Extending the teaching of Vatican I, Leo also taught in *Providentissimus Deus* that “There can never be any discrepancy between the theologian and the physicist, *as long as each confines himself within his own lines*, and both are careful, as St. Augustine warns us, not to make rash assertions, or to assert what is not known as known.” Continuous with this tradition The Fathers of Vatican II wrote, “*If methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with the faith because the things of the world and the things of faith derive from the same God.*”¹³ (Italics added for emphasis.)

It is important to note that the Fathers found it also necessary to correct those well-meaning but misdirected Christians who misuse scientific conclusions to strengthen articles of religious faith. The Fathers deplored “certain attitudes (not unknown among Christians) deriving from a shortsighted view of the rightful autonomy of science; they have occasioned conflict and controversy and have misled many into opposing faith and science.”¹⁴

The Crucial Role of the University in the Rapprochement between Faith and Science

In his lecture “Christianity and Scientific Investigation,” Cardinal Newman holds up the university as the antidote to “the needless antagonism” between revealed religion and science inasmuch as it regulates and directs its many and varied disciplines toward the common good. The university *qua* university professes to assign to each study, which it receives, its own proper place and its just boundaries; to define the rights, to establish the mutual relations, and to effect the inter-communion of one and all; to keep in check the ambitious and encroaching, and to succor and maintain those which from time to time are succumbing under the more popular or the more fortunately circumstanced; to keep the peace between them all, and to convert their mutual differences and contrarities into the common good.”¹⁵

In effect, the university “acts as an umpire between truth and truth.” Preeminence is accorded to the truths of the Catholic Church because, among other things, Truth “can but minister to truth,” and “reason cannot but illustrate and defend Revelation.” The university must then take into consideration “the nature and importance” of each of its departments, assigning to each its “due order of precedence.”¹⁶

Franciscan University’s Philosophy of the Curriculum is intellectually indebted to Cardinal Newman’s vision of the university, and in particular to his insistence

on the “unity of all truths.” With Cardinal Newman it holds that “nothing is too vast, nothing too subtle, nothing too distant, nothing too minute, nothing too discursive, nothing too exact” to attract the attention of our professors and students.¹⁷ It encourages professors to set the truths of their disciplines in relation to other truths “so that they illuminate each other.” And mindful of the unity of all knowledge students and professors remain aware of the whole as they study the parts. Accordingly, as Cardinal Newman wrote, they will grow in knowledge, but also in that wisdom “which discerns the whole in each part, the end in each beginning . . . because it [wisdom] always knows where it is, and how its path lies from one point to another.”¹⁸

Moreover, grounded as they are in the principle of the “unity of all truths,” the sciences are an integral part of the University’s curriculum, and not merely an appendage attached to it because everyone else has them. This guiding principle provides the sciences a proper context, and establishes their essential connections to all other intellectual disciplines. It thus goes far toward achieving that holism celebrated by von Hildebrand, whereby scientific knowledge forms “an organic part of the destiny of the individual and of mankind.”

The Unity of Truth: The Hope and Salubrity of the Sciences

The unity of all truths is much more than a means to head off conflict between science and religion; it turns out to be indispensable for sustain-

ing the very dignity and purpose of the sciences. As John Paul II pointed out in his September 1991 address to the study group of scientists, philosophers, and theologians, when scientists of the nineteenth century acted high-handedly, mistaking their part for the whole, and extending and applying their methods indiscriminately, they undermined truth in the name of the search for total certainty, and thereby lost their whole reason for being. A certain aimlessness began to infect the sciences. “Just when science was beginning to acquire an enormous prestige with the man in the street,” says Dawson, “the scientists themselves began to lose confidence in science.” Some agreed with Bertrand Russell that “the external world may be nothing but an illusion, and that if it exists it consists of events short, small and haphazard.” The universe is “all spots and jumps, without unity, continuity, coherence or orderliness.”¹⁹

Dominican Father James A. Weisheipl has also pointed out that many scientists seemed to have “abandoned hope in the power of man’s speculative reason; they seem to be content with universal uncertainty and a solitary path to knowledge.” Father Weisheipl contrasted this modern malaise that permeates the sciences with Aristotle who, while he acknowledged the difficulties and complexities involved in the investigation of nature, never thought that the effort was hopeless. Like Cardinal Newman, Aristotle recognized the usefulness of many different approaches to true knowledge. Indeed, writes Father Weisheipl, the dignity of science demands a respect for diverse and comple-

mentary methods of inquiry. “The pluralist approach to reality respects the principles, method and limitations of each legitimate endeavor. No one branch can be erected into a monolithic idol without destroying the integrity of truth and the dignity of science.” And, “if the scientist refuses to acknowledge any theories other than those proposed by his own method, conflicts [with religion] are bound to break out periodically.”²⁰

Leaders for the Sciences

We are in a better position now to appreciate the high importance for the dignity of the sciences of Franciscan University’s Philosophy of the Curriculum, informed as it is by the idea of the “unity of all truths.” It is a declared and explicit purpose of Franciscan University to produce leaders for the Church and for the world, leaders who will offer, among other things, hope. Graduates from the science programs at Franciscan University, in addition to having been well educated in their various fields, will practice the sciences with a singular and profound appreciation for the plurality and interconnectedness of truths, and a sense of the limits of their own disciplines. The hope that they will bring to the world, as leaders in the sciences will spring from the intellectual confidence nurtured by their sense of “the unity of all truths.” They will rejoice in the prestige of the sciences, when they are true to themselves, as confirmation of what God Himself revealed in Scripture: “The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declares the work of His hands.” (Psalm

18:1) And, in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi they will extol the beauty of this glorious work of the Creator. ✠

¹ The Mission of Franciscan University of Steubenville (Franciscan University of Steubenville, Steubenville, Ohio, 1993), 4-10. Hereafter referred to as *Mission Statement*.

² Christopher Derrick, *Escape from Skepticism: Liberal Education as if Truth Mattered* (Peru, Illinois: Sherwood Sugden & Company, 1977), 45.

³ Dietrich von Hildebrand, “The Conception of a Catholic University,” in Walter M. Kotschnig and Elined Prys, eds., *The University in a Changing World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 215, 224.

⁴ Peter Hodgson, “Chesterton and Science,” *Chesterton Review* (November 1994): 499.

⁵ *The Philosophy of the Curriculum of Franciscan University of Steubenville*. Adopted by full vote of the faculty on September 16, 1994. Hereafter referred to as *Philosophy of the Curriculum*.

⁶ *Mission Statement*, 4, 6.

⁷ John Paul II, “The Collaboration of Science

and Religion. An address to the 1991 conference on ‘The Quantum creation of the universe and the origins of the Laws of Nature,’ sponsored by the Vatican Observatory and the Center for Theology and Natural Science at Berkeley, California,” *Origins*, 10 October 1991, 283.

⁸ John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University* (New York: Image Books, 1959), 417.

⁹ John Paul II, “The Collaboration of science and Religion,” 283.

¹⁰ Christopher Dawson, *The Modern Dilemma* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1933), 79-80.

¹¹ John Paul II, “The Collaboration of science and Religion,” 283.

¹² Quoted in Stanley L. Jaki, *Chesterton Seer of Science* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 13.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, 36.

¹⁵ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 414.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 415.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 414.

¹⁸ *Philosophy of the Curriculum*.

¹⁹ Dawson, *Modern Dilemma*, 84.

²⁰ James A. Weisheipl, O.P., *The Dignity of Science* (The Thomist Press, 1961), xx-xxi.



The *University Faculty for Life* (UFL) will be holding its sixth annual conference entitled “Life and Learning VI,” at Georgetown University (Washington, DC) from May 31-June 2, 1996. Speakers include Julian L. Simon, Mercedes Arzu Wilson, William Brennan, and Laura Garcia. This is an occasion for pro-life academics and other concerned faculty to gather with their peers and consider the basic life issues: abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. The Conference fee is \$35.00, which includes registration, reception and Banquet; please add \$60.00 for a shared room, or \$70.00 for a single, if you will need accommodations. For more information, please write: UFL, 120 New North, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 20057-0998.

Dear Editor:

I have followed with interest the articles that have appeared in the Newsletter concerning the proposed changes in the sacramentary in our country. The concerns that you have expressed have had to do with translation. My concern is not only translation *per se* but changes in structure as well.

In my diocese Mass is celebrated in Spanish every Sunday in all but eight parishes. It is celebrated in Portuguese in five parishes. The new sacramentary in both of these languages has been approved already. The structure of the new Mass in Spanish and Portuguese is identical. It conforms to the structure of our present Mass in English. I have said Mass using sacramentaries published in Mexico, Spain, South America, and the translation and structure is always the same.

In English, at this point, some structural changes, as options, have already been approved. I have been told that it is the intention of the Bishops' Liturgical Committee to publish a missal in Spanish for the United States after the English has been approved, a missal with the changes that would correspond to those in the English translation.

What I fear is that we will end up with a sacramentary in Spanish for the United States that will have significant differences from the universally approved text. This presents a real pastoral problem. Mass will be celebrated one way in Mexico, Puerto Rico and South America, but another way in New York, Texas and California. This, I believe, would make it appear to an immigrant that the Catholic Church in the United States is not

the same as the Church in Latin America. That would be asking for trouble. We already are losing a significant number of immigrants to the sects.

I would like to see us stay in English with the structure of the Mass as it is in the approved Latin translation. The "Texto Unico" in Spanish follows this same structure, as does the Portuguese translation.

The fact is that we are already losing a significant number of Hispanics to other churches and sects. Using a sacramentary with options that are significantly different from "the Mass back home" would just add to the problem.

I don't want that problem in my diocese. Therefore, I plan to continue to use the approved "Texto Unico" in my diocese regardless of what the Conference does in Spanish.

The problem I will have to answer is: "Why is the new Mass in English at 9:00 a.m. different from the Mass in Spanish at 12:00 p.m.?" I can answer that by saying that the Spanish text has already been approved by Rome for world-wide use.

Do you have any thoughts on the matter? Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Most Reverend Donald W.
Montrose, D. D.
Bishop of Stockton

March 12, 1996

Dear Professor McNerny,

The clear message on the President's Page — *Women's Ordination. Not* — must be publicized. I am sharing it with other interested persons.

The articles on Philosophy are excellent. I was pleased with the laudatory remark about Ignatius Smith. In one of his wall-to-wall classes, I recall his first day introductory remarks. After briefly explaining class and term paper requirements, he made clear his grading system: A for Priests, B for religious Brothers and Sisters, C for the Laity. After a somewhat incredulous laughter subsided, he explained: "That is the way people judge you." Then he added, smilingly, "If anyone wishes to drop the class, feel free to do so." A general snicker, and all stayed. When term papers were due, he told us that he gave them to the students in the Dominican House of Studies "for their inspiration, edification, and education." Before March 17 he mentioned that this institution schedules regular classes for the day. "But," he added, "on St. Patrick's Day, this class has a unique custom. One year the professor fails to come; the next year the students are absent. This year the professor will not be here."

Needless to say, Fr. Smith's excellent material and presentation made his class an unforgettable one. May God bless all of you who are so committed to the Truth and to our Faith.

Sincerely in Christ,
Sister Elizabeth Marie Schwickert,
O.S.F.

To the Editor:

Dr. James Hitchcock's letter appearing in the September 1995 issue reminds us that more than verbal violence can occur within an ecclesiastical frame of reference. He recalled the murder of an American bishop by a former Jesuit.

Precedent for physical attacks by dissident religious is interesting. The present Holy Father, Karol Wojtyla, who considers St. Carlo Borromeo his patron saint (Talks of John Paul II, v. 1, p. 160), has never to my knowledge publicly referred to the episode where his patron was, like himself, the target of an assassination attempt. In 1569, Cardinal Borromeo was shot by one Father Farina, a member of the Umiliati order (later suppressed). The injury was slight.

The Church in Milan was probably grateful that the clerical terrorist was not a Jesuit. Back in the 16th century, after all, Jesuits had zeal, effectiveness and military tradition.

Charles B. Molineaux

ANNOUNCEMENT

The "Midwest G.K. Chesterton Society" will be sponsoring its fifteenth annual Midwest conference from June 27-29, 1996, in Milwaukee's Cousins Center (3501 South Lake Drive, Milwaukee, Wisconsin). Speakers include Joseph Schwartz, John McCabe, Michael Mikolajczak, and Rev. Ian Boyd, C.S.B. All sessions and programs of this conference are free of charge. For more information, please contact John Peterson (at 740 Spruce Road, Barrington IL 60010); or call Frances Farrell (at 414-461-1978).

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Rev. Robert Skeris, Christendom College
The Language of Contemporary Church Music

Dr. William Brennan, St. Louis University
*Challenging and Replacing the Language
of the Culture of Death: Past and Present*

9

Sr. Mary Prudence Allen, Concordia University
Language and the Invitation to Conversion

Kenneth Whitehead
Inclusive Language: Is It Necessary?

Rev. Joseph Fessio, S. J., Ignatious Press
The Church's Translation Problem Today

9

Rev. Francis Martin, John Paul II Institute on
Marriage and Family
Issues in Contemporary Biblical Translation

Dr. Robert J. Edgeworth, Louisiana State University
Translation of Liturgical Texts

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Mount St. Mary's Seminary

I

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Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

by Louise-Merrie Schrecongost

In his autobiography, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen said that he saw himself first as a priest. He lived as a priest for sixty years and Bishop for twenty-eight years. Although he spent just one year as full-time parish priest and three years as a bishop of a diocese, he became a pastor to not just one region, but to the world. Archbishop Sheen reached millions of people through radio and television broadcasts, books and articles, recordings, and lectures.

Archbishop Sheen was born in El Paso, Illinois on May 8, 1895, one of four sons in a farm family. He was baptized Peter but later decided to use his grandparents' name of Fulton. He re-

ceived his A.B. and M.A. degrees from St. Viator's College in Bourbonnais, Illinois, and studied at St. Paul's Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was ordained a priest on September 20, 1919 in the diocese of Peoria, Illinois. He continued his education at the Catholic University of America (where he received his S.T.D. and J.C.B. degrees), and went on to study philosophy at the University of Louvain in Belgium. He was awarded a Ph.D. in 1923 from Louvain and in 1925 was made an *agregé* in philosophy (a degree higher than a Ph.D. and granted to only a small number of students).

After serving for a year as a curate at St. Patrick's Church in Peoria, Illinois, Father Sheen became an Instructor at the Catholic University of America; he later became a Professor of Philosophy and taught there from 1926 until 1950.

He began giving talks on the radio in 1928 for the Paulist Fathers. Two years later, he was invited to be a regular

speaker on the Catholic Hour, a radio show sponsored by the National Council of Catholic Men.

Archbishop Sheen's first book was published in 1925. He was to publish over 70 books and two syndicated newspaper columns. His books can be classified in this way: 1. works on modern philosophy (e.g. *Moods and Truths, Philosophy of Religion*); 2. critiques of modern society (e.g. *Freedom under God, Communism and the Conscience of the West*); 3. books about Jesus (e.g. *Life of Christ, Seven Last Words*); 4. books to help the reader experience conversion (e.g. *Lift up Your Heart, The Way to Happiness*). Reading his books today, one senses how well he understood modern men and women. He recognized that their confusion and unhappiness was caused by the exclusion of God from their lives, and offered them solutions for solving the problems of modern life.

On June 11, 1951, Monsignor Sheen was consecrated a Bishop and

Historian Makes History

Reprint of *The Observer* article, Friday, January 19, 1995

Father Marvin O'Connell, professor emeritus of history, received the American Catholic Historical Association's John Gilmary Shea Prize during the association's 76th annual meeting in Atlanta on January 6.

The Shea prize is given annually to an American or Canadian author for a distinguished work of Catholic historical scholarship. O'Connell's recent book, "Critics on Trial: An Introduction to the

Catholic Modernist Crisis," was selected by a committee of church historians from a field of 26 books on Catholic history.

The citation praises O'Connell for his presentation of a complicated Catholic controversy which "in its intricacy winds through late 19th and early 20th century secular and ecclesial culture" and for his success in offering a "cohesive narrative despite the fact that the modernist movement was never as neatly circumscribed as past church crises."

"Critics on Trial" was published by Catholic University of America Press.

A native of St. Paul, Minn., O'Connell studied philosophy and history at Saint Paul Seminary and was ordained a priest for the archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis before receiving a doctoral degree from Notre Dame in 1959.

He taught history at the University of Saint Thomas from 1958 until 1972, when he joined the Notre Dame Faculty. At Notre Dame he served as chairman of the history department from 1974-80, and from 1993-95 he directed the University's undergraduate program in London.

He is at work on a biography of Notre Dame's founder, Fr. Edward Sorin. ✠

made an auxiliary Bishop of New York. The same year, his television show, *Life is Worth Living* premiered. Its format was simple: Bishop Sheen spoke for half an hour on a topic he felt would interest viewers, and wrote a few main ideas on a blackboard erased by an “angel” never seen by the audience. He concluded each show by saying “God love you,” reminding viewers of the most important fact in their lives. Among the topics he discussed were: “Teenagers,” “Tolerance,” and “The Philosophy of Communism.”

Sheen used examples from daily life, wit, humor, and even poetry to instruct the audience. He spent thirty hours preparing for each show and gave the talk to friends in Italian and French the day before it was taped in order to truly know his subject. He donated his entire salary to the society for the Propagation of the Faith. *Life is Worth Living* ended in 1957 and Bishop Sheen hosted a similar program in color in the 1960's.

Archbishop Sheen had a great love for the missions. In 1950, he was appointed the National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and served in that position until 1966. Florence Lee, the Secretary to the Society's National Director, also worked as Bishop Sheen's Secretary. She remembers: “He was absolutely wonderful to work for. I couldn't have worked for a kinder, more compassionate person.” She said that he had an extremely busy schedule. After morning Mass and customary Holy Hour at his residence, he went to his office and answered the mail. While his television program aired, he received an average of eight to ten thousand letters a day from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish viewers. Many people wrote because they were interested in learning more about the Catholic Church; they were sent books and pamphlets. Others wrote for the Bishop's advice. “He had a great insight into people's problems and seemed to know the right way to answer them,” said Miss Lee. Sheen was the editor of the Society's two magazines, *Mission* and *World Mission*, and spent part of his

mornings writing. At noon, he went out to lunch with the priests from his office; and in the afternoon, he met with visitors, including many missionaries.

During his lifetime, Bishop Sheen converted numerous people, but never counted the number or took personal credit. He believed it is God who converts the person; the priest is just the instrument. In *Peace of Soul*, he wrote:

Conversion, first and foremost, and above all else, is due to Divine Grace, a gift of God which illuminates our intellect to perceive truths which we never perceived before and strengthens our will to follow those truths, even though they demand sacrifices in the natural order. (268)

Sheen's example and dedication to the Church influenced others to respond to his call to make God the focus of their lives. Florence Lee told how she witnessed the following incident at the Society for the Propagation of the Faith office. “One time as the Bishop was leaving for lunch, a woman came into the reception room to give him a donation. Bishop Sheen took her hand and thanked her, saying she was very good to give to the missions. She said: ‘I'm not good. I haven't been to confession in twenty years.’ He told her to come for confession that afternoon and said she would be reunited with the Lord that day.” Miss Lee later asked Bishop Sheen if the woman went to confession, and he answered that she did.

Archbishop Sheen had great devotion to the Blessed Mother. He dedicated all his books to her, mentioned her often in his writings and broadcasts and wrote the book, *The World's First Love* about her. He made thirty pilgrimages to Lourdes and ten to Fatima, and encouraged all Catholics to honor Mary.

Sheen was appointed the Bishop of Rochester, New York in 1966. In 1969, he retired and was named Archbishop of the Titular See of Newport, Wales. He returned to New York City where he remained active: saying Mass, giving lectures, giving retreats to priests throughout the country, and writing new books and articles. He died on December 9, 1979.

Archbishop Sheen's writings con-

tinue to be read because he focused on issues which are equally relevant today. As early as the 1930's, he predicted that there would be serious consequences for society because of the modern denial of truth. In *Philosophies at War*, he defined the modern problem of moral relativism, which today affects education, government, and many individuals. He wrote:

The superstition of relativism tells us that there is no distinction between truth and error, right and wrong; everything depends upon one's point of view. All values are relative and depend entirely upon the way people live in any generation. (58)

Once Catholics start to accept moral relativism, it is not surprising that they will want to change or eliminate doctrine. In *Moods and Truths*, he refuted the idea that religion could exist without dogmas. He asked:

The real problem is which dogmas are we going to accept, those of hearsay, private wish, or the funded intelligence of an august line of philosophies, saints, and mystics. (145)

He explained that the Church's teachings were from Christ and in *The Divine Romance*, he emphasized that the Church is “not an institution like a bank . . . not an organization like a club,” (89) but that it is the Mystical Body of Christ. He wrote:

Christ who in His human body taught, governed, and sanctified, now continues to do the same in His Mystical Body, and her teachings are Christ's infallible teachings; her commands, Christ's divine commands; and her Sacramental Life, Christ's Divine Life. The Church, then, is the continuation of the Incarnation. (89)

He was very loyal to the Pope and tried to instill loyalty and respect for the Vicar of Christ in all Catholics.

Now that there is confusion over the meaning of sin and personal responsibility for one's actions is too often denied, we should consider Archbishop Sheen's solution. He advocated daily examination of conscience and frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance. A major theme of *Peace of Soul* was the benefits of Reconciliation. He wrote on the graces we receive from this Sacra-

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ment:

it gives us an increase of self-knowledge, perfects us in humility, gives us a more sympathetic understanding of the shortcomings and failings of others, and makes God a real consolation and Savior rather than a distant ideal. (141)

Bishop William J. McCormack, the present National Director of the Society

for the Propagation of the Faith, said:

“Everything in his writings applies to life today. Bishop Sheen was a chosen instrument of the Lord. He was a great priest. He was so sound in everything he wrote, never drawing attention to himself — only to the Lord and to our Blessed Mother so that she will lead us to the Lord.”

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Permanent Things, edited by Andrew Tadie and Michael Macdonald, (Eerdmans, 1995), 311 pages. \$ 25.00 hardcover, ISBN 0-8028-3804-9

Few of us have the leisure or the discipline to read widely outside of our fields. What time we can bring to such pursuits, then, needs to be as focused as possible. Assuming one's broad familiarity with Chesterton, Lewis, and Waugh (though Sayers, Eliot, and Dickens would help) and assuming the kind of intelligent acquaintance with the principal points of Christian thought which used to mark the liberally educated man and woman, I can think of few better companions for one's precious free hours in 1996 than Tadie and Macdonald's "Permanent Things."

Eighteen multi-disciplinary essays by scholars of the calibre of Russell Kirk, Marion Montgomery, Thomas Howard, Peter Kreeft, and Alzina Stone Dale (omitting, even thus, Gregory Wolfe, Barbara Reynolds, and Kent Hill among others) come together in this beautifully bound and printed book. I cannot list the topics contained herein without either reproducing the entire table of contents or doing serious injustice to matters omitted, but I can say this: like the authors they examine, the essayists in "Permanent Things" bridge the worlds of literature, history, politics, and theology, and they do it with admirable clarity and efficiency. Seldom is writing, anymore, so fruitful and fun.

The occasion for these essays was a tri-annual humanities conference sponsored by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Seattle University and Seattle Pacific University, a fact which lends consistency to the printed essays and results in a book which comes close to approaching the personalized ambience of mature, informed discussion which Tadie and Macdonald have created for conference participants over the last 10 years.

The ecumenical character of the topics and presenters in "Permanent Things" (and its 1989 predecessor, "The Riddle of Joy", also from Eerdmans) is noteworthy. Not a religious conference, and certainly not a contrived exercise in see-how-much-we-have-in-commonism, the commitment to permanent things like faith and honor which animated each minute of the conference and which marks every page of this work is, I think, one the best signs that the one Truth we all cling to will, in the end, triumph.

How highly do I value this book? Well, the publisher sent me a free copy to review. After I read it, I went out and bought another one to give to a lawyer friend who already has too much to read. And we're both happy I did.

Dr. Edward Peters
San Diego, California

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SIX REGIONAL CATHOLIC HOMESCHOOLING CONVENTIONS IN 1996

There will be six regional Catholic homeschooling conventions/curriculum fairs in the summer of 1996. The conferences, unaffiliated with any one Catholic curriculum or educational philosophy, will offer practical guidance and spiritual support for homeschooling and Catholic family life.

Manassas, Virginia (Sixth annual NACHE convention): Friday, July 12 (free curriculum fair noon-9:00 p.m.) and Saturday, July 13.

Speakers include Fr. John Hardon, S.J., Kimberly Hahn, Fr. George Rutler and Laura Berquist. Contact Rachel Watkins at (410) 254-9390.

Denver, Colorado (NACHE. West) July 5-6 at Teikyo-Loretto Heights University. Speakers include Bishop Charles Chaput, Laura Berquist and James Leek. Contact Christine Tucker at (303) 366-3970.

Seattle, Washington (Northwest Family Education Conference):

July 5 and 6. Speakers include Fr. Joseph Fessio and Dr. James Stenson. Contact Julia Fogassy at (206) 725-9026.

Pasadena, California (Catholic Home Educators for Christ the King), June 15 and 16. Speakers include Dr. Ronald McArthur, Dr. Timothy O'Donnell and Dr. Mary Kay Clark. Contact Mary Ann Shapiro at (818) 441-6636.

Syracuse, New York (NYPACE), August 2 and 3. Speakers include Jim Likoudis, Steve Wood and Dr. Mary Kay Clark. Contact Jackie Schilinger at (315) 689-1394.

Ohio/Kentucky (late May or early June; location and date to be announced). Speakers include Patrick Madrid. Contact Steve DiCarlo at (606) 431-7059.

Details about these regional conferences will also be published in *The Catholic Home Educator*, NACHE's quarterly magazine. For further information about Catholic homeschooling, contact

*National Association of Catholic Home Educators, Post Office Box 420225,
San Diego, CA 92142. Membership/magazine subscription is \$12.00/year.*

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