

FELLOWSHIP OF CATHOLIC SCHOLARS

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2

MARCH 1981

Letter From President James Hitchcock

One of the major concerns of some Catholic scholars over the past quarter century has been professionalization – conformity to accepted scholarly standards in one's discipline, commitment to objectivity, recognition of professional competence by those outside the Catholic orbit.

On the whole a good thing, professionalization can impose its own kinds of deformities. For example, some Catholic scholars seem to think that in order to establish their professional objectivity they must be found in a posture of dissent from official Church teaching. To be in harmony with that teaching, apparently, raises the suspicion of being unprofessional.

Yet it can be argued that the very prevalence of the posture of dissent is itself unprofessional, and in several ways. I will not dwell on one obvious way – the tone habitually struck by a man like Hans Kung, for example, is hardly one of professional objectivity, and he is scarcely alone in this.

But there is a more important consideration. In his address to scholars at Catholic University of America in 1979, Pope John II made a familiar but obvious point – the faithful have a right to be taught Catholic doctrine by those who designate themselves Catholic scholars.

Predictably, the point was dismissed and even ridiculed. In an age of mass communications, it was said, controversial theories cannot be kept secret. The faithful are not children to be protected from disturbing ideas. Finally, who is to say what is Catholic doctrine? Disagreement itself proves that such doctrine is in doubt.

But any even elementary sense of professional responsibility would have immediately accepted the Holy Father's point. To use a close parallel, would a responsible doctor elect to try a risky and untried surgical procedure, in preference to established procedures without warning the patient of the risks? Would a lawyer choose to argue his client's case in disregard of established legal precedents simply because he was convinced of the brilliance of his own reasoning powers?

Established professions have recognized standards of acceptable and unacceptable practice. They seek to protect the public from irresponsible professionals. There is general consensus within the profession as to what constitutes correct practice.

The academic profession (taken broadly as including all who instruct the public) has no such standards of malpractice, virtually no means of evaluating professional performance. Often it claims a kind of immunity for its members, without imposing commensurate standards of performance.

In the Church the simple fact is that, as the Pope noted, the faithful are now often taught speculative theories which diverge radically from official doctrine. The point is not simply that they are told about dissent but that they are often taught dissent as though it were orthodoxy. This happens in schools and colleges, in seminaries, in public lectures, in Catholic publications, sometimes from the pulpit.

A profession so inclined to demand its rights should be willing to show at least as much concern for its responsibilities. Truth in religious packaging would be a good place to begin.

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Fourth Convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

March 27 — March 29, 1981

The Astor Hotel

924 East Juneau Avenue

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Theme — Christian Faith and Freedom

PROGRAM

Chairman and President — Professor James Hitchcock
St. Louis University

Friday, March 27th

3:00 — 8:00 p.m. — Registration

4:00 p.m. — Meeting of the Board of Directors

7:30 p.m. — General Meeting of the Membership

8:00 p.m. — Keynote Address: *The Meaning of Christian Freedom*
Professor Ralph McNerney
Notre Dame University

9:30 p.m. — Reception

Saturday, March 28th

9:00 a.m. — FIRST PLENARY SESSION

Chairman, Mr. Patrick Riley,
DeRance Foundation

Address — *Freedom and the Christian Family*
Fr. Francis Canavan, S.J.
Fordham University

11:15 a.m. — Committee Workshops

12:30 p.m. — Lunch

1:45 p.m. — SECOND PLENARY SESSION

Chairman, Fr. Joseph Farragher, S.J.
San Francisco, California

Address — *Freedom and the Catholic University*
Fr. Richard Roach, S.J.
Marquette University

4:00 p.m. — Concelebrated Liturgy (Windsor Room/Basement)

6:00 p.m. — Convention Dinner — Presidential Address

8:00 p.m. — THIRD PLENARY SESSION

Chairwoman, Sr. Dominic Twohill, O.P.
Gannon University

Address — *Freedom and Religious Life*
Sr. Rose Eileen Masterman
St. Mary's, South Bend

9:30 p.m. — Reception

Sunday, March 29th

7:00 a.m. — Concelebrated Liturgy (Private)

9:00 a.m. — FOURTH PLENARY SESSION

Chairman, Dr. John Dunsford
St. Louis, Missouri

Address — *Freedom and the Social Apostolate*
Fr. Virgil Blum, S.J.
Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights

- 10:45 a.m. — Business Meeting for Fellowship Members
12:30 p.m. — Lunch
1:30 p.m. — Reports on Committee Meetings

Additional Information Concerning the Convention

1. The registration fee is \$15.00 and may be paid to Executive Secretary in advance or at convention time.
2. The hotel rooms (through courtesy of Fr. Richard Roach, S.J.) are by national standards quite reasonable in price. The rates are \$22-30 for singles; \$24-35 for doubles; \$4.00 additional for each additional person per room.
3. The formal meals during convention time — two luncheons and an evening banquet — will cost a total of \$25.00. Refreshments at the social hours will also be extra.
4. Two registration cards will accompany each invitation — one to be returned to the hotel reserving a room, the other to be returned to the Executive Secretary to signify intention to attend the Convention.
5. Specific directions to the hotel will be provided by the Executive Secretary to all who pre-register with him.
6. Travel options from Chicago to Milwaukee for those who choose to fly into Chicago are as follows:
 - Amtrak runs daily trains at a cost between \$13-18 round trip.
 - Bus Lines include *Continental Air Transport* from both Midway and O'Hare Airports every few hours, Royal Coach Lines from O'Hare, Greyhound from downtown Chicago. Travel time one hour.

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Convention Theme and Workshops

“Christian Faith and Freedom” was selected by the Executive Board as the theme of the 1981 Convention because the use and the abuse of freedom is presently the subject of so much confusion and controversy within the Church as it is in secular society.

The papers presented to the plenary sessions will incorporate some significant Catholic thinking on what Christian freedom is and how the principles enunciated there apply specifically to four important areas of Christian experience; the Christian Family, the Catholic University, in Religious Life and in the Secular World.

At this 1981 Convention there will also be prepared workshops — each in the form of a *practicum* — at which the workshop director will present how in his view Christian freedom is properly exercised in the four mentioned areas of daily life. The Workshop directors for the four areas of concern are: 1—*Family Life* — Mr. Kevin Perrotta from Servant Publications, 2—*Catholic University* — Dr. Joseph Scottino, President of Gannon University, 3—*Religious Life* — Fr. Kenneth Baker, S.J. editor of the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 4—*Social World* — Dr. Christopher Wolfe of Marquette University.

* * *

Proceedings of the 1980 Convention Now Available

The Proceedings of last year's Convention whose subject matter was *Christian Faith in a Neo-Pagan Society* will be available on April 1st.

This year we are going to send a copy to every member trusting that each recipient will reimburse the Fellowship the sum of \$6.00, which will be the cost of production. This volume contains some good papers by Bishop Austin B. Vaughan, Professor Paul C. Vitz, Professor William A. Stanmeyer, Professor Glenn W. Olsen, Fr. Donald J. Keefe, S.J., Professor Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., Fr. Michael Wrenn which you might want to keep permanently in your library.

You also should know that there are copies available (also at \$6.00 each) of the 1978 Proceedings entitled *Catholic Faith and Human Life*, and the 1979 Proceedings whose theme was *Historicism and Faith*. These four volumes (including the 1981 book) represent the work of the first four conventions of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, which will complete five years of existence from the first organizing meeting held in Kenrick Seminary in the Summer of 1976.

(Mailing a small book at fourth class rate now costs \$1.00 and more.)

Dr. Herbert Ratner on Biology and Biologism — I

In the theories advanced by many feminists and avant-garde theologians, we find an assumption, sometimes tacit, sometimes explicit; namely, that personality and its embodiment are diverse realities which may interact in some mechanistic fashion, but which do not constitute a single substantial reality, a natural entity, an integral whole; that neither psyche nor body has, by nature a predetermining or defining influence on the other. Rather, all behavioral influences are explained by the feminists as cultural, and by the theologians as imposed by what they mysteriously call "the person," as if there were a world of human persons different from the world of human natures. In the early years of the feminist movement the major thrust was that males and females were equal in all respects except for a few overt anatomical differences. By *equal* was meant *equivalent in all respects*: the "personhood" of each sex is the same; whatever sexual differences exist are culturally imposed, not intrinsic. This gave rise to the concept and practice of unisex, as if by a wave of a magic wand, by arbitrary fiat, hundreds of thousands of years of nature's artistry in producing a viable and flourishing species could be undone.

Dissident theologian, Anthony Kosnik, senior author of *Human Sexuality*¹ (a study commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America) emphasizes that,

There has been a widespread and general consensus among moralists in moving away from a static, predominantly biological, understanding of natural law . . . From this point of view, the basis for moral judgment lies not in acts predetermined as intrinsically evil, but rather in a person's response to God's call in the concrete realities of existence [p. 124]

In this context the authors argue that artificial insemination by a doctor is justified (p. 139), that homosexual genital relations can be morally good (pp. 209-18), that "loving, responsible sexual intercourse of a couple about to be married is acceptable (pp. 155-66), that adultery and mate swapping probably could be morally right (pp. 148-9), and that bestiality, under certain conditions, might be permissible. (p. 230).

Although Kosnik does not discuss murder, the inference can be drawn that murder is not predetermined as "intrinsically evil" by virtue of man's nature as a social animal, but that the evil of murder is determined by a "person's response to God's call in the concrete realities of experience." The fact is that societies that have survived and thrived, even without benefit of the words of God

as given in the Old and New Testaments, universally knew the proscription of murder to be a condition for social living. That is why murderers have always been viewed as outlaws; *i.e.*, acting outside the law.

Another dissident theologian, Charles E. Curran, discussing sex morality, expresses a position similar to that of Kosnik. He states,

The encyclical on the regulation of birth employs a natural law methodology which tends to identify the moral action with the physical and biological structure of the act [p. 159]²

Elsewhere Curran warns of,

. . . the definite danger of identifying the human action with a *mere* [italics added] animal or biological process. [and that] Traditional theology has in the past definitely employed the words 'natural' and 'nature' as synonymous with animal or biological processes and not as denoting human actions in accord with the rational nature of man [p. 117].³

In discarding the concept of nature, and sins associated with nature, he concludes,

We who live in a scientific and technologic society will have a different view of man and his happiness. Modern man does not find his happiness in conforming to nature. The whole ethos and genius of modern society is different. Contemporary man makes nature conform to him rather than vice-versa [p. 121].

A final example of the dissident theologians' attack on biological nature and the alleged error or arguing from it, which argument they term *biologism*, is from Hans Kung. Concerning concepts of natural law derived from the biological component of human nature, he, in agreement with the criticism of *Humanae Vitae* (Paul VI's 1968 encyclical) of the majority position of the Papal commission on Birth Control, states,

. . . that its concept of what is natural is naive, is static, narrow and completely unhistorical, that it ignores man's historicity, that it dissects him in the light of an abstract conception of his nature, that the restriction of the concepts of nature and natural law to the physical and biological sphere is a regression to the long obsolete Aristotelian, Stoic and medieval idea; that the distinction between natural and artificial is arbitrary (and becomes a matter for the microscope and of milligrams).⁴

It is evident that the dissident theologians have a fundamental misunderstanding of nature. They restrict biology to mechanisms of the parts of the body dissociated from the physical and psychic

whole, whereas biology, the science of life, deals with living organisms and vital processes and is therefore all encompassing. They do not view man (as well as other creatures) as an inseparable unity of psyche and body — two aspects of one agent — the human composite.

The scientific benefit of the hylemorphic view rejected by the dissident theologians was well stated by a Jungian psychologist and theologian:

... It enables us, as it enabled Aristotle himself [*De Anima*, 403, a, 25 ff]. to see psychology on the one hand, and biology and physiology on the other, as concerned, neither with two separate and disparate fields of inquiry, nor yet with two purely subjective aspects of the same reality, but as concerned with the potential and the determining constituents respectively of the integral *humanum*. ... it enables us to avoid ... all *a priori* limitations which would banish the irrational and the unconscious from psychological consideration.⁵

What the dissident theologians fail to see is that the living body mirrors the psyche as the psyche mirrors the body, the one visible, the other invisible; that one only finds sheep in sheep's clothing and wolves in wolves' clothing and that a wolf in sheep's clothing is a monstrosity. It is telling that dissident theologians separate the person from anatomy and physiology and criticize other theologians who argue from anatomy and physiology, yet those scientists who have most studied the intricate mechanisms of the mind and the dynamics of human behavior argue that anatomy is destiny (*CF* 9:4-33, 1970).

The fact is that the arts of man dealing with nature, e.g., agriculture and medicine, share nature's goal by cooperating with the innate forces of nature; that it is suicidal to change our concept of the reality of nature to what man prefers nature's reality to be, the error of today's sociologists and behavioral scientists (see *CF* 7:195-8, 1968); that our goal is not to master nature but to nurture nature.

REFERENCES

- ¹Kosnik, A., et al. *Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought*. Paulist Press, New York, 1977.
- ²Curran, C.E. *Natural Law and Contemporary Moral Theology*. In Charles E. Curran (Ed.), *Contraception: Authority and Dissent*. Herder and Herder, New York 1969.
- ³_____. *Absolute Norms and Medical Ethics*. In Charles E. Curran (Ed.), *Absolutes in Moral Theology?*. Corpus Books, Washington-Cleveland, 1968.
- ⁴Kung, H. *Infallible? An Inquiry*. Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1971, p. 35.
- ⁵White, V. *God and the Unconscious*. Henry Regnery, Chicago, 1953, p. 96.

Items of Interest

● Fr. Dismas Gannon O.C.S.O. writes that Our Lady of Guadalupe Trappist Abbey in Oregon (P.O. Box 91, Lexington, Or. 97127) is in the process of collecting the complete works of Hilaire Belloc. Belloc is often downgraded as an historical scholar (perhaps for the wrong reasons) but his Christian insights into historical developments, besides the accuracy of the analysis, often had a prophetic quality. Fr. Gannon sends along a few choice selections from *Survivals and New Arrivals* (1929). "The inter-communion between the new Paganism of Europeans and the very ancient Paganism of other races is at yet only faintly sketched out; but it is advancing. I cannot but believe that in another generation it will be powerful, apparent to all."

"There remains, apart from the old Paganism of Asia and Africa, another indirect supporter of Neo-Paganism: a supporter which indeed hates all Paganism but hates the Catholic Church much more: a factor of whose now increasing importance the masses of Europe are not as yet aware: I mean the Mohammedan religion: Islam." (p. 188)

From: *The Great Heresies* (1938) "There was another more intelligent suggestion made in the nineteenth century, which was this: — that the decline of Islam had proceeded from its fatal habit of perpetual civil division: the splitting up and changeability of political authority among the Mohammedans. But that weakness of theirs was present from the beginning; it is inherent in the very nature of the Arabian temperament from which they started. Over and over again this individualism of theirs, this "fissiparous" tendency of theirs, has bravely weakened them; yet over and over again they have suddenly united under a leader and accomplished the greatest things."

"Now it is probably enough that on these lines — unity under a leader — the return of Islam may arrive. There is no leader as yet, but enthusiasm might bring one and there are signs enough in the political heavens today of what we may have to expect from the revolt of Islam at some future date — perhaps not far distant." (p. 134)

● *The Institute on Religious Life* affiliates approximately ninety women's communities and a number of men's communities.

Should any organization desire to further the work of the Institute and to add moral support to its goals and ideals, apply to Father James Downey, O.S.B., Coordinator — National Office, 4200 North Austin Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60634 (312-545-1946). Annual dues \$100 per year. Dues include subscriptions to *Consecrated Life* and *Religious Life*.

- A *Symposium on Human Life*, marking the 100th Anniversary of Marquette University, will convene on Sunday, March 22, 1981 and conclude on Friday March 27th. It is the intention of this Symposium to focus on the major ethical and moral issues currently threatening the value of human life. The speakers will be presenting ideas from the Catholic faith and the human sciences. Featured speakers will include Professors Elizabeth Anscombe, James Hitchcock, Edmund D. Pellegrino, John Finnis. For additional information write or call Fr. Richard Roach, S.J. 1212 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233 (414) 224-1647.

- The 55th Annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association will be held April 3-5, 1981 at the Chase Park-Plaza Hotel, St. Louis. The general theme is "Infinity of God and Man." Papers will deal with Medical and Business Ethics, Infinity and the Person, Human Rights, Contemporary Christian Metaphysics, Phenomenology and Religious Belief. Featured speakers include Fr. Joseph Lombardi, S.J., John E. Murdoch, Thomas Anderson, Charles Misner, Stephen Dinan. The Presidential Address will be given by Fellowship member Fr. Leo Sweeney, S.J., entitled "Surprises in the History of Infinity". Further information is available from Fr. Sweeney at Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois 60626.

- The poems of Father Janusz St. Pasierb, a contemporary Polish scholar and poet, have been translated into English and attempts are being made to find an American publisher. Father St. Pasierb is a professor at the University of Warsaw and the Warsaw Academy of Catholic Theology. Anyone with suggestions for publication should contact: Emile Comar, Louisiana Catholic Conference, P.O. Box 52948, New Orleans, La. 70152.

● Professor Finnis at Houston

A Colloquium on "Foundations of Law and Morality" will be held at the Center for Thomistic

Studies, University of Saint Thomas, Houston, Texas, 77006, on March 23-24.

The Colloquium will discuss the issues raised in Professor John Finnis' latest book, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (New York: Oxford, 1980). This book, a brilliant reinterpretation of classical and Thomistic positions in philosophy of law and in the basic principles of morality, appeared as the latest volume in the highly respected Clarendon Law Series.

This book has been bringing the Catholic tradition in morality to the attention of many people not formerly familiar with it. It is also a brilliant defense of the basic principles of morality that have been insistently defended by the Church against the revisionary attacks of contemporary dissenters.

Professor Finnis will address the Colloquium, and will be present to discuss the live issues this book raises with other participants in the Colloquium. Others giving lectures are: Professor Joseph Witherspoon (University of Texas), Professor Charles Rice (Notre Dame), Professor Henry Veatch (Georgetown, and Center for Thomistic Studies), Fr. Thomas Russman (Catholic University), and Fr. Ronald Lawler (Director, Center for Thomistic Studies, University of Saint Thomas.) For further information or reservations, write or telephone Fr. Lawler at the address noted above, or telephone 713-522-7911.

- Fr. James Schall, S.J. of Georgetown University and author of *Welcome Number 4,000,000,000* (ALBA Books 1977) responds at great length to Irish Mill Hill Fr. Arthur McCormick who advised last year's Synod of Bishops to approve contraception. McCormick, himself once an anti-contraceptionist, now thinks contraception is the answer to the world's population problem. Fr. Schall's extensive critique of that position is worth reading in *Clergy Review*, December 1980.

- The NCEA Convention scheduled to hold its annual convention in New York April 20-23 will feature among others - Andrew Greeley, William McCready, Joseph A. Tetlow, Frank McNulty, James J. DiGiacamo, Raymond E. Brown, Gabriel Moran, Mariella Frye.

- Joseph M. Becker, S.J., has a valuable article in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* (Jan.-March 1977) entitled "The Statistics and a Tentative Analysis." The magazine is published by the American Assistency (Jesuit), 3700 West Pine Blvd., St. Louis, Mo. 63108.

More on Fr. De Lubac

The December 1980 Newsletter referred to certain difficulties experienced earlier by Fr. Henri de Lubac, S.J. Whatever the difficulties have been or will be, it is worth recalling, I believe, that some at least of De Lubac's thought has been accepted into the official Church's teaching, in particular, into that very important 'Document of Freedom', the Apostolic Letter Octogesima adveniens, of Paul VI, issued in 1971 on the 80th anniversary of Rerum Novarum. Thus De Lubac, who worked so hard to promote study of early Christian sources, has now become himself a modern Christian source.

In a lecture at the 1947 French Social Week Fr. De Lubac, looking forward to the future, asked against what new dangers will our faith need to protect the people. One of the new threats he listed was the improper use of techniques of analysis by abstraction, conceptual conversion (*réduction noétique*) as he called it. Here are a few lines from his talk.

"Man himself, like the universe, is becoming the object of science. If the world is being investigated, why shouldn't man too? To the transformation of nature should therefore be added, they think, the transformation of society. A whole technology is developing, thanks to which man becomes 'master and possessor of human forces'

"Adulation of science, ontological revolt, conceptual conversion; these are, in short, the three temptations that accompany the progress of our age, and which have opened up the spiritual crisis where we struggle.

"Jaspers has recently shown how the scientific disciplines applied to man are harmful if they expel another source of knowledge, that alone, may 'meet man as a whole being. . . . This total being,' he says, 'must be re-won.'"

"To retrieve this total image of man that is becoming lost and with it the sense of being. . . . we must appeal to our faith in the creation of man in the image of God. . . .

"Mention has rightly been made here of a 'tragic mistake.' There would not be, intellectually, anything to say of it had it not seemed in some way to have been made legitimate by this illusion of the knowledge that we have called conceptual conversion. . . . We must be careful that these conversions to not become mutilations and that one illusion does not in turn succeed to another. . . ."

As is the case for so many other 'sources', De Lubac's talk both enlightens and is itself enlightened by the subsequent statements to which it gave rise.

John Doeble

From Notre Dame Magazine — December 1980

- On "Tomorrow's Priesthood" by Richard P. McBrien

"That the priesthood has changed and continues to change is a historical fact. The priesthood has taken many forms over the centuries. There were no Christian 'priests' in the New Testament; Jesus was the only priest of the New Covenant. The earliest disciples still recognized the Jewish priesthood as valid, and Jerusalem's Christians kept up daily temple attendance."

- On "The Underestimation of Pope Paul VI" by Eugene Kennedy

"Pope Paul VI, like a great artist surviving the neglect of his own time, is enjoying a revival.

Recently the Paul VI Institute gathered together a distinguished roster of theologians in Brescia, Italy, for the first scholarly colloquium on the late pope's life and work. At a recent congress of a great religious order, Paul was quoted by the delegates many times; the current pope not at all.

Pope John Paul II, who so robustly fills the stage of our consciousness with his confidence and certitude, may cause some Catholics to look with a surprising appreciation at the late Pope who even as he preached to the world, seemed to stand half-shadowed by its ambiguity and anguish"

- "Will Joan Hickey Overcome" by Jim Castelli

"Joan Hickey, a 55-year-old divorced mother of three attending the Washington Theological Union, believes the church will eventually be compelled to ordain women to preserve respect for the sacraments as people accept women ministers as the equals of priests."

". . . . Insensitivity has its origin in the 'males only' tradition of the priesthood, Hickey believes. The church's male atmosphere causes priests and seminarians to unconsciously assume a male perspective. A classroom discussion about a divorced woman who had an abortion after being impregnated by her ex-husband illustrates the problem. Said Hickey: 'The male seminarians all worked from the assumption that the woman acted irresponsibly, until I questioned the husband's responsibility.'"

Many seminary administrators share Hickey's concern and believe women can help eliminate the perceived male bias. 'Women seminarians make some of these guys realize the whole world isn't male,' says Rev. Vincent Cushing, president of the Washington Theological Union. 'It's a mistake to educate someone in an all-male environment, especially for the ministry.'

Reflections on Sterilization:

Sister Corrine Bayley, C.S.J., and Richard A. McCormick have argued that "if reputable theologians believe that direct sterilization cannot be absolutely excluded morally, then one has to question whether the hospital is pursuing the true overall good of the patient if it adopts a policy that is based on an absolute moral position." The article advancing this argument, "Sterilization: The Dilemma of Catholic Hospitals," was published originally in the October 18, 1980 issue of *America* and was reprinted in January 11, 1981 issue of *The Catholic Leader*, an Australian paper with considerable influence in the English-speaking Catholic world.

In their opinion and, it must be acknowledged, in the opinion of many contemporary Roman Catholic moral theologians, the clear teaching of the Church on the inherent malice of direct, contraceptive sterilization is not only erroneous but also inimical to true human goods. They also claim that this teaching and the reasons given in support by theologians either begs the question by simply asserting that direct, contraceptive sterilization is *morally* evil or else absolutizes a biological aspect, i.e., fecundity and thus constitutes a form of physicalism or biologism in morality.

They argue, moreover, that contraceptive sterilization (and their major concern is with tubal ligations of women, which require hospitalization and thus involve hospitals) is the most efficient and humane means for preventing a pregnancy when there is a grave reason for excluding a pregnancy from henceforth within a marriage, and that it is unreasonable and unrealistic to compel a married couple to live in fear of a pregnancy that could be terribly threatening to the health and life of the wife. The conclusion is almost inescapable: direct, contraceptive sterilization must surely be a morally right choice in such instances.

As a married man and as a teacher of moral theology I have wrestled with this problem for many years. I believe that the Church's teaching on the subject is true, that it does not beg the question, that it is not predicated upon any kind of physicalism or biologism, and that it is far more humane and responsive to the genuine needs of human beings than is the teaching of Sister Bayley, Father McCormick, and a good many contemporary Roman Catholic moral theologians.

The teaching of the Church is rooted in a love for everything that is humanly good and in a love for God, who is our supreme good. This teaching is rooted in the truth that we are to love and pursue the good and avoid evil and in a recognition that the goods of the human *person*, goods such as life itself, our ability to see and to hear, our ability to

speaking, and our ability to communicate life to a new human person (our procreative power), are real goods that we ought to love and to cherish and not repudiate simply because their continued flourishing within us may inhibit our participation in something else that is really good.

Thus we are not to kill ourselves of set purpose even if the continued presence of life within us inhibits us, because of our condition, from participating in other human goods. We are not, in other words, to do evil so that good may come about. We are permitted, of course, to suffer the loss of true personal goods, to permit or allow the evil of their destruction to take place, under certain conditions. Thus we can choose to refuse burdensome and repugnant treatments both for ourselves and for those committed to our trust and "allow" death to take place, and we can have an eye excised or our procreative powers sterilized if the excision or sterilization is simply the indirect and unintended consequence of our choosing to do a deed that is itself one of protecting our life and health. But we are not, like Origen, to castrate ourselves in order to become eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, nor are we to choose to *make* ourselves blind or mute or sterile. There is nothing physicalistic or biological about this way of thinking; it is not predicated upon any notion that our life itself, our sight, or our power to give life is the *ummum bonum*, but it is rather rooted in the conviction that our life, our sight, our power to give life are truly good gifts from God, gifts that we ought not to seek, or set purpose, to get rid of.

When this kind of thinking, the thinking that in my judgment is reflected in the teaching of the Church, is applied to the question of contraceptive sterilization, one can see that the argument against such contraceptive sterilization, as the argument against contraception as such is by no means one that begs the question. It is an argument that proceeds from principles, namely the principles that good is to be done and pursued and evil is to be avoided and that our power to give life to a new human person is something truly good and truly personal. Thus we ought not, of deliberate and set purpose, propose to get rid of our good power to give life, just as we ought not of deliberate and set purpose, propose to get rid of our power of speech or sight or hearing or of our life itself.

Moreover, were Sister Bayley, Father McCormick, and their company of contemporary Catholic moralists correct in holding that direct, contraceptive sterilization is morally good (indeed eminently reasonable and realistic) in the cases envisioned, it would likewise follow that contraceptive sterilization for other very serious causes

By William May

(and contraception too) would be morally good. For the dilemma faced by the married couple they envisage does not differ in kind from the dilemma faced by every married couple in seeking responsibly to fulfill their obligations as spouses and parents.

I can appreciate keenly the agonizing situation in which the married couples about whom Sister Bayley and Father McCormick are concerned, for although my wife is not suffering from any condition that would pose serious threats to her health, it would, in my judgment, be highly unreasonable to make her pregnant. We have very serious reasons for avoiding a pregnancy now and, so far as I can see, for the balance of our married lives. Yet we both know that it would be immoral for us to practice contraception or to make ourselves sterilized by our own free choices, and we know that this would be immoral because it would mean closing our hearts, our persons, to something really good that God has given us.

What McCormick, Sister Bayley and others forget is that there are realistic alternatives for married couples in such a dilemma. Today there is the very realistic alternative of natural family planning, and there is also the alternative of choosing to forego marital relations for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. From what I know, and from what has been documented by such competent medical authorities as Dr. Hanna Klaus, today there is no intrinsic necessity for married couples in such a dilemma to choose foregoing marital relations for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, but I also know that there are many married couples, who love each other deeply and seek to grow in marital love, who for various reasons do not find it possible to follow natural family methods and therefore choose to abstain from the genital embrace in order to express their love for one another and for the kingdom of God in other ways, realizing that they do not express love either for one another or for the kingdom of God by choosing to contracept or sterilize themselves.

What always troubles me about the proposals of writers like Sister Bayley and Father McCormick is that they *assume* that a tubal ligation in the instance at hand (and the use of contraceptives in other sorts of instances) is the most reasonable and humane way of coping with the human dilemma. Why it is most reasonable and humane to have the women, in the instance at hand, undergo major surgery and subsequently, as Dr. Klaus has noted in the November issue of *Hospital Progress*, to run the risk of an ectopic pregnancy, escapes me. There is truly no dilemma for the Catholic hospital, so far as I can see. If a married couple wants to meet the dilemma by resorting to sterilization, they can

always resort to a vasectomy of the husband, a far less serious operation and one that can be done in a doctor's office and leave the Catholic hospital uninvolved. Yet of course this means sterilizing the man and not the woman.

Here it seems to me that the meaning of marital love is quite pertinent to the whole issue of contraception and of contraceptive sterilization. Most forms of contraception (and in particular pills and IUD's, which also may be abortifacient) impose burdens upon women that they do not impose upon men. No matter what form of contraceptive is used the man still gets his pleasure, whereas with most forms the woman is responsible for making sure that the pill has been taken, the diaphragm is in place, and the jellies and foams are available, and of course the woman is the one to suffer the side effects of pills and IUDs, and also the pregnancies, for no contraceptive means is foolproof. Now we have theologians arguing that to meet a true marital dilemma the *woman* should undergo major surgery, and run the risk (usually kept secret from her by attending physicians) of having ectopic pregnancies! I find this most difficult to reconcile with the Christian notion of marital love, and see it quite unlikely that contraceptive intercourse or contraceptive sterilization require, in spouses, the growth of true marital chastity — a hallmark, the Fathers of Vatican Council II have told us, of Christian spouses who seek to order their lives according to objective principles of morality, principles that respect fully both the life-sharing and life-giving meanings of human sexuality and marriage.

From a High School Teacher

“ ‘The old adage you can teach seniors but you can't teach them much' seems to be true. I am finding it more difficult and different than I imagined. The most surprising element to me is the lack of a religious atmosphere in our school and the difficulty in reaching the administration with the concerns of members of the Religion Department. We seem to be more concerned about being a good school providing an alternative education to the public school system than we are about being a 'Catholic' school. There are some bright spots. Some students seem eager to absorb the teachings of the Magisterium in the areas of social justice, sexual ethics, marriage and life options. Some are beginning to see — that Jesus' message is difficult to live out in today's world and it is these young men who seem to make it all the more worthwhile.”

A Personal Tribute to Marshall McLuhan

It has been said of Marshall McLuhan that his most impressive achievement is his reputation. Although his name is well known throughout the world and some of his aphorisms have become a regular part of the language, relatively few people have tried to understand his general thought, and among those who have, many freely admit their confusion. It is ironic that this disproportion between his fame and familiarity – a phenomenon largely explainable by the mysterious manner in which modern day communications work – was precisely the kind of thing that utterly fascinated McLuhan and was central to the endeavor to which he enthusiastically committed himself.

Though many felt frustrated in their attempt to understand what Professor McLuhan was saying, they nonetheless had the feeling that what he was saying was terribly important, something they desperately needed to know more about. Hugh Kenner, one of McLuhan's more illustrious students, once said that it is a mark of genius to reduce massive complexity to a simple, meaningful symbol or idea. This, according to Kenner, was what his former teacher exemplified by singling out the "media" as an object of serious intellectual inquiry.

One of McLuhan's chief concerns throughout his career was the loss of individual identity effected by the mass media. In his first book, *The Mechanical Bride* (1951), he remarked: "The supple, well-adjusted man is the one who has learned to hop into the meat grinder while humming a hit parade tune." In one of his last works, *Take Today: The Executive as Dropout*, he states that people with private identities are treated as "unpersons" in a bureaucratic system and that "saints and criminals are in the same cell, and for the same reasons, as far as the 'organization' is concerned."

But McLuhan's concern for individual people developing and retaining their own personal identities was not merely academic. It flowed, I believe, from a deep Christian love for all human beings. And he knew, as well as anyone, that if there are no individual identities there can be no individual rights.

There are three features in particular of McLuhan's thought for which I am especially grateful. The first is his serene confidence that the human mind is capable of understanding whatever it is within our complex electronic world that is happening to us. In a general sense, we are a society of sleepwalkers. We react rather than respond, we are too often victimized and seduced by forces against which we are too poorly equipped to defend ourselves. We are often doubly discouraged: because we do not understand what is

happening and because we do not think we can understand. But all of McLuhan's thought is charged with hope. He believes, with a faith that is infectious, that the human mind is capable of understanding media and liberating us from our ignorance. As McLuhan has expressed it time and again: "There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening." We cannot be free unless we are willing to take the pains to contemplate.

A second point I want to mention is McLuhan's conviction that the whole person must be involved in order for understanding to take place. The specialist and the expert fragment things and cannot see what is going on. "Comprehension," he writes, "is never mere classification. It means the perceiving of total processes by using every sense in any situation." It is the whole person who knows and the health of our culture demands the insights of whole persons. But even more than this – the complexity of the contemporary world demands a non-specialist preparation of awareness which is almost poetic in its scope and sensitivity to pattern. McLuhan studies poets and learned something of their way of seeing, an accomplishment many of his critics failed to take into consideration.

Finally, I am grateful for McLuhan's continuing treatment on the theme of "breakdown as breakthrough." As our society shows signs of breaking down in so many critical areas, it is crucial to know how to convert these breakdowns into breakthroughs. Aristotle taught that the tragic hero's suffering or struggle for a new identity was made possible by a "tragic flaw" or defect. Without this flaw, change for the better cannot take place. It is through our personal failures, our lack of unity with the world around us, that we gain insights and see things we could not see if we were entirely one with our world. When our own mores merge with the mores of the world, there can be no consciousness. Thus, the only man who fails is the man who is eligible for success. With this idea in mind, McLuhan once quoted Meister Eckhardt: "Only the hand that erases can write the true thing."

Like most of McLuhan's thoughts, this one is broad enough to encompass the religious dimension. We are all fallible mortals, probing and stumbling. We hope that our failures may be redeemed. McLuhan lived with an abiding faith that Christ's final breakdown – death – preceded his ultimate breakthrough – resurrection. Having known McLuhan, I believe his own ultimate breakthrough is assured. Rest easy, dear teacher.

Donald DeMarco – Ontario

Concerning Catholic Higher Education

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education is planning a new document for *Catholic* universities, as distinct from *Ecclesiastical* universities which were covered by *Sapientia Christiana* more than a year ago. The new document will provide direction for those colleges which call themselves or are considered Catholic but are chartered by civil authority not by the pope or the local bishops. Most of the American 255 Catholic colleges and universities fall into this category.

As far as the implementation of *Sapientia Christiana* is concerned, the *Catholic University of America* has petitioned Rome for an extension from January 1, 1981 to June 1, 1981, for submitting statutes of ecclesiastical faculties in response to *Sapientia Christiana*. In various faculty meetings during 1980 efforts were made to secure a dispensation of the Catholic University from the norms set forth in *Sapientia Christiana*. It was argued that the interests of the Holy See were adequately protected by the current statutes of the University. These efforts to avoid compliance with SC were unsuccessful, and a Mixed Committee, composed of faculty representatives, the Chancellor, and several bishop members of the Board of Trustees in November 1981 submitted revised statutes intended to conform more substantively with the norms of *Sapientia Christiana*. These proposed statutes do seek to keep matters on this side of the Atlantic, but they explicitly authorized the Chancellor of the University, acting in the name of the Holy See, to grant the *missio canonica* or *venia docendi* to new appointees (and to reject appointees for cause), to grant or deny tenure, and to suspend faculty for grave cause. Although an effort was made by some faculties to reject the statutes proposed by the mixed committee — and in fact the Department of Theology by a vote of 13 to 7 did reject them in late November — the combined Ecclesiastic faculties later voted substantively to accept the proposed statutes, recommending procedural changes. The final resolution of the matter has still not taken place, but in all likelihood the Board of Trustees will take action in the near future.

The American Bishops did issue a Pastoral Letter in November 1980 entitled "Catholic Higher Education and the Church's Pastoral Mission"

urging that Catholic colleges in the U.S. offer their students "an introduction to the Catholic theological heritage" and "a vision of life that includes religious values." The Bishops hoped too that teachers there "will have special reason to show respect for the authentic teaching of the Church." Nowhere in the document are Catholic identity or academic freedom defined. Cardinal Garrone's earlier insistence (1973) "on the necessity for each Catholic University to set out formally and without equivocation either in statutes or in some other internal document, its character and commitment as "Catholic" and "on the necessity for every Catholic University to create within itself appropriate and efficacious instruments so as to be able to put into effect proper self-regulation in the sectors of faith, morality and discipline" were not mentioned in the American document.

Auxiliary Bishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk of Cincinnati was in charge not only of the early drafts of the document but for its final form and presentation to the bishops. He worked with the *Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities* in preparing the statement, and particularly with Msgr. John F. Murphy, former executive director of ACCU, now in Covington. ACCU (and its predecessor NCEA's College Department) with Msgr. Murphy have resisted Roman definitions of college Catholicity since 1967 when the American statement named "Land O'Lakes" encouraged declarations of college autonomy from the overview of the hierarchy. Cardinal Garrone's letter of 1973 was directed specifically at the American situation. In 1976 Msgr. Murphy formally requested that the impending *Sapientia Christiana* not mention civilly erected faculties of theology, a motion that was formally rejected at the time by the *Congress of Universities and Faculties of Ecclesiastical Studies* meeting then with Garrone in Rome.

In preparing the 1980 American Bishops' document many suggestions that would clarify the document and bring it into conformity with Roman definitions were deflected. This may explain why Rome intends to issue its own document on civilly erected Catholic Colleges and Universities, which are more commonplace in the U.S. than in any other part of the world.

Bishop Austin Vaughan: Today's Theological Questions

1) We have not been paying enough attention to the importance of objective truth in recent years. There are many examples of this. 1 – For almost twenty years – perhaps more – we have paid little attention to the idea of *heresy*, because we have laid so much stress on the importance of *sincerity* or good will on the part of a believer, or, for that matter, of an unbeliever. If a man does his best, God won't blame him for doing something wrong out of ignorance. I'm not looking for public condemnations of individuals as a political tactic in the Church; but the underlying assumption in paying no attention to heresy, – or to doctrine that is clearly erroneous, so that I don't get caught up in a fight over words, – is either that no one knows for sure what's right, so we shouldn't pay much attention to a deviation, or that it isn't really *important* what is right because it makes little difference anyway. Belief becomes a matter of loyalty or obeying the rules – and rules can change.

2) Much of our grasp on reality is portrayed as a subjective reaction rather than something that is valid for all human beings; how something relates to me becomes more important than what a thing is in itself. Whether this is harmful or helpful may depend on how far it goes – how much separation there is between the objective and the subjective, or how much de-emphasis of the former. Trans-signification is a concept that can add a new dimension to our understanding of the Eucharist – but it easily falls off into an ignoring of the objective transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ that has taken place.

3) Truth is regarded as the current state in a process that is always subject to many errors – and so it cannot command a very profound commitment. Even the creeds are historically-conditioned, and for some, this means that there is no permanent validity to the formulas used, but only to some undefined and undescribed "reality". – Truth is no longer bringing the mind into accord with reality – *Adaequatio mentis et rei* – but instead a grasp of a current view.

4) There is a fear on the part of some scholars of being imprisoned by old certainties that will not survive in a new age. (At a Conference on Faith, Science and the Future, at MIT last Summer, I often found a fear of dogma or of absolute truth – in their own field or in any other – expressed by men who seemed to me to be operating on the basis of absolute truth on a practical level – but who seemed to look upon the very notion as a strait-jacket, and so formally rejected it.)

5) We have moved into a period of

re-examination of our beliefs to see how much of them is permanently valid, and has to be retained in every age and culture. This was the critical question that Pope Paul VI faced before *Humanae Vitae*: was the prohibition of contraception that went back to the third century a core-doctrine, or was it only one way of expressing more basic values for a given time. This kind of examination is important, but when it is undertaken on a vast scale, it can easily lead some people to reduce the amount of doctrine that is essential to the faith more and more – and this process has been going on in the Church for the last 15 years.

The search for core-doctrine in Catholic teaching can be like the search for the historical Jesus in the last century and the early part of this one; it sometimes ended in the conclusion that there was no historical Jesus, or that it didn't matter if there were not, or that it mattered not in itself but only insofar as it had an influence on a message – or a movement – or an idea – or an ideal.

In dogmatic theology, we find this in the suggestion that no doctrinal statement has lasting value (H. Kung) or that the areas that we are sure of and that really count are very few – maybe not much more than that Jesus is Lord, – or in a use of the notion of a hierarchy of truths that indicates many of our defined doctrines can be sloughed off as peripheral or outdated.

In moral theology, it takes the form of believing that every moral judgement can shift to some extent with the situation, so that we have no concrete moral absolutes – and consequently no possibility of the Church making an infallible definition that will apply to all cases (e.g., abortion is intrinsically evil) since this kind of universality doesn't exist at that level (Richard McCormick in *America* – on Hans Kung). This leads to writing off any permanent fidelity to a single commitment made in advance, since fidelity will be a response to a shifting norm, or to a shifting perception of the norm as it applies to me.

In Scripture, it leaves you with a sense of never reaching Jesus or His message directly or indirectly, but rather only the author of one of the Gospels – or else one of the many theologies to be found in the New Testament (some of them conflicting), with no clear principle on how the author or the theology relates to the Jesus who became man for our sake, so that we could see God in our midst. – It leaves us with so much emphasis on the literal intention of the human author that little room seems to be left for any overall picture that God intended to convey in the revealed Scriptures,

Publications of Interest

- Fr. Robert Nash S.J.'s new book *Bringing Christ Back* (Our Sunday Visitor Press \$3.95) has been called "a simplified summa of the Passion for the Laity." Fr. Nash is an experienced preacher with world-wide missionary associations. The book is a series of useful meditations on the Sorrowful Mysteries, the Stations, etc.

- The May-August issue of *Scripta Theologica* published by the University of Navarre, at Pamplona Spain contains a lengthy article entitled "Controversias Christologicas en Inglaterra."

- In the Spring of 1981 *Franciscan Herald Press* will publish *Principles of the Catholic Moral Life*, edited by William E. May. This work, over 400 pages in length, contains the text of papers given at a workshop sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington at The Catholic University of America in June 1979. Contributors to the volume are: Cardinal Baum, Richard Roach, Donald McCarthy, Louis Bouyer, Manuel Miguens, John Finnis, William May, Ronald Lawler, John Connery, Joseph Boyle, Frederick S. Carney, Germain Grisez, Joseph Mangan, William Smith, Paul Philibert, and Jordan Aumann. This substantive work deals with the biblical, ecclesial, and doctrinal sources of Catholic moral life, with the natural law in St. Thomas and in the documents of Vatican II, with freedom, sin, and grace, with moral methodology, with conscience and its Catholic formation, and with Christian perfection as the goal of the moral life. In addition, it offers incisive criticism of much of the "new" moral theology.

- The editors of the Spanish edition of *Communio* have published a new edition in Spanish of Henri de Lubac's *Meditation Sur L'Eglise* (English Edition *Splendour of the Church*)

- Rene Laurentin's little known (in the U.S.) article on the infancy narratives and modern exegesis is available to interested parties from the Fellowship office. The article entitled "Exegeses Reductrices Des Evangiles de L'Enfance" first appeared in *Marianum* (XLI 1979 pp. 76-100). Those familiar with the present controversies dealing with the birth of Christ and the historicity of Mary's role in that birth will find this article worthwhile.

- A weekly 4-page Newsletter entitled "Vatican Voices and Notable Papal Quotes" and the "Research Service on Papal Quotations" (edited by Fr. Cletus Healy, S.J.) distills important excerpts from L'Osservatore Romano. There are study guides to go with it useful for parish or classroom discussions.

Regular subscription for the *Newsletter* costs \$15 per year (\$20 with the study guides).

The Research Service publishes papal quotations with titled headings for easy filing with the exact citation from L'Osservatore. This service for 1980 cards costs \$35.00. Index tabs available with subscription costs \$5.00.

Make checks payable to *The Truth, Inc.*, Room 100, 3400 W. Michigan St., Milwaukee, WI. 53208

- The Daughters of St. Paul (St. Paul Editions) have recently published a series of new small volumes on Catholic matters: Sr. Concetta Bellegia *God and the Problem of Evil*, a *Basic Catechism*, Bishop John J. O'Connor *In Defense of Life*, John Paul II *On The Mercy of God*, Fr. Richard V. Lawlor, S.J. *Answers to Your Questions*. Other Volumes will be reviewed.

- A new text in logic called *Logical Analysis: An Introduction to Systematic Learning*, may be of interest to the membership. The text is non-symbolic, and it is likely to be classed as a work in "informal logic." The consideration of logical theory is Aristotelian, but the point of interest for the Fellowship is that the text can serve as a kind of introduction to liberal education. It has this trait because of the emphasis it places on argumentative analysis. Available February 1, 1981 from Burgess Publishing Company, 7108 Ohms Lane, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55435. Paperback; the price will be about \$16.00.

- Franz H. Mueller, professor emeritus of economics at St. Thomas College in St. Paul, has published a study of the noted German Jesuit economist and social thinker Heinrich Pesch. It is: *Heinrich Pesch, Sein Leben und Sein Lehre*, J. P. Bachem Verlag, Ursula Pl 1, 5000 Koln 1, West Germany.

- *The New Canadian Ethic: Kill Our Unborn Canadians* by David Dehler, discusses the prevalence of abortion in Canada and also assembles a collection of documents bearing on the legal and moral issues. It costs \$5.50 in paperback and is available from 100 Bronson, Suite 1104, Ottawa K1R 6G8.

- Mrs. Onalee McGraw, Education Consultant of the Heritage Foundation, 513 C Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002 (202-546-4400) has recently published a 78 page booklet entitled "The Family, Feminism and the Therapeutic State" — her response to the Secular Humanist State's Response to U.S. Family Problems. The price is \$2.00.

Periodical Reviews

Francis X. Murphy, "Of Sex and the Catholic Church." *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1981, pp. 44-57.

● The pope and the bishops are regularly assailed for two kinds of reasons. Occasionally saints, and more frequently sinners, have assailed them for not being faithful to what they themselves believe and teach, and for not proclaiming with sufficient insistence the Word the Church has always taught. At other times critics (no canonized saints that I know among them) attack bishops for being faithful to what they do believe and to what the Church has always held. Father Murphy's assault is of the latter kind.

He indeed seeks to put on the mantle of the true traditionalist. He is in favor of compassion (unlike the pope; for to favor the specific traditional moral teachings the pope defends is to be cruel). He is in favor of "Vatican II": the one invented by dissenters, not the one that happened at the Vatican. He honors the "sensus fidelium" (that is, the understanding of faith chosen by those baptized people who, bruised by secular pressures and misguided by dissenters, begin to hold things that faith has never taught.)

For Murphy, what virtually every Catholic moral theologian taught as certain and binding (up until 1960) in sexual ethics is largely false. He generously acknowledges that faith may teach platitudes: do good, avoid evil. But if it tries to teach that specific kinds of acts are always sinful if deliberately done (deeds like rape, adultery, sodomy), it has gone astray. Murphy has a tired old quotation from Rahner to prove the vast claim that there are no specific moral absolutes. Forget what our whole moral teaching, and the work of our most brilliant moralists of the day hold (people like John Finnis of Oxford, G.E.M. Anscombe of Cambridge, Germain Grisez of this country, and a certain Karol Wojtyla, now of Rome.) For Murphy the whole of contemporary moral thought is the determined little sect of dissenters.

He reveals that he is no professional moralist also in the gross blunder on p. 57. Dissenting moralists generally like to forget the traditional teaching on probable opinions: that they have force only in matters "freely debated in the Church," so that there are no probable opinions against the Holy See's insistent defence of received teaching. Murphy resolves this difficulty by an astonishing mistatement of the historical record. (I will not call him a liar, as he boldly calls a cardinal he disagrees with.)

His attack on Pope John Paul II on pp. 46-47 is childishy bitter and unfair. His attack on the bishops is slightly more subtle, but as unjust. He

praises the bishops servilely when they point out (as can be quite right) the serious difficulties in received moral teaching. But when they make it clear that they firmly believe precisely these difficult truths, they are no longer honestly speaking their convictions! Now they are "forced to proclaim a loyal obedience."

This article is a blatant challenge to bishops and all other pastoral leaders. It gathers together many of the dogmas of dissent, that have become dogmatic positions for the "Second Church." That church of dissent teaches its word in season and out of season; it cares not for fairness; it will not allow the strength of the authentic position to be seen by those whose education they control.

Have we yet the energy and courage to proclaim authentic Catholic faith as forcefully? Archbishop Quinn, at the Synod, rightly observed that we must work to help the faithful toward assent to authentic teaching. But how can they believe what they do not hear?

Catholics "hear" the Church's teaching: official documents are very clear. But they are indocrinated by the secular media, and sometimes by the Catholic media, in opposed views: and they seldom see the Church's position presented persuasively.

My own experience, in teaching seminarians, graduate students, undergraduates, lay people over these past two decades is this: when Catholics hear equally well both the arguments of dissent and those supporting the Catholic position, they tend overwhelmingly to choose the Catholic position. Often they feel they have been hurt and cheated by people who misled them. There is a joy and a rich satisfaction in finding again for themselves that the teachings of Christian morality are more life-giving than burdensome.

What must be done? In too many places, even priests and catechetical leaders have been taught by dissenters. They are uncomfortable to be teaching against the word of so intelligent and good a pope, against the teachings of our bishops, and against the whole heritage of Catholic tradition. They are uncomfortable to be teaching people to do what authentic teaching declares separates people from the grace of Christ. Their dissent is normally rather thin: given a chance to hear in depth an intelligent defense of Christian sexual ethics, they will accept it. Many competent people are available to give in depth defenses of Catholic positions; but they must be intelligently selected, and the teaching must be done with sensitive vigor.

Ronald D. Lawler, OFM

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Book Reviews

Mortimer Adler, *How To Think About God: A Guide For The Twentieth Century Pagan* (New York, Macmillan, 175 pp. \$9.95)

In the mid-nineteen twenties a young man who had met all other prerequisites successfully for the attainment of his bachelor's degree at Columbia University was denied a diploma because he refused to take a test in swimming. However, he subsequently earned his doctorate in psychology in 1928 from Columbia and received an appointment to the faculty thereof. This was the beginning of a distinguished career in higher education which put Mortimer Jerome Adler on the road to becoming one of the mentors of the modern American mind. He is now chairman of the board of editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, director of the Institute for Philosophical Research in Chicago, and associate of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. His best known contribution in the academic field is undoubtedly his joint effort with Charles Van Doren, *The Great Treasury of Western Thought*, containing the *Syntopicon*, index and guide to the basic concepts of Western thought.

Among his distinguished works, including *What Man Has Made of Man*, *The Difference of Man and the Difference it Makes*, he has also written two highly successful *How* books: *How to Read a Book* (Read it twice) and *How to Think about War and Peace* (There can be no universal peace unless countries surrender part of their national sovereignty). At the age of seventy-eight Professor Adler now attempts here another *How* book.

Professor Adler professedly composed this work for "openminded pagans," those who have a "residual curiosity about God." He claims the best of qualifications for writing such a book: he twice successfully resisted the attraction to become a Christian, at one time an Episcopalian and at another a Catholic, and so remains a pagan writing for pagans. If he were a Christian, he would not, indeed could not be qualified, according to his own admission, since like St. Thomas, Descartes, et alia, his thought would be affected and thus invalidated by his faith. In this work written after the death of Etienne Gilson, Adler professes to have learned from the French Thomist's *Christianity and Philosophy* that Aquinas does not qualify as a "pure" philosopher. Indeed, any man of faith thereby disqualifies himself from being a natural theologian. For Adler faith automatically excludes the possibility of objective rational thought. In the twilight of a philosophical career, when we would expect some seasoned wisdom, it is startling to have a philosopher simplistically invalidate the man

of faith as so conditioned that he cannot both think and be judged by others on the ground of human reasoning alone. We are forced to unacceptable conclusions: no theologian was ever a true philosopher of God; faith must not, because it cannot seek understanding; matters of faith are incompatible with and mutually exclusive of matters of reason; there can be no reconciliation between truths of divine revelation and truth of human reason; truth is not one.

Accordingly, Adler, ignoring the traditional valid distinction between natural theology (theodicy) and supernatural theology, sees need for further distinction and divides all thinking about God into three categories: sacred philosophy about God (a theologian thinking theologically about God), natural philosophy about God (a theologian thinking philosophically about God), and purely philosophical thinking about God (a non-theological pagan thinking about God). The first is disqualified to guide the pagan, for he uses a source above reason, divine revelation. The second is disqualified because his reasoning, necessarily adulterated by his faith, cannot be "pure". The third is eminently qualified, as was Aristotle, the pagan by necessity, as is Mortimer Adler, the pagan by choice.

Adler thus cancels out more than a millenium of theological and philosophical thought, summarily rejects Aquinas's arguments for the existence of God as well as those of any other philosopher tainted by acquaintance with the God of the Christians, Jews or Moslems because they were adversely "affected by current beliefs". All this is considered proved by being stated. But Adler is our qualified guide, the philosopher who can say, "We pagans. . . ." Clearly, it takes one to lead one.

First, the path must be cleared. Adler proceeds with part two, *Errors to be Avoided*. There are two: the first, the error of begging the question by assuming what is to be proved. To avoid this we "must certainly eschew the position taken by persons of religious faith," namely, that the cosmos had a beginning in time. This assumes a Creator, that a God exists. The second error is to suppose "that an inquiry concerning God's existence is an inquiry concerning the existence of a first cause." It is puzzling why Adler does not advert to the fact that St. Thomas, whom he has already disqualified as being able to say anything at all relevant to the question, staunchly and at a great price defended the pagan Aristotle's concept of a world kept eternally in existence as not repugnant to human reason. In regard to the second "error", Aristotle himself argued to the existence of a first cause. Indeed, most commentators who tend to reject St. Thomas's five ways to

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consider the existence of God make an exception to his argument based on the existence of a first cause and accept it as the valid, if only one. For him and Aristotle both, the only explanation for a hierarchically ordered set of simultaneous cooperative causes is a first cause.

In part three, *To Set the Stage*, Adler warns us to beware trying to define "God," an error few have made in the history of philosophy or theology. Adler goes to Anselm to get an acceptable description of God. He goes on at length to shatter definitively the ontological argument, but salvages the notion of the "supreme Being, than which nothing greater can be thought of." Unable to accept Anselm's *non sequitur* that a supreme being exists because when we think of a being than which none greater can be conceived we must include the note of his actual existence, Adler must still find a way to link this acceptably described supreme being to actual existence. This he does with a little metaphysical prestidigitation. After presenting a treatment of the analogy of being in an admirably traditional, exact and well-illustrated sequence, he suddenly applies the analogy of being to existence itself rather than to existing beings, and concludes that God indeed does exist but not as other things exist. Existence is nonconceptual act, and analogical concepts of being refer only to existing subjects, not to their existence, to existents, not to existence. However, this mixed methodology satisfies our guide enough to proceed to the nexus of his argument.

Professor Adler now applies a scientific concept to metaphysics with all the enthusiasm with which Descartes applied mathematical notions thereto. For Adler there are two kinds of concept: empirical, based on some physical perception, and theoretical, based on objects of thought that are not objects of immediate perceptual experience. Examples of theoretical constructs are "electron," "neutrino", "black hole", and *mirabile dictu* "God." "The notional apparatus of theology, like that of nuclear physics and twentieth century cosmology, consists mainly of theoretical constructs" (pg. 67). Now, he maintains, it is legitimate for pure philosophy to construct these concepts. If pure philosophy could not, then neither could physics legitimately do so. Thus he patterns his philosophical reasoning on scientific reasoning and then claims that the validation for scientific reasoning is philosophical reasoning! Circular reasoning was, however, never presented as an Error to be Avoided.

The pagan guide now comes to the end of the trail. Only theoretical constructs can lead us to the existence of God. But these cannot prove that a

God exists. Only mathematics can give us proof of anything. Scientific theoretical constructs, like "meson" and "black hole" cannot be used to prove or demonstrate that mesons or black holes exist. Since philosophical theoretical constructs are of the same nature as the latter, and they afford the only way we can think about God, then it follows that the existence of God cannot be proved or demonstrated at all, it can only be inferred. We have as much "proof" for the existence of God as we have for the existence of a black hole, no more no less. Thus metaphysical certitude doesn't enter into the question at all. Indeed, for Adler there is no such thing as metaphysical certitude. As the existence of the neutrino is at best an educated guess, so also is the existence of God.

Thus, for Mortimer Jerome Adler the only conclusion we can arrive at in the search for God is that God probably exists.

I am persuaded that God exists, either beyond a reasonable doubt or by a preponderance of reasons in favor of that conclusion over reasons against it. I am, therefore, willing to terminate this inquiry with the statement that I have reasonable grounds for affirming God's existence. (pg. 150.)

Our openminded pagan reader is now left just where he started before this guide took over, uncertain as to God's existence, but certainly now with better reasons for his uncertainty.

Abyssus abyssum invocat. Our guide has demonstrated nothing, eschewed the possibility of a metaphysics of God, admitted only of the force of persuasion in the matter, a matter which he bases on scientific hypothesis which, based on the secondary aspects of being, is at best provisional, revisional and substitutional (Since Adler wrote this book, scientists have discovered that the "neutrino" contains matter.)

Leaving the pagan, at the end, to "decide for himself" is what saves this work from being but a trip from darkness to darkness. There are two possible reactions for the openminded pagan with residual curiosity concerning God who finishes reading this book. One pagan, a bruised reed broken, will end up with an expired curiosity and a closed mind, opting for the only alternative: Eat, drink and be merry! The other, with some residual sanity and a modicum of good will in the matter, will instinctively reject a treatise about God which gives him no hope. Perhaps he will imitate G. K. Chesterton who said, "When a new book comes out on some topic, I go and read an old one on it." I recommend St. Thomas' *Summa Contra Gentes*, the summa against pagans for pagans.

Vincent Zamoyta

Selected Notes on Contemporary Books and Articles

Introducing David Jones: A Selection of His Writings. Edited by John Matthias with a preface by Stephen Spender (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1980), 237 pages, \$8.95.

Dai Greatcoat: A Self-Portrait of David Jones in His Letters. Edited by Rene Hague (London and Boston: Faber & Faber, 1980), 273 pages. \$12.50.

Despite the fact that David Jones was ranked by T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden as one of the major modernists and is probably the most important English speaking Catholic poet of the twentieth century, he is still not well known outside of academic circles. Fortunately, an increasing number of articles and books devoted to his life and work are making information about him more easily accessible. *Introducing David Jones*, an anthology of his works edited by John Matthias with a preface by Stephen Spender and *Dai Greatcoat: A Self-Portrait of David Jones in His Letters* edited by Rene Hague will certainly help to introduce readers to the poet's work and to familiarize them with his ideas.

The anthology includes a helpful introduction by the editor and selections from Jones' three poetic works: *In Parenthesis*, *The Anathemata*, and *The Sleeping Lord*. In the first of these, a prose-poem concerning life at the front in World War I, Jones uses the "mythical method" to link the soldier in the trenches with Malory's grail knights and the medieval soldiers in the Welsh epic *Y Gododdin*. Such a brief description of the poem, however, does not begin to convey the richness of the materials Jones evokes and the poetic beauty that they achieve. Although *In Parenthesis* is about a war, it is by no means a typical war poem. As Jones says in the preface, "I did not intend this as a 'War Book' — it happens to be concerned with war. I should prefer it to be about a good kind of peace — but as Mandeville says, 'Of Paradys ne can I not speken propurly I was not there: it is fer beyonde and that for thinketh me. And also I was not worthi.'" Indeed, Jones' chief focus in the poem is on not only the soldiers' sacrifice but also on that of Christ and on the way in which all sacrifice works together to the good for them who love God.

Matthias also gives representative selections from *The Anathemata*, Jones' masterpiece, including the poet's preface which explains the poem and its title. "Anathemata," the plural of the Greek word "anathema" meaning all offerings — whether sacred or profane, is a fitting title for a work which chronicles the story of man's evolution as an artist and sacramentalist from his earliest symbolic

productions to those of modern times. For Jones, the focus of man's evolution as priest and artifex is Christ's incarnation, his institution of the Eucharist, and His self-sacrifice on the cross. In fact, as the poet explains in the preface, the whole structure of the poem is modelled on that of the mass.

The selections Matthias chooses from *The Sleeping Lord* demonstrate Jones' diverse interests: his fascination with the matter of Britain and Welsh legend, his preoccupation with the role of the soldiers of the tenth fretensis who were detailed to crucify Christ, and his concern over the confrontation of traditional ways of living and thinking with life in modern technocracies. In "A, a, *Domine Deus*," a devotional poem that Jones wrote and revised from 1938 to 1966, he expresses this concern:

I have been on my guard
not to condemn the unfamiliar.
For it is easy to miss Him
at the turn of a civilisation.

I have watched the wheels go round in case I might
see the living creatures like the appearance of
lamps, in case I might see the Living God projected
from the Machine. I have said to the perfected
steel, be my sister and for the glassy towers I
thought I felt some beginnings of His creature, but
A, a, a, Domine Deus, my hands found the glazed
crystal a stage-paste . . . *Eia, Domine Deus*.

Rene Hague's portrait of the poet in letters gives an excellent picture of Jones, provides indispensable information concerning the facts of his life, and offers valuable insights into his character. Hague, who was one of the poet's closest friends for more than fifty years, is the ideal explicator of Jones' attitudes and activities. The editor begins with biographical material that proves fascinating in its own right. Born to an English mother and Welsh father in 1895, Jones first trained to be an artist before enlisting in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in World War I. After demobilisation, he converted to Catholicism in 1921, while he was living with Eric Gill, the Catholic sculptor who had established a guild devoted to work and prayer. As the letters to four correspondents over a period of fifty years indicate, Jones' life was devoted to these two activities with unflagging patience, faith, joy, and good humor. Throughout all the various illnesses and disappointments, chronicled in the letters, the poet reveals himself as an intelligent, whimsical human being filled with wonder and courage, but poignantly aware of his own limitations and vulnerability.

His wry wit characterizes all of the correspondence, especially in reference to everyday habits and

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occurrences. Of drinking, he remarks "I've stopped drinking soda altogether now and always take water, a simplification and less expensive (but O dear *how* expensive whisky is, I *wish* I didn't have to drink it)." Such levity is often, however, juxtaposed with much more serious musings, as, for example, in a letter dealing with the inextricable connection of art with Christ's passion:

I am at the moment in a very *great* muddle about "religion", but I do still feel that the Church, in showing forth the passion under this art form, commits us irrevocably to this basic notion of "art" — as a thing which "shows forth" under another form existing realities. Even the old "penny catechism" was nearer the mark as "art criticism" when it says that the mass is a showing again in an unbloody manner what was done once and for all in a bloody manner, or words to that effect. I am sure that some such concept is the inner secret and nodal point of all the arts.

The picture of David Jones given by his letters in Hague's book and by the work excerpted in Matthias' anthology not only whets the reader's appetite for more information about Jones and his poetry, but it also provides encouragement for all those who have thought deeply about the role of Christians and Christianity in the modern world.

Carson Daly

John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago and London 1980) Pp. 424. \$27.50.

This book has already achieved a certain notoriety, reviewed as it has been in such publications as *Newsweek* (Sept. 29, 1980) and *The New York Times Book Review* (August 10, 1980). The latter review, full of the highest praise, is particularly curious, because written by a specialist in modern European intellectual history who seems to know very little indeed about the middle ages. Perhaps the single most important thesis of the book is set forth in the Introduction, which argues that the common assumption that religious belief has been the cause of intolerance of gay people is incorrect. Boswell rather sees such oppression as usually stemming from other sources, and at the most then being cloaked by or incorporated into religion.

The second chapter deals with Definitions, and gives instructive arguments for the greater utility of the word "gay" in comparison to the more modern

and common "homosexual." "Gay" is understood to specify an emotional orientation that is not identical with the relationship or sexual acts usually specified by "homosexual." "Gay" describes (p. 43) "persons who are conscious of erotic preference for their own gender," while "homosexual" is a broader term, comprising (p. 44) "all sexual phenomena between persons of the same gender." Critical to B.'s approach to his subject is his observation that "any distinction between 'friendship' and 'love' must be extremely arbitrary (p. 46)." This means that throughout the book he cites many texts as evidence of a gay orientation which will strike many readers as irrelevant to the question.

Chapter three is devoted to the Roman evidence, and chapter four turns to the scriptural evidence. The argument is that although Christianity had a major role in shifting the Roman attitude of tolerance toward homosexuality, the importance of Christianity here was much less than commonly supposed: "The Bible was not the only or even the principal source of early Christian ethics, and the biblical passages purportedly relating to homosexuality had little to do with early Christian misgivings on the subject. . . . It is, moreover, quite clear that nothing in the Bible would have categorically precluded homosexual relations among early Christians (p. 92)." What Boswell's readings of the texts actually show is that virtually nothing is clear. Just as Boswell's reading of Aristotle in an earlier chapter will drive specialists to distraction, so his reading of the biblical texts is very uneven. He is at his best in discussing, here and in Appendix I, the supposed homosexual subject matter of I Cor. 6:9 and I Tim. 1:10. What Boswell says about the change of the translation of *malakós* in twentieth century translations of the Bible, from applying to masturbation to applying to homosexuality, without new textual data (pp. 106-07) does not speak well of the integrity of the translators. Also instructive are his comments on the variations in the translation of even the *Bible de Jerusalem* into other languages, pp. 338 n. 7.

The following chapter deals with those social and intellectual factors which influenced the formation of Christian opinion on homosexuality, especially from the third century on. Boswell's argument, carried through the following chapters on the Church fathers, the early middle ages, the urban revival, and gay literature in the high middle ages, is that Christianity did not fully set its face against homosexuality until the thirteenth century. When it did, this was the work of the thirteenth century scholastics, who took the popular

(continued on page 19)

(continued from page 18)

prejudices of their times and gave them theological expression. Above all, for Boswell, this was the work of Aquinas, of whose writings Boswell hardly understands a single passage cited. At the close of his book Boswell repeats an earlier warning that his entire study is provisional. Certainly he is to be taken at his word. In spite of the value of some of the lexicographical and literary discussion, there is a manipulation of evidence in the book which renders unproved the conclusions of every chapter. (The author of this review will offer an extended review of this book in a forthcoming issue of *Communio*).

Glenn W. Olsen

What Is Going On at Princeton?

• A very interesting insight to life on a secular campus with religious origins is provided by *Prospect*, a quarterly publication of the "Concerned Alumni of Princeton" published at 240 Nassau Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. There in you will find that the cross has been removed from the University Chapel, that a woman Episcopal priest is likely to be appointed assistant Dean of the Chapel, that the Gay Alliances is active on Campus, that unlike all the other Ivy League faculties, no Princeton professor supported Ronald Reagan for the presidency, that not all Princetonians like Ralph Nader, that during the year 1978-1979 44 Princeton students had their abortions funded by the University, paid by a compulsory fee to which all students must contribute without exception.

A Grievance Committee?

A Report by Father Lawler

In its fall meeting, the Board of the Fellowship discussed briefly the suitability of setting up a Grievance Committee to study alleged abuses of academic freedom in a variety of contexts. Its purpose would not be to make trouble, but to remedy troubles. It would not aim at enforcing conservative or liberal prejudices, but at promoting fairness.

The committee would be called upon to uphold academic freedom: in its full Catholic sense, as it has been defended by such scholars as Newman and Maritain. This concern for freedom respects also the rights of men to revealed truth. In the narrow agnostic and secular senses of academic freedom there is either no concern for the liberating power of faith, or there is no adequate care to spell out the right relationships in this area.

All of us have heard horror stories. There have been massive protests against alleged abuses of academic freedom that were quite unjustified. But there have also been great silences about real

abuses. Professors holding entirely legitimate positions, and fully competent, have been fired because academic employers wished to identify competence with acceptance of their (sometimes not fully orthodox) positions. Those with tenure have been abused in various ways: refused the ordinary cost-of-living increases, abusively told that students (i.e., the students conditioned to accept certain positions, not those delighted with the teacher's work) disapprove of their work. Professors have been commanded to take views they consider wrong: e.g., to affirm that the positions upheld by Catholic teachers denying central teachings of faith are legitimate.

Do we believe that there are enough problems in these areas that are of sufficient importance as to justify setting up a committee? Are we likely to find enough energy to carry out the work of such a committee, in patience, fairness, but with vigor? Perhaps this question should be settled in our March meeting in Milwaukee.

Our three new reviewers, Professors Zamoyta, Daly, Olsen are on the faculty of St. John's University (NYC) and the Universities of Notre Dame and Utah respectively.

Miscellaneous

● Fr. Louis L. La Sarge, pastor of Blessed Sacrament Church, 2233 Diamond N.E. Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505 (616-361-7339) seeks a Director of Religious Education for his parish. Master's degree preferred. Employment date July 1981. 245 children plus adult education. Salary and working conditions negotiable.

● Dean Jean Willkie, academic dean of Trinity College, Washington, D.C. 20017 informs us that there is an opening for a full-time position in the Economics Department of this college. Ph.D. desirable. Please write to the Dean at the above address before April 1st.

St. John's University
Jamaica, N.Y. 11439

● A conservative Jewish rabbi, David Novak, is interested in obtaining an academic position in a Catholic institution. Rabbi Novak has a doctorate in philosophy from Georgetown University, where he worked under fellowship member Germain Grisez. Prof. Grisez believes that Dr. Novak would contribute substantially to the work of faithful Catholic scholars in philosophy and theology, especially in the field of ethics and moral theology. Rabbi Novak's address is: Congregation Beth El, 422 Shirley Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23517.

Prof. Grisez, who lives and works at Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, will be happy to provide further information about Rabbi Novak.

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Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

● Concerning New Membership

Recommendations for new membership in the Fellowship henceforth should be sent to Dr. Joseph Scottino, President, Gannon University, Erie, Pa. 16501.

● Scholarships for Catholic Doctrine

Full scholarships are available for a program leading to the degree of Master of Arts. Among other things, recipients must have at least 24 undergraduate credits in theology and philosophy, recommendations from academic and ecclesiastical authorities, and write an essay describing the applicant's intention regarding the subsequent use of the degree. Write Director, Institute for Advanced Studies in Catholic Doctrine, St. John's University, Jamaica, N.Y. 11439 (212-990-6394) deadline: April 1, 1981.

● Recent publications by President James Hitchcock:

"The Supreme Court and Religion: Historical Overview and Future Prognosis," *St. Louis University Law Journal*, 1980.

"The Secular City, 1981," serialized in the *National Catholic Register*, beginning January 11, 1981.

● William G. Most *The Consciousness of Christ* (Front Royal, Va., Christendom College Press, 1980 \$5.95) to be reviewed later. Fr. Most is on the faculty of Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa.